

January 2024 EHFS Newsletter

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Training Opportunities

Webinars

February 6th at 9AM – Morel Mushroom Outbreak and Investigation: This webinar will go over last year’s mushroom-related outbreak from beginning to end including the perspectives and actions of sanitarians, epidemiologists, and communicable disease specialists, all of which were involved in the outbreak response.

March 5th at 9AM – Fire Codes: Dirk Johnson, the State Fire Marshal, will be joining us to give an overview of fire codes and the role of the State Fire Marshal’s Office in enforcement. There will be a specific focus on the changes to the mobile food unit requirements. Please come with any questions you may have.

Other Opportunities

AFDO Advanced Inspector Bootcamp (Free, Virtual) – February 14th, 21st, and 22nd, 2024: These 3 sessions for experienced (2+ years) retail/manufactured food inspectors will cover topics like foodborne illness outbreak investigation, specialized processes, plan reviews, and food safety culture. Registration for each session is separate. More information and registration links can be found on the [AFDO Advanced Inspector Bootcamp website](#). CEUs are offered by AFDO.

Zoom links to live webinars and recordings of previous webinars can be found on the [EHFS Training Resources page](#). If you have any further questions related to upcoming trainings or would like to be added to the Training Announcement List, please contact me at Karena.Doctor@mt.gov.

-Karena

Licensing Update

eStop licenses are now in the 2024 license year. Last week I sent a list to the sanitarians whose unpaid eStop licenses won't be brought into the 2024 license year until they have paid the 2023 license fee. EHFS cannot accept eStop license fees. Owners will need to contact estop directly at 406.444.6789 for all fiscal information and to pay fees directly to them. Please be aware all fees must be paid and all licenses must be approved for an eStop license to print.

When you look up an eStop license in the EHFS database, if the license is in printed status, it does not mean the establishment is approved for licensure it means EHFS has received the license fees only.

You can still send EHFS 2023 license applications, make sure to send both 2023 and 2024 fees.

Delinquent notices will be sent out soon, please remember new 2024 licenses do not need to pay the late fee.

-Gail

Task Order Frequently Asked Questions

- **What happens if our county goes over the amount allotted in the task order?**

All inspections completed will be paid for regardless of the amount listed in the task orders. The budget for each task order was calculated based on growth from the previous two years. If your county exceeds the amount, EHFS can have it updated. We will be monitoring this in the 3rd and 4th quarter to see if updates are needed.

- **Our contract was already signed by the commissioner, but we need to update the Scope of Work selections.**

Once a contract is signed and executed, a Memorandum of Understanding and a new copy of the Scope of Work will need to be wet signed by the commissioner to have those selections amended. You can reach out to Kaylie at kaylie.kummer@mt.gov for these documents.

- **What if we need to change the name(s) of signers on the contract?**

We are able to update the contracts and resend them before they are executed. However, this process is not encouraged as it takes time and there is an expense involved in rescinding contracts. If you need this done, you can reach out to Kaylie at kaylie.kummer@mt.gov.

- **Why did I not receive a copy before it was sent to my commissioner?**

This Task Order process is new to our section. We are learning as we go, and unfortunately, we did not know the correct way to assign viewer access to those who wanted to see the contracts before they were signed. People who requested access will receive the signed copy once the task order goes into effect.

When we send out 2025 contracts, we will have them sent to viewers prior to going to the commissioner for signature. For now, if you would like a copy before it is signed, please email Kaylie and she will send you a watermarked version of your counties task order.

Thank you for your patience as we learn this new process. We are discussing improvements for next year. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please reach out to Staci, Sadie, or Kaylie.

Thank you,

Staci, Sadie, and Kaylie

Meat Products in Montana

Chicken, Pork, Beef... It's what's for dinner!

What is meat? In Montana, the term "Meat" means the edible flesh of livestock or poultry and includes livestock and poultry products. It may be important to note that the definition of livestock has recently changed. Livestock now means cattle, buffalo, sheep, swine, goats, horses, and mule or other equines, whether alive or dead. Poultry means any domesticated bird, whether alive or dead. ([81-9-217](tel:81-9-217), [MCA](#))

Meat starts off as a living animal that is then slaughtered, butchered, and often further processed into meat products which are eventually provided to consumers through different types of retail markets and restaurants. The entire journey of meat from start to finish is overseen by multiple governmental agencies. Commercial animal feed provided to livestock is regulated through the Montana Department of Agriculture Feed Program. The Animal Health Bureau of the Montana Department of Livestock works to control communicable animal diseases associated with livestock in Montana. The Montana Department of Livestock Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) section conducts antemortem and postmortem inspections of the animal during the slaughter process at state licensed slaughter plants to ensure the animal is fit for human consumption. MPI inspectors will also provide food safety inspection services at state licensed meat processing facilities. County sanitarians will conduct food safety inspections of meat and meat products at the end of its journey when it is being provided to consumers through retail food establishments such as grocery stores, restaurants, and retail butcher shops.

