



**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND CONSUMER SERVICES
MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION DIVISION
Raleigh, North Carolina**

Steve Troxler, Commissioner

MPID NOTICE	11-26	8-18-2026
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Standard Operating Procedure for Completing Compliance Referral Form

I. PURPOSE

This Notice establishes procedures for properly prioritizing and relaying reports of foodborne illnesses and other consumer complaints. In addition, these procedures outline the steps to take when members of the general public inquire about registration as a Meat & Poultry Handler or Poultry Exempt Operator.

II. CANCELLATION

MPID Notice 1-21 dated 1-12-2021

III. SCOPE

This procedure shall be followed by all MPID personnel when answering inquiries from the general public and completing the Compliance Referral form within the [NCMHTD Database](#).

IV. DEFINITIONS

Consumer Complaints: A report by a consumer or their representative about a problem with meat or poultry products that may pose a public health risk. Complaints could include illness or injury, allergic reaction, foreign object contamination, off-quality issues, or economic adulteration.

Meat and Poultry Handler: An individual or business that engages in receiving and/or storing, transporting and/or offering for sale (wholesale and/or retail) fully marked, labeled and wholesome meat and/or poultry product. All such products must bear a state or federal inspection legend on the final product at the time of sale. Opening of product containers for further processing or repackaging is not permitted.

Poultry Exempt Operator (PEO): A person, firm, or corporation that slaughters or processes poultry exempt from Federal or State inspection. This type of operation can sell raw product to household or non-household consumers in North Carolina unless the operation is a custom exempt operator. Custom exempt operators may not engage in the buying or selling of any poultry product capable of use as human food (9 CFR 381.10(a)(5-7), 381.10(b), and 381.10(c)). PEOs may also be able to sell cooked product as a retail sale directly to household consumers only if prepared under the jurisdiction of their local health department.

Retailer: A person, firm, or corporation that sells meat, poultry, shell eggs, or egg products directly to consumers for consumption, generally off-premises. Retail operations may include cutting up, slicing, trimming, grinding, freezing, curing, cooking, smoking, breaking bulk, or wrapping or rewrapping amenable food products (9 CFR 303.1(d)(1), 381.10(d)(1)).

Risk Level 1: foodborne illness confirmed by doctor, hospitalization, multiple incidents that seem related

Risk Level 2: suspected foodborne illness; no medical confirmation of illness

Risk Level 3: no illness reported, product could cause illness/harm to consumer (ex. foreign material)

Risk Level 4: no illness reported, product complaint is quality related and/or not likely to cause illness/harm to consumers (e.g., food tastes/smells bad)

V. PROCEDURE

- A. The MPID Raleigh Office receives numerous calls throughout the year for various reasons. This Notice focuses on calls received involving consumer complaints, allegations of illegal activities, registration of Meat and Poultry Handlers, and individuals wishing to operate under the Poultry Exemption. Attachment 1 provides guidance on which agency has jurisdiction in different situations.
- B. When a call is received, gather the individual's name, address, city, zip, county, phone number and email address. Obtain the nature of the individual's call to determine what type of information would be most relevant to collect and provide to Compliance Officers. This information may, with the information in Attachment 1, be useful in determining whether to refer the caller to another agency.

NOTE: Calls to MPID, and any associated documentation, may be subject to public records laws and released to third parties upon request. If the caller wishes to remain anonymous, please let them know that we will look into their allegation but having a person to contact for additional questions that may arise during the investigation can be helpful.

1. Consumer Complaints

- Determine whether or not the product is USDA Inspected by:
Asking if the product bears a round inspection legend that says "USDA Inspected and Passed" for meat products or "USDA Inspected for Wholesomeness" for poultry products.
 - If the answer is "yes" the caller should be referred to the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). By referring the complaint to USDA, the caller will become part of a National Consumer Complaint Monitoring System.
 - If the product is not USDA inspected or the caller does not know, continue the conversation, and ask:
 - If any illness has been associated with the consumption of the product
 - If the caller is reporting contamination or foreign material
- Gather information about the meat or poultry product(s) involved and where the products were purchased
- If illness, contamination, or foreign material is reported, call the State Director and Compliance Supervisor to share the report directly with them.
- If the consumer's complaint involves allegations of unfair business practices, refer them

to the North Carolina Department of Justice, Consumer Protection Section at 919-716-6000.

