

How to Become a Meat and Poultry Handler

To initiate the registration process, call the NCDA&CS Meat and Poultry Inspection Division at 919-707-3180. We will ask for your name, address and phone number and may ask a few questions to ensure a Meat and Poultry Handler's Registration is required for your new business venture. This information will be shared with the Compliance Officer in your area who will contact you to arrange an appointment for an on-site visit to set up your registration. Given busy schedules, please allow at least a week for a return phone call.

This on-site visit is free of charge as is the registration itself. Compliance Officers conducting the Meat and Poultry Handler registration process will be checking for the following:

- All meat and poultry products are properly marked, labeled and wholesome.
- Storage units such as coolers or freezers are clean, in good repair, and able to keep product at a safe temperature.
- Storage units are dedicated for the meat and poultry products you will be offering for sale (no other personal items inside). [Exempt poultry products](#) must be stored in their own dedicated freezer.
- Storage units are indoors, and the general housekeeping around the coolers/freezers is maintained to prevent the creation of insanitary conditions.
- Adequate pest control measures are taken to maintain sanitary conditions in the area where product is stored.
- Any damaged or returned product is properly disposed of.

Our field personnel revisit each registered meat and poultry handler periodically for review. These visits may be conducted without advanced notice.

Answers to commonly asked questions

Q: How much does it cost to obtain a Meat and Poultry Handler's Registration?

There is no fee for this registration.

Q: How long does it take to obtain a Meat and Poultry Handler's Registration?

In most cases, field personnel can arrange a visit with you within two weeks of notification by our office. Particularly busy areas may require a little longer. Once on-site, the registration typically takes around 2 hours. If all requirements are met, you will be issued a Meat Handlers registration at that time.

Q: Do I have to have product on hand prior to registration?

It is preferred that product is available to ensure it is properly marked, labeled and wholesome. If product is not available, the person conducting the registration may have to make a second visit.

Q: Do I have to purchase a refrigerated truck to transport product?

No. Product must be transported in a manner that is sanitary and that prevents perishable

product from temperature abuse. A refrigerated truck is not required. Some Meat and Poultry Handlers use portable ice chest style coolers (which contain alternative cooling methods) or have a cooler/freezer unit on the back of a pickup truck powered by an inverter or other alternative cooling method.

Q: Can I sell at any farmer's market once I have my Meat and Poultry Handler's Registration?

Your registration allows you to sell meat and poultry products anywhere in North Carolina.; however, farmers' markets operate independently and set their own rules about what type products they will allow to be sold on their premises.

We recommend you contact the farmer's market ahead of time to learn their policies. Some farmers' markets may require perishable meat and poultry products to be stored and displayed under active refrigeration in self-contained, temperature-controlled freezers or refrigeration units. Other markets allow perishable products to be sold from ice chests with alternative cooling methods.

Q: Can I have a label made with my farm name on it instead of the name of the packing plant that processed my animals?

Yes, as long as the packing plant you use will agree to do this for you.

Q: I would like to have "All Natural Angus Beef" and "Raised without Antibiotics or Added Hormones" on my label. How can I do this?

Statements such as "All Natural Angus Beef" or "Raised without Antibiotics or Added Hormones" are [special claims](#) that require pre-approval. You must work with the inspected establishment that will be applying the label with special claims. An application must be submitted to the appropriate agency for claim approval.

For products produced at facilities under **Federal Inspection**, the label approval request, must be submitted to Labeling and Program Delivery Staff (LPDS) through the [Label Submission and Approval System \(LSAS\)](#). The submission must include documentation to support the claim. For questions about necessary documentation for supporting claims, FSIS recommends searching the publicly posted Knowledge Articles ("Public Q&As") in the [askFSIS](#) database. If after searching the database, you still have questions, reach out to the Office of Policy and Program Development through [askFSIS](#) and select "Labeling" as the Inquiry type or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935.

For products produced at facilities under **State Inspection**, the label approval request, [MPID Form 11](#) (available from the in-plant inspector), and documentation to support the claim must be submitted by the establishment owner to the NCDA&CS, Meat and Poultry Inspection Division in Raleigh, NC, through their in-plant inspection personnel (IPP). Questions about necessary documentation for supporting claims may be addressed to IPP through establishment owners.