

Food Labeling for Retail Food Establishments



This fact sheet summarizes some label requirements and will help retail food establishment operators develop food package labels that meet requirements.

Packaged food must be labeled. Food is packaged if the food establishment bottles, cans, cartons, wraps or bags the product and makes it available for self-service.

The label on a food package tells consumers exactly what is inside the package. Food package label information must be written in English. There are five parts of a food label:

- Identity (name of food)
- Net Quantity of Contents
- Ingredient List, including Major Food Allergens
- Business Name and Address
- Nutrition Facts

Principal Display Panel (PDP)

The principal display panel (PDP) is the front of the package and is easily seen by the consumer at the time of purchase. Include the identity and the net quantity of contents on the PDP.

Identity

The identity is the truthful common or usual name of the product. Providing a brand name is voluntary.

- Use a name that is not misleading.
- Use large, bold type.
- Print the name in the middle of the label.

Net Quantity of Contents

The net quantity of contents is the minimum amount of food contained within a package, not including the weight of the package and packing material.

- Print the net quantity of contents as weight (for solids or semi-solids), volume (for liquids), or count (in limited situations). Examples: NET WT 12 OZ; 64 FL OZ; 6 COUNT.
- Place in the lower third of the PDP with no other information next to or below.
- Use weight for meat, fish, and shellfish labels (Minnesota Rules, part 1545.0290).

For more information about food sold by weight or count refer to the *Grocers Guide to Weights and Measures* at mn.gov/commerce/weights-and-measures/images/grocers-manual.pdf.

Information Panel

The information panel is usually found to the right of the PDP. Include the ingredient list, business name and address, and nutrition facts on the information panel.

Ingredient List

List all ingredients by their common or usual name.

- List all ingredients in descending order (most to least) by weight. If less than 2% by weight, an ingredient can be mentioned at the end of the list, stating "contains 2% or less of ____."
- Include all sub-ingredients. Example: Flour (bleached wheat flour, malt barley, flour, niacin, iron, potassium thiamine, riboflavin).
- Include chemical preservatives and food coloring in descending order (most to least) by weight.

Major Food Allergens

Allergen labeling is required for packaged food products that contain any of the eight major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soy.

Identify by name any major food allergens in the product, as part of the ingredient list. This must include protein derived from a major food allergen. Use one of the following options:

1. List the common or usual name of the food source, followed by the name of the allergen in parentheses. Example: flour (wheat), whey (milk).

OR

2. After the ingredient list, place the word "Contains:" followed by the food allergen. Example: Contains: wheat, milk.

For tree nuts, declare the specific type of nut. Examples: almonds, coconut, pecans. For fish or crustacean shellfish, declare the species. Examples: walleye, shrimp, lobster.

Business Name and Address

Print the business name, city, state, and ZIP code of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor. If the business is not listed in the current telephone guide for the city, include the street address.

If the name given is not the actual manufacturer, also state the establishment's relation to the product. Examples: "Manufactured for" or "Distributed by."

Nutrition Facts

A nutrition facts panel is sometimes required. Packaged foods that do not have a nutrient content claim or health claim may be exempt due to:

- Size of the business
- How food is sold, served or offered for sale
- Insignificant amount of nutrients, such as in spices, tea or coffee

The nutrition facts panel includes information about the serving size, calories and key nutrients of the food. If required, place the nutrition facts panel at the top of the information panel.

For more information about exemptions refer to the *Small Business Nutrition Labeling Exemption Guidance* at www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm053857.htm.

Nutrient Content Claims and Health Claims

When making a nutrient content claim or health claim, include nutrition facts in the information panel.

- Nutrient content claims indicate the nutritional value of the food. Examples: "low fat," "high in oat bran," or "contains 100 calories."
- Health claims describe the relationship between a food component and a disease or health-related condition. Examples: a brand name including a term such as "healthy," or a heart symbol.

Labeling Resources

This fact sheet provides only a brief summary of some federal, state and local labeling requirements for retail establishments. Some additional label components for retail establishments could include:

- Gluten-free claim
- Meaningful quality assurance date
- Country of origin labeling (COOL)
- Safe handling instructions
- Grade and size

The following resources provide additional detail, examples, diagrams and educational materials:

- *A Food Labeling Guide* (FDA)
www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/UCM265446.pdf
- *Guidance for Industry: Gluten-Free Labeling of Foods; Small Entity Compliance Guide*
www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/guidancedocumentsregulatoryinformation/ucm402549.htm
- *Food Allergen Training for Food Service Employees* (U of MN Extension)
www.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/courses/online/food-allergen-training/
- Country of Origin Labeling
www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/cool

For More Information Contact

Minnesota Department of Health
Food, Pools, and Lodging Services Section
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fpls/index.html
651-201-4500
health.foodlodging@state.mn.us

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Dairy and Food Inspection Division
www.mda.state.mn.us/food
651-201-6027 or 1-800-697-AGRI
mda.info@state.mn.us

University of Minnesota Extension
Food Safety
www.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/
612-624-1222
mnext@umn.edu

To request this document in another format, contact 651-201-4500.