



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PO Box 97, 190 Rogers Avenue, Milford, CT 06460
Bureau of Aquaculture



CONNECTICUT 2023 *VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS* CONTROL PLAN (VPCP) EFFECTIVE JUNE 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30 June 1, 2023

Dealer Company Name: _____ SS#: _____

Method of Cooling (truck, cooler, ice, slurry): _____

Signature: _____

STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL HARVEST RESTRICTIONS FOR OYSTERS:

A.1. SSIII Dealer:

- a. Dealer shall maintain this plan with their HACCP plan.
- b. The requirements of this plan shall apply to all oysters harvested in Connecticut’s coastal waters during Vibrio control periods. *NOTE: Connecticut currently only has VPCPs for oysters harvested from June 1 through September 30, 2023, both dates inclusive. The CT VPCP can change throughout the season as needed to fit current circumstances and federal regulations.*
- c. All oysters harvested from June 1 through September 30, 2023 shall be adequately shaded* from direct sunlight while onboard the vessel and during transport from harvest area to original dealer. *(Aquaculture producers may request an exemption from the shading requirement from DA/BA when submitting their signed CT VP Control Plan prior to the start of Vibrio season. Unless an exemption is granted by DA/BA, adequate shading remains a requirement of all producers.)* *See Definitions Section
- d. All oysters shall be adequately iced* or placed under temperature control* **within five (5) hours from the beginning of harvest during June, July, August and September.** Upon landing, all oysters shall be adequately iced or placed under temperature control immediately or transported directly to the wholesale dealer’s physical facility to be placed under temperature control within these time frames.
- e. Each harvester shall maintain a harvest log book that records the date, start time of harvest, time to dock, amount harvested (count, bags, etc) and time sold or time refrigerated recorded in indelible ink. Harvest start time shall be recorded in log before the vessel leaves the harvest area.
- f. Shellstock invoices/documentation shall include the time of harvest* in addition to harvest date, harvest area (lot and Town), type of shellstock and quantity, as well as Shipping Document* including *VPCP Time to Temperature Control Statement**.

- g. Pursuant to *CGS Sec. 26-192c. Inspection and regulations concerning shellfish* any license may be suspended pending revocation proceedings, or amended, if shellfishing operations or harvesting areas are a public health hazard or if the licensee has violated any provision of this section, section 26-192e, 26-192f, or 26-192h or any applicable department regulation or any section of the public health code.

B. Original Receiving Dealer (SSI/Harvester or SSIII):

1. **All oysters received by the original dealer* between June 1 and September 30, 2023 shall be cooled to 50°F internal temperature within 5 hours of being placed under temperature control.** It is strongly recommended that cooling be achieved as quickly as possible; based on cooler validation studies conducted in Connecticut, cooling to 50°F internal temperature can be readily achieved within 5 hours by dealers.

*For the purposes of this plan, the “original dealer” is the first to receive shellstock from the harvester and initiate the cooling process; the original dealer may be an CT SSI or an CT SSIII. If an SSI has access to mechanical refrigeration, they are required to act as the original dealer and must ensure that oysters reach an internal temperature of **50°F within 5 hours of being placed under temperature control and prior to being sold.** This original dealer must have access to mechanical refrigeration or a conveyance which has been inspected and Approved by the DA/BA for the storage of shellstock. This conveyance must be pre-chilled prior to loading oysters and must be maintained at 45°F or below when shellstock is stored. This conveyance must be capable of reducing the internal temperature of product to 50°F within 5 hours.

If the SSI/harvester does not have access to mechanical refrigeration, they shall not be considered the “original dealer”; the original dealer is the first to receive shellstock from the SSI/harvester and initiate the cooling process. This original dealer must receive shellstock within harvest time limits and shall meet and document the internal temperature requirements for oysters under this plan.

The “original dealer” responsible for initiating the cooling process and documenting internal temperature critical limits must be recorded on this form and Approved by DA/BA prior to the start of the VPCP season.