2. Allegations of Illegal Activities

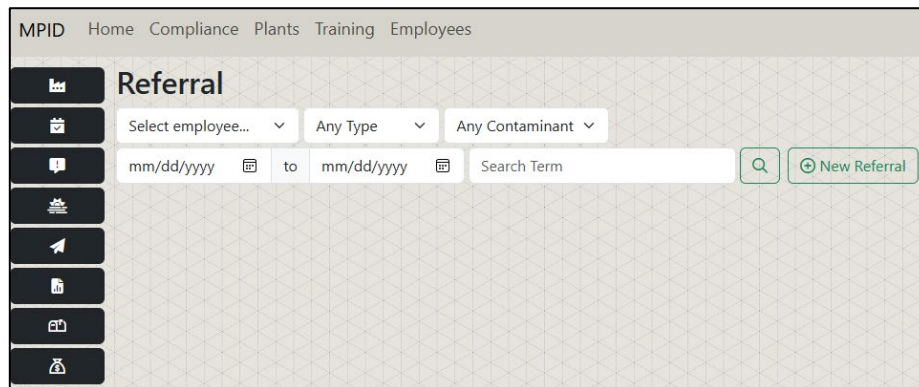
- Ask the caller to give a detailed description of the nature of the illegal operation including types of products involved.
 - Who is conducting the illegal activity? (name)
 - Where is the illegal activity being conducted? (specific location)
 - When does the illegal activity tend to take place? (day of the week, time of day)
 - Where can the illegal products be found in commerce? (names of businesses or persons that are purchasing from the illegal operator)

3. Meat and Poultry Handler and Poultry Exempt Operator Inquiries

- Inquire as to the nature of their planned business. For example, wish to conduct door-to-door sales, desire to have animals slaughtered at inspected facility and sell meat at flea market, or desire to slaughter poultry of their own raising on their farm to sell to public.
- Let the caller know you are referring their request to a field employee who will be contacting them to set up an appointment for registration. If they have not received a call two weeks after their initial inquiry, they should call the Raleigh Office.

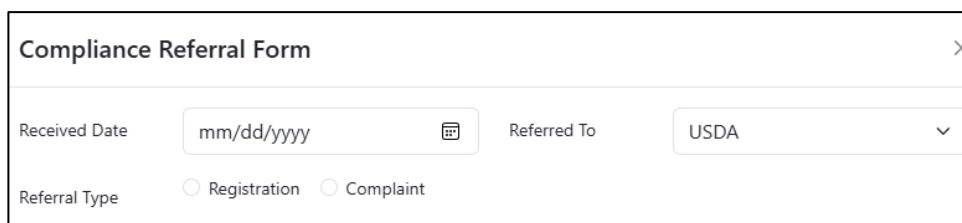
VI. DOCUMENTING COMPLIANCE REFERRALS IN NCMHTD DATABASE

- Log into the [NCMHTD Database](#) Referral webpage and select New Referral button.



The screenshot shows the 'Referral' page of the NCMHTD Database. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: MPID, Home, Compliance, Plants, Training, and Employees. Below this, the 'Referral' section features a sidebar with icons for various functions. The main content area includes a form with the following fields: 'Select employee...' (a dropdown menu), 'Any Type' (a dropdown menu), 'Any Contaminant' (a dropdown menu), 'mm/dd/yyyy' (a date input field with a calendar icon), 'to' (a text label), 'mm/dd/yyyy' (another date input field with a calendar icon), 'Search Term' (a text input field), and a 'New Referral' button (a green button with a plus icon and the text 'New Referral').

- Complete Compliance Referral Form (CRF) blocks for “Received Date”, “Referred To” and “Referral Type”



The screenshot shows the 'Compliance Referral Form' (CRF) interface. It has a title bar with the text 'Compliance Referral Form' and a close button (an 'X' icon). The form contains three main sections: 'Received Date' with a date input field (mm/dd/yyyy) and a calendar icon; 'Referred To' with a dropdown menu showing 'USDA'; and 'Referral Type' with two radio buttons labeled 'Registration' and 'Complaint'.

Consumer Complaints and Allegations of Illegal Activities

- Under “Type of Complaint” section, mark the “Consumer” box for consumer complaints and if there is an illness associated with the complaint, mark “Illness” box as well. Mark the “Illegal” box for allegations of illegal activities.

Type of Complaint		
☐ Consumer	☐ Illness	☐ Illegal

- Record the caller’s name, address, city, zip, county, phone number and email address in the “Complainant” section. If the caller wishes to remain anonymous, record N/P (none provided) for name.

Complainant			
Name	First	Middle	Last
Address			
City/Zip	City	Zip	
County	Select County ▼		
Phone Number			
Email			

- Record the product(s) involved and, if an establishment is known, record the establishment’s name and address in the “Firm Information” section.

Firm Information		
Product(s)	☐ Beef	☐ Chickens
	☐ Swine	☐ Turkeys
	☐ Goat	☐ Ducks
	☐ Sheep	Other
	☐ Poultry Products	
	Other	
	Firm Name	
Address		
City/Zip	City	Zip
County	Select County ▼	
Phone Number		
Email		

- In the “Complaint Info” section, select type of “Contaminant/Foreign Material” if applicable. Assign risk level (1, 2, 3 or 4) for all complaints per Attachment 2 “MPID Consumer Complaint Response Matrix,” and in the “Comments” section, give a full description of the nature of the complaint or the description of alleged illegal operation.

