

RECALL RESPONSE BY AGENCY

Multiple agencies within Washington have a role when a food product is recalled. This document is designed to explain the different responsibilities each agency fulfills to protect public health by confirming that a recalled food product is no longer being sold, stored, or available for consumption.

This guide can be used when local health jurisdictions are requested to follow-up on a recall.

DEFINITIONS

Recall – A firm’s removal of food products from distribution and sale when there is a reason to believe that such products are adulterated, contaminated or misbranded; or that a regulatory agency considers to be in violation of law. FDA and USDA-FSIS assess the public health concern or hazard presented by the product being recalled and classify the concern. A Class 1 Recall is a classification example. These involve a health hazard that will cause serious adverse health problems or death (e.g. presence of pathogens in RTE product).

Scope of Recall – Defines the amount and type of product in question. Includes product names, sizes, codes, and packaging descriptions.

Sub-recall – Occurs when a consignee has further distributed recalled product. For example, when a consignee is a distributor, they may need to conduct a sub-recall. Regulatory agencies will collect sub-distribution information from consignees that further distribute.

Recall Verification Audit Check – A regulatory agency’s action to verify that the recalling firm’s communications and strategies were effective and consignees have received recall notifications and taken appropriate action. Form #3177 will be provided to you for recording the information when this formal request is made by FDA. These checks are also conducted on sub-recalls.

Consignee – Those who received, purchased, or used the product being recalled. Includes distributors, warehouses, retailers, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, schools, care centers, consumers, etc. These may also be referred to as food establishments by LHJs.

Recall Communication & Strategies – The recalling firm’s method to communicate and instruct their consignees on how to handle recall product. This includes: in-person notification, phone call, letter or email, social media, press release, and posting a Placard or Food Safety Notice at affected retail establishments. The firm’s recall strategies should instruct consignees on what to do with the recalled product (Return, Destroy, or Relabel).

- **Press Release:** Notice of recall sent to the press from the recalling firm. It includes product information, health hazard, distribution, and instructions to consumer.
- **Placard or Food Safety Notice:** One page document drafted by the recalling firm for posting at retail locations where product was sold. It includes product information, health hazard, and instructions to the consumer.

Public Health Alert – If a firm refuses to issue a recall, a regulatory agency may warn the public not to consume a harmful product by issuing a public health alert.

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LHJ ROLE

Conducting the Check – *Before You Go*

Review the Recall Communication Information

- Review the recall for applicable details and recall strategy.
 - Review information specifying lot number and codes.
 - Review distribution information.

Take the following

- Copy of press release and attachments.
- ID.

Conducting the Check – *While You Are There*

Speak with a Manager or Employee

- Ask questions and document response; including name and title of person interviewed
 - Did consignee have recalled product?
 - Did the consignee receive recall communication?
 - What did consignee do with the product once they received recall notice?
 - Status of recalled product: Quarantined, Destroyed, or Returned
 - Is there a recall notice posted at point of sale for consumer awareness such as a press release, food safety notice or placard?
- Visit the storage sites for the recalled product and check shelf stock.
- Make sure recalled product is properly quarantined or that recall instructions were followed.
- Inform the retailer that other regulatory agencies may contact you about this recall.

Sharing Information after the Check

- Report your findings to Washington State Department of Health
(These reports will be forwarded when needed by regulatory agencies of the recalling firm.)

NOTE: Distribution information provided to FDA and/or WSDA by the recalling firm is considered confidential information. FDA can only share distribution with those that are commissioned, who may not further disclose distribution without FDA permission. USDA/FSIS will publish retail distribution on Class 1 recalls online at: www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/recalls-and-public-health-alerts/current-recalls-and-alerts.