



Recommended Practices for Vibrio Season 2019

The Safe Food for Canadians Regulations require licensed operators to develop, maintain and implement a preventative control plan (PCP) that includes validated control measures for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Vp).

BCSGA Recommended Practices

Who? Licensed Operators and Farmers of live oysters destined for raw consumption

When? Vibrio season (May 1 – October 1)

Licensed Operators

- Licensed operators (i.e., processors) must have a Preventative Control Plan (PCP) that includes controls measures for Vp. Licensed operators who are in the process of validating their PCP must ensure live oysters meet current Vp guidelines.
 - Under the PCP, interim measures must be initiated when conditions are favorable for Vp (e.g., surface water temperature equal to or greater than 15°C).
- Licensed operators who are in the process of validating a Vp control program should submit five (5) final product samples, in subsets of 14 live oysters, to an ISO/IEC accredited laboratory for Vp analysis to ensure Vp levels are <100 MPN/gm in each sample.

Farmers

- Farmers must operate within the parameters of a Supplier Food Safety Assurance Program (SFSAP) agreement with the licensed operator.

SFSAP agreements should contain the following elements to control Vp:

- Description of validated controls the farmer must follow to ensure the final product meets Vp guidelines
 - Explanation of the records that will be provided to the licensed operator to confirm the farmer implemented control measures, including time, air temperature and internal oyster temperature at transfer points from the farm to the licensed operators
 - Verification procedures the licensed operator will implement to ensure the farmer uses control measures
 - Schedule to monitor and record water temperatures that reflect oyster growing conditions
 - Plan for Vp sampling (e.g., one sample per lease weekly) to monitor Vp levels at the harvest site
 - Method for farmer to notify licensed operator when Vp levels are 100 MPN/g or higher.
- Each farmer's harvest practices must support the lowest possible Vp levels; e.g., harvest from deeper, colder waters.
 - Implement time and temperature controls during harvest.
 - Effectively chill product to drop the internal temperature of harvested oysters to 0°C–10°C as quickly as possible – with an ultimate temperature target of 4°C.
 - Use storage and transportation systems that maintain chilled product between 0°C–4°C.
 - Implement a schedule and procedures for regular thermometer calibration.
 - Farmers must maintain current and accurate records (written or electronic) about movement of product to the farm, transfer of product from the farm and harvest for market sale.

Summary

The BCSGA encourages licensed operators and farmers to work together to develop [Supplier Food Safety Assurance Program](#) (SFSAP) protocols to minimize the risk of Vp contamination in live oysters destined for raw consumption. Accurate record keeping as well as specific details the farmer must meet to fulfill the requirements of the processor's validated preventative control program, including controls to ensure the initial load of Vp meets the guidelines, will help validate an SFSAP.

The BCSGA reminds licensed operators and farmers to familiarize themselves with the following:

- DFO Conditions of License, particularly section 12 and subsections 9.3 and 9.4
- CFIA's [Measures to Control the Risk of Vibrio parahaemolyticus \(Vp\)](#) in Live Oysters
- CFIA's Validation of [Preventative controls for Vibrio parahaemolyticus](#)
- CFIA's *Update to the Vibrio parahaemolyticus Guideline* (May 20, 2016) and the Bacteriological Guidelines for Fish and Fish Products.