



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH**

FOOD AND HOUSING DIVISION

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Guidelines for Determining Approved Food Sources

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An important part of ensuring that food served or sold by retail food facilities is safe and wholesome, is by verifying that all foods come from “approved” sources. “Approved” means that the facility where the food is produced, prepared, or processed meets or exceeds the standards of the responsible regulatory agency. Approved sources are critical because foodborne illness investigations have shown that the cause of foodborne illness outbreaks is often traced back to foods from unapproved sources.

Each food facility must be able to demonstrate that the processor or supplier they are using is “approved”. It is important to recommend that food facility operators maintain copies of invoices or bills of lading for tracking all purchases. Additionally, inspectors should educate food facility operators to ask for some verification of approval from processors and/or suppliers for their own protection and that of their customers.

Recommended Practices for Food Facility Operators

The following practices are recommended to food facility operators to ensure the food they are receiving is safe and from an approved food source:

1. Confirm that suppliers have a food safety and security plan in place.
2. Check-in the deliveries, do not allow an unattended delivery.
3. Keep a list of where food products are purchased and maintain copies of invoices/bills of lading for tracking all purchases.
4. Have written procedures for receiving of foods.
5. Be aware of delivery conditions and product quality. Check for tampering, discoloration, pinholes, unusual packages, contamination, and whether potentially hazardous foods are transported at safe temperatures.
6. Use approved food sources only. All raw produce should be washed before using.

Responsible Agencies

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for raw and processed meat and poultry.

- **The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is responsible for the following products processed in the State of California: milk and other dairy products, game animals, eggs, and retail processing of sausage/chorizo.**
- **The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for foods not regulated by the USDA.**
- **The United States Department of Commerce (USDC) Seafood Inspection Program is a voluntary program for fish and shellfish wholesale processors and distributors.**
- **The California Department of Public Health Food and Drug Branch (FDB) is responsible for foods not regulated by the USDA, but processed or distributed in California.**
- **The California Department of Fish and Game is responsible for regulating Commercial Fishermen.**
- **The San Diego County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) is responsible for wholesale food distributors in San Diego County (except seafood warehouses, wholesale food processors, and food salvagers).**
- **The following Local Departments of Environmental Health (DEH) are responsible for all foods processed and distributed wholesale at the local level:
Los Angeles County
Orange County
San Bernardino County
The City of Vernon**

Table of Enforcement Agency Responsibilities and Verification Methods For purposes of determining wholesale food safety oversight, the following are potential methods of verification that food facilities can use when making a decision on whether or not a supplier is an approved source. Please note that other methods of verification not listed in this guideline may be acceptable. **(See back panel for agency abbreviation reference)**

Foods Regulated	Federal Agency	State Agency (California Wholesale Distributors and Processors)	Local Agency (City or County Wholesale Distributors and Processors)	Methods of Verification
Domestic and Imported food (including produce, bottled water, and other foods) <u>but not meat and poultry</u>	1. FDA 2. U.S. Customs Service (Imported Foods)	1. CDPH/FDB 2. CDFA (eggs, game animals, and dairy products)	1. San Diego County DEH <i>wholesale food distributors only</i> 2. Los Angeles County DEH 3. Orange County DEH 4. San Bernardino County DEH 5. City of Vernon DEH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of regulatory oversight : copy of suppliers local enforcement agency permit, state or federal registration or license, or a copy of the last inspection report. • Third party audit results [many vendors now provide third party guarantees, including NSF International or American Institute of Baking (AIB)]. • Microbiological or chemical analysis/testing results. • Man-in-the–plant verification (e.g. chain food facilities may have their own inspector monitor food they buy). • Self-certification (guarantee) by a wholesale processor based on HACCP. • For raw agricultural commodities such as produce, certification of Good Agricultural Practices or membership in a trade association such as the Western Growers Association or United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association. • A copy of a wholesale distributor or processor’s agreement with its suppliers of food safety compliance.
Domestic and Imported Meat and Poultry and related products such as stews, pizzas, and frozen foods containing meat- or poultry	1. USDA 2. U.S. Customs Service (Imported Foods)	CDFA (eggs, game animals, and dairy products)	1. San Diego County DEH <i>wholesale food distributors only</i> 2. Los Angeles County DEH 3. Orange County DEH 4. San Bernardino County DEH 5. City of Vernon DEH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Mark on meat or poultry products. • Registration of importers with the USDA.
Drinking Water (non-bottled water)	USEPA	CDPH	San Diego County DEH (Small water systems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recent certified laboratory report demonstrating compliance with drinking water standards. • A copy of the last inspection report.
Fish and Fish Products	1. US Dept. of Commerce Seafood Inspection Program (USDC) 2. FDA	1. CDPH/FDB 2. CA Fish and Game		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of regulatory oversight: copy of suppliers’ local enforcement agency permit, state or federal registration or license, or a copy of the last inspection report. • Third party audit results • Man-in-the–plant verification • Self-certification (guarantee) by a wholesale processor based on HACCP. • A copy of a wholesale distributor or processor’s agreement with its suppliers of HACCP compliance. • “USDC approved list of fish establishments and products” located at seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov
Shellfish (bivalve mollusks)	1. USDC 2. FDA	CDPH/FDB		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shellfish Tags • Listing in current Interstate Certified Shellfish Shippers Publication (updated monthly and available at www.ISSC.org) • Listing in current California Shellfish Shippers Publication (updated monthly and available on www.dhs.ca.gov/fdb) • Gulf oyster treatment process verification if sold between April 1-October 31 (Nov 1-March 31 certification may be used in lieu of warning signs) • “USDC approved list of fish establishments and products” located at seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov
Alcoholic Beverages	1. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms 2. FDA	CDPH/FDB		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of regulatory oversight: copy of suppliers local enforcement agency permit, state or federal registration or license, or a copy of the last inspection report. • Third party audit results • Man-in-the–plant verification • Self-certification (guarantee) by a wholesale processor based on HACCP. • A copy of a wholesale distributor or processor’s agreement with its suppliers of food safety compliance.