Meat or meat products that have gone through this inspection process will be stamped or labeled with a Montana Department of Livestock Mark of Inspection (Figure 1). This meat is eligible for sale only within the State of Montana and is considered an approved source for use by retail food establishments and other licensed public facilities in Montana. The mark contains an establishment number that can be looked up on the Department of Livestock's [website](#) to determine where the product was last processed.



Figure 1. Montana Department of Livestock Mark of Inspection

Anyone that wishes to sell meat outside the state must obtain slaughter and food safety inspection services through the USDA, and that product will then be stamped or labeled with a [federal mark of inspection](#) (Figure 2). A product containing the federal mark of inspection would be eligible for sale in Montana, or in other states, and is also considered an approved source.



Figure 2. USDA Marks of Inspection

Some poultry products might be processed under exemption. Exempt products would not contain a mark of inspection, but they would be labeled with owners name, address, and P.L. 90-492. This public law number indicates that the product was produced under one of

the legal exemptions outlined in this law. There are several exemptions under this same law. This is important to county sanitarians, because pursuant to a [2013 Guidance](#) worked out between DPHHS and DoL, raw poultry produced under the 20,000 bird exemption is considered to be approved source in Montana. Poultry produced under one of the other exemptions may not be considered an approved source.

It's quite common to have questions about meat come up during inspections. Any general meat questions or questions concerning state inspected plants can be directed to the Montana Department of Livestock Meat and Poultry Inspection Section at mmeioffice@mt.gov, (406)444-9761. The Meat, Milk and Egg Inspection Bureau Chief Alicia Love can be contacted directly at Alicia.love2@mt.gov, Cell: (406)438-6262, Office: (406)444-5293.

-Erik

Body Art: Parent/Guardian Consent

Recently, we received a complaint from a concerned parent stating their 17yo daughter received a tattoo from a licensed establishment without their consent. The complainant said an unauthorized adult signed as the child's guardian. This brought up discussion on what exactly is required by operators to determine the legitimacy of a parent/guardian.

Under [MCA 45-5-623 \(g\)](#): Unlawful transactions with children. "(1) Except as provided for in 16-6-305, a person commits the offense of unlawful transactions with children if the person knowingly:

(g) tattoos or provides a body piercing on a child without the explicit in-person consent of the child's parent or guardian. For purposes of this subsection (1)(g), "tattoo" and "body piercing" have the meaning provided in 50-48-102. Failure to adequately verify the identity of a parent or guardian is not an excuse for violation of this subsection (1)(g)."

The definition of explicit is "stated clearly and in detail, leaving no room for confusion or doubt." Therefore, operators should be obtaining proof of guardianship, not just a photo ID of the signing adult. This proof may include birth certificates, court documentation, letter of guardianship, etc.

In this case, the signing adult is also at fault for falsely claiming to be the guardian. When speaking with the complainant, I informed them the issue of the signing adult is out of our jurisdiction and to contact law enforcement.

Regardless, it is still the body art establishment's responsibility to obtain explicit in-person consent from the parent or guardian of a minor. As regulatory authorities, we are able to enforce this under [ARM 37.112.158 Restrictions and Prohibitions](#): (1) A tattooing or body piercing procedure may not occur if: (c) the client is under the age of 18, without the explicit in-person consent of the client's parent or legal guardian as provided in 45-5-623, MCA. (2) If the client is under the age of 18, the parent or legal guardian must accompany the client throughout the procedure.

Thank you,

Sadie

Job Openings

Cascade County has an opening for a part-time sanitarian. This position is for someone that is already licensed, not for an SIT. [Details are included here.](#)

RiverStone Health (Yellowstone County) has an open RS/SIT position. [Details are included here.](#)

Please share these opportunities with anyone you think might be interested. If you would like to see a job opening in your county listed on our newsletter, please send it to kaylie.kummer@mt.gov.

Contact Information

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