

Retail Labeling Guidelines

A good rule of thumb: if it is packaged, it should be labeled.

FEATURES OF A LABEL

PRODUCT NAME

INGREDIENT STATEMENT

BUSINESS NAME AND ADDRESS

NET CONTENT STATEMENT

NUTRITION FACTS PANEL

SAFE HANDLING LABEL FOR RAW MEATS/EGGS



Product Name

- On front of the package (or principal display panel).
- Use standard of identity names, e.g. Cheddar Cheese
- If no standard of identity, then use common or usual name or a name that is truthful and not misleading. A good rule: if you can't tell what's in the package by reading the name, it needs a better name.
- The name of the product must be at least 1/2 the type size of the most prominent printed matter on the package, in bold type, and generally parallel to the base of the product.

Ingredients Statement:

- Listed in descending order of predominance by weight (from most to least).
- **All the sub-ingredients for food with multiple ingredients have to be included. These must be very specific.** For example, enriched flour (flour, niacin, ...etc.), soy sauce (water, soybeans, wheat...)
- Do not use collective terms such as herbs, secret ingredients, seasonings etc.
- All certified colors must be listed by their specific names. ex: FD& C Yellow # 5, Red 40
- Oils and fats should state whether or not they are hydrogenated and include the source, i.e. "soybean oil" not "vegetable oil."
- Water that is added as an ingredient (not for reconstitution purposes) must be listed in ingredients.

Net Quantity of Contents:

- Located on the front of the packaging in the lower 30%.
- Random weight packages and products made in and sold only in the same store may simply list pounds and ounces all others must be stated in both pounds/ounces and metric (grams or ml) in the largest whole unit.
- Type size depends on the square inches of the principal display panel (not just the label, but the whole front of the package).
- Must be conspicuous and easy to read.

Declaration of Responsibility:

- Legal name of manufacturer, packer or distributor
- City, state and zip
- If the business name and address are not in the local telephone directory, include the street address.

SOME EXEMPTIONS AND EXCEPTIONS:

Bulk Foods:

- Must contain all labeling information on a placard on or near container.
- Consumer should be provided with a means of marking the containers if products are similar in nature.
- Retailers may repack items that are received in bulk containers and provide labeling information using a counter card, placard or sign that contains all the features of the label.

Bakery:

At full service bakery counters, products must be fully labeled unless:

- packaged in clear plastic bags
- products made “from scratch,” not baked off
- sold at service counter in the bakery
- Full ingredient information is available to the customer

Exemptions do not apply to retail stores with bakery areas because products are purchased at checkout counters.

Sandwiches:

- Need full ingredient labeling including sub-components of complex ingredients such as cheese or bread
- May be sold by weight, measure or count if sold for immediate consumption at the retail level.

Non-Refrigerated Cheese Curds:

- Fresh, non-refrigerated curd can be packaged and displayed for sale only on the day it is made.
- Must be labeled with date of manufacture.
- Discarded at the end of the day if not sold. They cannot be returned to refrigeration and sold.

Smoked fish:

- Name of product must include common species name.
- Labeled with processing date and sell-by date; no Julian dates; must be understandable to consumer.
- If sold in unfrozen state labeled with “PERISHABLE- KEEP REFRIGERATED AT OR BELOW 38°F” in conspicuous letters at least the size of the name of the food.
- If sold frozen “ PERISHABLE- KEEP FROZEN PRIOR TO USE.”
- Cold process smoked fish must include “NOT FULLY COOKED” in at least the same type size as the name.
- All other label features are required.

Infant Formula:

- Cannot be sold after the code date specified by the manufacturer.

Meats:

- Need safe handling label on packages of raw meats.
- Should label both species and cut in product name.
- Full ingredient listing for products with more than one ingredient: bulk sausage, for example.

Eggs:

- All shell eggs, whether in intrastate or interstate commerce, that have not been treated to destroy *Salmonella* must bear “Safe Handling Instructions.”
- Statement must appear on the PDP or Information Panel of the egg package.