

This document is intended to be a “Guideline” which describes in simple terms a number of basic requirements which must be met before licensing a small poultry producer. For further assistance contact the Administrative Office in Atlanta – (404) 657-4801.

SMALL POULTRY/PASTURE POULTRY GUIDELINES

Registration by the department is required for the slaughter, preparation, and sale of one thousand (1,000) or fewer poultry in a calendar year by a poultry producer for the sale of whole raw poultry directly to the ultimate consumer at the producer's farm and/or farmers market. The requirements include, but are not limited to, those for: cooling procedures; sanitary facilities, equipment, and utensils; clean water; washing and other hygienic practices; and waste and wastewater disposal.

The department shall conduct such inspections as are reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with requirements.

An annual registration fee of \$100.00 is required for Small Poultry processors.

Qualifying statements:

- Slaughter, preparation and sale of 1000 birds or less in a calendar year
- Of their own raising
- direct sale to end-product users only
- whole birds only
- Intra-state sale only

Poultry can be sold fresh or frozen on the farm
- If fresh within 48 hours

If sales occur at the farmers market, poultry can be sold only in a frozen state and a mobile meat license is required.

Records:

The Department must be notified at least 48 hours prior to slaughter and provided the information listed below:

1. Poultry slaughter dates
2. Number of poultry slaughtered each date and the cumulative total per permit period
3. Temperature control log monitoring poultry cool down and storage (w/ calibration)
4. Annual bacteriological water test results (if applicable)

Minimum construction requirements:

During slaughter and plucking, overhead protection and drainable floors are required. Further structural elements, such as walls or screens, maybe used to prevent any additional risk of contamination such as, insects, dust, mud, etc. Further processing and packaging must be conducted in an enclosed protected area.

Water:

It is important to have an adequate supply of potable water for processing. If using a non-public water system, it must be constructed, maintained, and operated according to requirements of the Department. The non-public water source needs to meet drinking standards and should be tested.

The water source and system shall be of sufficient capacity and pressure to meet the water demands of food establishment.

Hand washing:

Hand washing facilities shall be convenient and easily accessible for all employees in poultry processing area. The hand washing sink must provide water temperature of at least 100°F. Hand washing station shall be equipped with hand soap and paper towels.

Hands must be thoroughly washed before starting, between each preparation step and as frequently as required to prevent contamination. Hands must also be washed after every break. Hand washing stations must be conveniently located in your slaughter site and properly maintained.

Bathroom facilities:

- At least one toilet must be available and conveniently located to your poultry slaughter site.
- Toilet areas must be kept clean, free of trash and litter, and in good repair. All doors used to enter the non-domestic toilet area must be self-closing and must not open directly into your slaughter site.
- Hand washing sinks must be conveniently located to restrooms.

Backflow prevention:

Be sure that you have left an air gap between the hose or fill pipe and the vessel or bucket that you are filling. The air gap must be at least two (2) times the diameter of the fill hose or pipe. If you don't wish to maintain an air gap, contact your Food Safety Officer for advice on other means of providing protection of the water system.

Sanitization:

All equipment must be cleaned and sanitized before you begin slaughter and after you finish slaughtering. Clean and sanitize any knives or other equipment that falls to the floor or otherwise becomes contaminated.

Hot water or chemicals can be used for sanitizing equipment. If immersion in hot water is used for sanitization, the temperature of the water shall be maintained at 170°F or above. If chemical sanitizing solution is used, it shall be used in accordance with the EPA – approved manufacturer’s label use instructions.

Buckets of sanitizing solution are allowed in your slaughter area for rinsing and storing your wipe down cloths that are used to sanitize the equipment and slaughter / preparation areas during processing. The sanitizing solution in the bucket must be maintained at proper solution for the particular chemical. Be sure to use cool water to make up the solution and follow label instructions. This sanitizing water needs to be changed every one to two hours while you are slaughtering. Appropriate test strips shall be used to verify sanitizing solution strength.

Equipment wash sink:

On-farm processors can clean with water hoses, using hot water and soap, followed by a water rinse and sanitizing rinse. Food grade hoses must be used in the processing areas.

All equipment must be stored so it will not become contaminated between uses.

Sewage:

Sewage shall be disposed through an approved public or individual disposal system.

County or municipal sewer system evaluation may be required to approve a grease trap, or to allow an exemption.

Lighting:

Adequate lighting must be present.

Employee Health:

- Must be authorized by the permit holder. Unauthorized persons must be kept out of the slaughter site. Authorized persons are prohibited from smoking, eating or drinking while actively engaged in slaughtering, preparing or handling the poultry.

- Any authorized person infected with a communicable disease, has open sores or infected cuts on hands, is vomiting or has diarrhea is prohibited from working in your slaughter site.
- Slaughtering personnel must wear clean and adequate clothing. The clothing must be clean at the start of the slaughter-preparation-sale process and changed when the clothing becomes soiled and no longer suitable to the specific part of the process (slaughter, preparation or sale) in which you are engaged. Hair restraints are required.
- Authorized persons must remove hand jewelry that cannot be adequately sanitized during periods when carcasses are handled by hand. If such hand jewelry cannot be removed, impermeable or disposable gloves may be worn. Food employees shall keep their fingernails trimmed, maintained with no fingernail polish or artificial fingernails unless wearing intact gloves. Maintain any gloves that are used in an intact, clean, and sanitary condition.
- All personal garments and belongings must be stored separately and apart from the slaughter site.

Packaging/ Labeling:

You are required to provide sanitary food grade packaging of the poultry. Packaging must be stored in a sanitary location and protected from pests. Proper label is required on packaging of poultry, consisting of farm name, address, and safe handling instructions. If sold by weight, certified scale must be available.

Storage:

All foods must be stored to prevent contamination and growth of microbial organisms. Under refrigeration the poultry must maintain an internal temperature of 40°F or below. Frozen foods shall be maintained in a frozen state.

Waste Management:

Waste from processing includes offal, feathers, and blood.

It is recommended that you begin by contacting the Department's Livestock/Poultry Division for disposal management plans (404) 656-3649. On-farm processors usually compost their waste. Contact your local UGA County Extension office for handouts on composting methods. Various other methods of disposal are acceptable in Georgia.

The state EPD is the ultimate approval agency for your rinse water management and approval of any plans you might have for disposal.