



Department of Public Health and Human Services

Public Health & Safety Division ♦ Communicable Disease Control & Prevention Bureau

Food & Consumer Safety ♦ PO Box 202951 ♦ 1400 Broadway ♦ Helena, MT 59620-2951

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Steve Bullock, Governor

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Guidance for Law Enforcement

HANDLING DISTRESSED FOODS, DRUGS, AND COSMETICS IN TRUCK WRECKS, TRAIN WRECKS AND SIMILAR EVENTS

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is charged with assuring the safety and suitability of consumer commodities. The Montana Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Title 50 Chapter 31 MCA) gives DPHHS the authority to inspect consumer products for contamination (excluding tobacco products).

Incidents involving trucks and trains may contaminate consumer products. To help prevent contaminated products from entering commerce and causing illness or death, these goods must be inspected by local or state health officials to determine if those products are suitable for consumer use and allowed to continue transport.

DPHHS relies on law enforcement and other incident responders to **notify** DPHHS and/or county sanitarians when these events occur so that appropriate federal, state and local parties can be informed.

Montana Highway Patrol officers are asked to immediately notify MHP dispatch of any transportation incident concerning possibly damaged consumer products. Please report the following critical information. If local law enforcement is first on the scene, the same information may be relayed to the local sanitarian.

1. Location of the incident (name of highway or street; intersections; mile marker; etc.)
2. When the incident occurred
3. What was in the vehicle (frozen meat, fresh produce, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics or other consumer commodities) and approximate quantities
4. Who are the responsible parties or persons and their contact information
5. Name of wrecker company, if any (and phone number, if available)
6. The truck, trailer, or boxcar number(s) and license plate and/or other identifying information

MHP dispatch will notify Montana Disaster and Emergency Services (DES), which will relay the critical information to DPHHS. Local sanitarians, working with DPHHS, will assure proper handling and/or disposal of the products. In some cases, local law enforcement may have already notified the county sanitarian directly, but we ask that you report the critical information to MHP dispatch anyway.

If the commodities are damaged (spilled, out of refrigeration, damaged containers, etc.) we need assistance from law enforcement to prevent pilfering and unapproved salvaging of the items. Please work with the state/local health departments in these situations. Thank you for your assistance!

If you have any question, please call DPHHS at 444-5309 or email hhsfcs@mt.gov