2. All dealers who receive oysters harvested from Connecticut coastal waters between June 1 and September 30 inclusive shall implement a HACCP plan that indicates pathogen growth of naturally occurring Vp as a significant hazard that is reasonably likely to occur and includes the following:
 - a. Critical Control Point Receiving: All oysters received by the original shipper shall be accompanied by invoice and shipping document in accordance with section A.6 of this Plan;
 - b. Critical Control Point Receiving: All oysters shall be harvested in accordance with the time temperature requirements of Chapter VIII @.02 A. (2); according to the requirements of this Plan oysters must be received within 5 hours from the start of

harvest during June, July, August, and September. In order for the original dealer to receive shellstock, the original dealer must know what time the shellstock was first harvested and receive that shellstock within the required time frame.

When receiving oysters from a Connecticut Licensed Harvester/Shipper I, shellstock acceptability(receiving Critical Control Points) can be determined as follows:

1. The shipment of shellfish is accompanied by documentation that indicates time of harvest;and
2. The time between shellstock harvest and shellstock icing or refrigeration does not exceed 5hours during June, July, August and September.

- c. Critical Control Point Storage: A Critical Limit indicating that the internal temperature*of oysters has reached 50°F (10°C) or below within 5 hours and prior to sale. During Vibrio control plan months, the original dealer may not ship oysters until the internal temperature has reached 50°F(10°C) or below; the oysters must reach 50°F (10°C) or below within 5 hours (1 hour from time ofharvest for Darien, Norwalk or Westport). Time into refrigeration and time that internal temperature reaches 50°F must be documented on a HACCP record. The dealer's HACCP Plan shall include controls necessary to ensure, document and verify that the internal temperature of oysters has reached 50°F (10°C) or below within 5 hours or less.

Please note that each observation of internal temperature must include:

- Actual temperature observation (i.e. 47°F NOT <50°F)
- Actual time that the temperature was recorded (i.e. 2:15 pm NOT <5 hours);
- Initial of person performing the observation.

- d. Critical Control Point Storage: A Corrective Action to ensure that oysters that are not cooled to aninternal temperature of 50°F (10°C) within 5 hours are not sold for human consumption.
3. A dealer shall ensure that mechanical refrigeration used for the cooling and storing of oysters meetsmodel ordinance requirements and the requirements of this plan:
 - a. Mechanical refrigeration or other conveyance must be pre-chilled and maintained at 45°F orbelow; and
 - b. Mechanical refrigeration or conveyance must be capable of reducing the internal temperatureof product to 50°F within 5 hours.
 - c. The use of temporary or inadequate cooling is not acceptable.

Note: Dealers should be advised that cooling rates for oysters will depend on size and capacityof refrigerated storage areas. Oysters should be stored in a manner that

allows for the free circulation of refrigerated air in order to achieve even and rapid cooling throughout each containerized lot of shellstock.

4. Pursuant to *CGS Sec. 26-192c. Inspection and regulations concerning shellfish* any license may be suspended pending revocation proceedings, or amended, if shellfishing operations or harvesting areas are a public health hazard or if the licensee has violated any provision of this section, section 26-192e, 26-192f, or 26-192h or any applicable department regulation or any section of the public health code.

C. Corrective Action:

1. Dealers shall reject any lots of oysters that are not properly tagged and invoiced as required by this Plan.
2. Dealer shall reject any lots of oysters that have not been received within the harvest time frames required by the Plan.
3. Dealers who receive shipments of oysters that are not compliant with the requirements of Section A or B of this Plan shall place the shellstock on internal hold and immediately notify the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture (DABA). Dealers shall then document the deviation as a Corrective Action and await instruction from the DABA for final disposition of time/temperature abused oysters.

D. Enforcement:

1. Representatives of regulatory agencies (DA/BA, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), etc.) shall conduct periodic unannounced inspections at harvest sites, common landings and wholesale dealer facilities to determine compliance with the requirements of this Plan.
2. Any new cooling process or any process that has changed since the previous season (such as a new cooler, different equipment, change in volume of shellfish harvested, etc.) must be evaluated by DA/BA prior to the start of the VPCP season.
3. Cooling processes that have been previously evaluated and validated by DA/BA will be re-evaluated during the VPCP season.
4. Cooling processes may be evaluated by DA/BA under worst case conditions during the course of the VPCP season.
5. All shellfish harvested under this plan shall be subject to embargo, disposal, or return to growing area under supervision if found to be significantly time/temperature abused or non-compliant with requirements of this Plan. Refusal of harvesters and/or dealers to allow inspection or inability to maintain compliance with the requirements of this plan may result in enforcement up to and including suspension and revocation of harvester and/or dealer license in accordance with *CGS Sec. 26-192c*.

