

Become a NJ Certified Shellfish Dealer

This information pertains ONLY to molluscan shellfish (clams, mussels, oysters) operations. For an operation handling any other seafood, complete and submit the NJDOH Initial Application to Operate a Food-Cosmetic Establishment (F-29) at: nj.gov/health/foodanddrugsafety/wfcp.shtml. For information on starting an aquaculture operation, visit the NJ Department of Agriculture's website at: jerseyseafood.nj.gov/aquaculture.html.

GENERAL CHECKLIST:

- * Letter of approval from zoning official (if operating in a residential area)
- * NJDOH wholesale license application
- * NJDOH certified shellfish dealer application
- * Facility with 45°F or below cold storage unit/area
- * Seafood HACCP certification (segment 1)
seafoodhaccp.comell.edu/Intro/index.html
- * Draft HACCP plan for your shellfish operation
- HACCP records, tags
- Infrared thermometer
- Transport vehicle with cold storage
- NJDOH inspection

*Note: items with * are required prior to NJDOH inspection. Some items may/may not be required for certain operations.*

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www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/food-drug-safety/industry-service-programs/#3



All certified shellfish dealers are required to purchase, handle, process, and ship shellfish under sanitary conditions and with appropriate temperature controls. Dealers must also maintain a current HACCP plan, additional HACCP records, and tagging as required for traceability. Shellfish operations are subject to the FDA Shellfish Model Ordinance and N.J.S.A. 24:2-1, Chapter 13.

How do I start a shellfish business in NJ?

If you intend to start a retail (direct to consumer sales) operation, contact your local health department. Find your local health department at: <https://www.state.nj.us/health/lh/documents/LocalHealthDirectory.pdf>.

If you intend to start a wholesale (business to business sales) operation, complete and submit two applications:

1. Initial Application to Operate a Food-Cosmetic Establishment (F-29) at: <https://www.nj.gov/health/forms/f-29.pdf>
2. Application for Certification to Handle Oysters, Clams, or Mussels (F-48) at: <https://www.nj.gov/health/forms/f-48.pdf>

Once we receive and review your application, we may contact you for more information. We will then assign a shellfish inspector to evaluate your facility for certification.

What happens during an initial shellfish inspection?

A shellfish inspector will evaluate your proof of seafood HACCP certification or knowledge, your draft HACCP plan, and assist with other recordkeeping requirements. The inspector will also evaluate your operation for compliance with sanitary standards and temperature controls. During the inspection, they will observe potential deficiencies and provide you with advice on corrective actions. Some deficiencies can be corrected on the spot. After you have satisfied all requirements, you will be issued a shellfish certification number. You are then authorized to begin selling shellfish in and outside the state of NJ.

What if potential deficiencies cannot be immediately corrected?

Your inspector will offer you clear guidance and a timeline for correcting your deficiencies. They will return at a later date to determine if your deficiencies have been satisfactorily addressed. Certification may be withheld until all corrections are made.

How about routine inspections?

Once you begin operations, you will generally be inspected at least twice per year, depending on the nature of your operation. If you pass your inspection, your shellfish certificate will be renewed each year before the annual expiration date of June 30.

What is Vibrio and how does it affect my operation?

Vibrio is a type of naturally occurring bacteria that can lead to illnesses such as Vibrio parahaemolyticus (Vp) and Vibrio vulnificus (Vv). Shellfish dealers handling oysters from June 1 - August 31 must adhere to additional requirements detailed in the most current Vibrio Control Plan. More information is available at: www.state.nj.us/dep/bmw/nssphome.html.