

Labelling and traceability of shellfish

Bivalve shellfish species (oysters, mussels and clams) feed by filtering large volumes of water. If the shellfish are living in water which contains microbiological or chemical contaminants, or natural toxins, they will concentrate this material in their gut. As people normally eat shellfish raw, and without removing the gut, they are likely to become ill if product is harvested from contaminated areas.

To protect the consumer, the NSW Food Authority limits when and where shellfish can be collected for commercial harvest. The legal requirements for commercial shellfish species—including labelling and traceability systems to enable product to be quickly retrieved in the event of a contamination notice or event—are set out in Food Regulation 2010, which the Authority administers.

Shellfish must be labelled

All shellfish you distribute must be clearly labelled to enable prompt recall if it is deemed that the product is unsafe or unsuitable for human consumption (eg high post test results, biotoxin positive etc). Attach labels securely to your product or print labels onto your distribution bags.

All shellfish must be tagged or labelled at the time of harvest, recording:

- date and time of harvest, and
- name of harvest area from which shellfish were taken.

Shellfish that are packaged for sale must have the following details on the labels:

- name and address of business under your licence,
- unique batch ID number (Product Record number),
- name of harvest area from which shellfish were taken,
- date of harvest,
- species and quantity of shellfish,
- a statement of the conditions under which shellfish should be stored (eg 'keep refrigerated' for Pacific oysters and mussels), and
- the country of origin (eg 'product of Australia'. This is not required if the word 'Australia' is in the business address).

Records need to be kept

You must maintain records of:

- date and time of all harvests,
- name of harvest area from which shellfish were taken,
- species of shellfish collected,
- depuration details if product was depurated, and
- business name and address of receiver.

All these details can be maintained in your Product Record (PR) book which can be ordered from the Authority on 1300 552 406. These records must be kept on the premises, with accurate records being maintained for your biannual audits.

More information

Please contact the Authority if you have any queries about your licensing requirements.

- refer to the *NSW Shellfish Industry Manual* and accompanying guidelines
- visit the NSW Food Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- phone the helpline on 1300 552 406

Note

This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).