E. Critical Control Point: Harvest Shellstock (Oysters) – Vibrio Control Months

Firm Name:	Finished Product Description:
Firm Address:	Method of Storage 7 Distribution:
	Intended Use:

Critical Control Point		Rapid cooling (5 hours to temperature control, 5 hours to 50F)
Significant hazard		Pathogen Growth
Critical Limits		Harvested shellstock must be: (1) Placed into temperature control within 5 hours and (2) Cooled to 50F internal temperature within 5 hours from the time placed under temperature control
Monitoring	What	1) Time since start of harvest to temperature control 2) Time from temperature control to internal temperature of 50F
	How	Clock, internal temperature of oysters
	When	Until internal temperature of 50F
	Who	Designee
Corrective Action		If product is not rapidly cooled to 50F internal temperature within specified for Vp control months, then notify DA/BA to determine corrective action, shellfish may be re-planted as directed. Fix work day harvest schedule or dealer pick-up arrangements to avoid delay in future. If product is landed and sold after specified time frame for refrigeration for Vp control months, then initiate product recall, notify DA/BA to determine corrective action, shellfish may be re-planted as directed. Fix work day harvest schedule or dealer pick-up arrangements.
Verifications		Weekly record review by HACCP trained person; update critical limit for Vp control months in HACCP plan annually upon receipt of State VPCP; Check harvester license/dealer's listing in Shellstock Shippers List.
Records		Logbook - harvest records showing time of first harvest, harvest date, time sold and/or time in to refrigeration, internal temperatures; corrective action records, verification records; note start of harvest time, time into refrigeration on original dealer's invoice/bill of landing; Annual State VPCP

*Definitions:

Adequately Iced means the containers holding the shellfish have enough ice on the shellfish that is sufficient to ensure that immediate cooling begins and continues to provide cooling until required internal temperatures are achieved within 5 hours of being placed under temperature control.

Adequately Shaded means that measures shall be taken to prevent oysters from direct exposure to sunlight that might cause a significant increase in pathogenic growth due to an increase in temperature.

Internal Temperature means the internal temperature of the meat of the animal as measured using a calibrated probe thermometer; under most circumstances when measuring the temperature of previously cooled product, the internal temperature of shellstock is reflected by the external temperature of the space surrounding the shellfish, or the external temperature of the shell at the center of a packaged mass of shellstock (box, bag, etc) and may be measured by inserting a thermometer probe into the package to an appropriate depth.

NOTE: When verifying a rapid cooling procedure, the shellstock must be opened and the actual internal temperature of the meat measured using a calibrated probe thermometer, as there may be a significant difference between the amount of time it takes to cool the shell of the animal compared to the meat. An approved rapid cooling procedure must be verified using the internal temperature of the meat as measured.

Shipping Documentation is defined as the documentation required by the NSSP Model Ordinance to accompany all shipments of shellstock that indicates (1) time of shipment; (2) that conveyance was pre-chilled; and (3) notice of any shellstock that was shipped prior to meeting required internal temperature and notice of a time/temperature recording device indicating that continuing cooling has occurred. In order to comply with the requirements of this VPCP, the ***VPCP Time to Temperature Control Statement*** must also be included with the shipping documentation.

Temperature Control is defined as mechanical refrigeration or other conveyance pre-chilled and maintained at 45°F or below and capable of reducing the internal temperature of product to 50°F within 5 hours.

Time of Harvest means the time when the first shellstock is removed from the water or, in the case of intertidal harvest, the time of first exposure.

VPCP Time to Temperature Control Statement is a statement that accompanies a shellstock shipment that indicates the time interval at which shellstock was placed under temperature control and cooled to an internal temperature meeting applicable VPCP control plan requirements.

The CT Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture will review this Plan on an annual basis and revise it as needed to maintain compliance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program's Model Ordinance.