Complaint Info

Contaminant/Foreign Material

☐ Plastic
☐ Rubber
☐ Wood

☐ Metal
☐ Needles
☐ Wire

☐ Glass
☐ Bone
☐ Insects/Bugs

Other Contaminant/Foreign Material

Complaint Risk Level

N/A-Not Applicable

Comments

Cancel

Save

- Review **all** information on the CRF for accuracy, then save.
- After the CRF has been saved, the completed form will appear with a button to “Email Compliance Officer”. Select button to send the CRF.

Email Compliance Officer

Date Received

5/6/2026

Referred To

Moody, Daniel E.

Received By

Iczkovits, Sabrina L.

Notes

Date Contacted

Date Resolved

Note: Be sure to inform the State Director and Compliance Supervisor of illness, contamination, or foreign material reports.

Meat and Poultry Handler and Poultry Exempt Operator Inquiries

- In the “Registration Contact” section enter the caller’s name, address, city, zip, county, phone number and email address in the corresponding blocks.

Registration Contact			
Name	First	Middle	Last
Address			
City/Zip	City	Zip	
County	Select County ▾		
Phone Number			
Email			

- For Meat and Poultry Handlers select the type of products they desire to sell in the “Firm Information” “Meat Handler Species” boxes on the form and for PEOs, select the type of poultry they desire to slaughter and sell in the “Poultry Exempt Operator Species” boxes. Additional firm name and secondary address/phone numbers should be entered in this section. If there is no firm name, record Registration Contact’s name in “Firm Name” (last name, first name). Otherwise, you will not be able to save the form.

Firm Information	
Product(s)	Meat Handler Species
	☐ Beef ☐ Swine ☐ Goat ☐ Sheep ☐ Poultry Products Other MH Species
	Poultry Exempt Operator Species
	☐ Chickens ☐ Turkeys ☐ Ducks Other PEO Species
Firm Name	
Address	
City/Zip	City Zip
County	Select County ▾
Phone Number	
Email	

- In the “Comments” section, give a description of the nature of the type of business they plan to operate. For example, wish to conduct door-to-door sales, desire to have animals slaughtered and sell meat at flea markets, etc.

Comments	
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- Review **all** information on the CRF for accuracy, then save.
- After the CRF is saved, the completed form will appear with a button to “Email Officer”. Select button to send the CRF.

Email Compliance Officer			
Date Received	5/6/2026	Referred To	Moody, Daniel E.
Received By	Iczkovits, Sabrina L.	Notes	
Date Contacted			
Date Resolved			

V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have any questions or need additional information, contact your supervisor.

Dr. Karen Beck
State Director

DISTRIBUTION:
 MPID Raleigh Office Personnel, Compliance
 Officers

SUBJECT CATEGORY:
 Compliance

Attachment 1

NCD&CS-MPID/USDA-FSIS	County Inspection	NCD&CS-Food & Drug Protection Division	No Inspection Required
Slaughter of red meat species, meats will be sold in commerce	Stores where processing of meat and poultry products occur for on-site retail sales *Note a limited amount of wholesale of single ingredient meat items to Hotels, Restaurants or institutions is allowed under certain circumstances	Wholesale of non-meat food items including breads, seafood, dairy products, bottled & canned drinks, vegetable products and retail sales of these items	On-farm slaughter of red meat animals of one's own raising provided the meats are for personal use only and not sold
Slaughter of red meat species that belong to other people		Wholesale of closed-faced sandwiches with traditional bread and biscuits (meat or non-meat)	Processing of deer and other wild game meats except wild boars (NC Wildlife laws prohibit the sale of native game species)
Slaughter of poultry species other than ones raised by the owner or exceeding the exemption limit (USDA)			
Wholesale of red meat or poultry products		Cafeterias	Wholesale of wrap style sandwiches not containing meats
Wholesale of open-faced sandwiches containing meat	Delicatessens		
Wholesale of wrap style sandwiches containing meats	Food Stands/Trucks (mobile restaurants or firms that otherwise prepare & serve food but do not have seating)	Wholesale and retail of baked goods containing less than 2% meat or poultry	
Wholesale of meat & poultry Pies ex. Chicken pot pie/shepherds pie	Catering Operations (firms that prepare meals and their employees serve them either on-site or at another location)	Wholesale and retail of sauces and soups containing less than 2% cooked meat or poultry (BBQ sauce, spaghetti sauce w/o meat, vegetable soups)	
Production of canned products containing at least 2% meat and poultry for wholesale (USDA)	Central Kitchens (ready to eat meat & poultry products prepared in one location and transported directly to and served at another location under the same ownership)	Production of canned products not containing meats (pickles, salsa, canned vegetables, jelly)	Selling packaged pork skins popped onsite at farmers market, flea market, etc. from inspected pellets. No product can be carried over to the next day.
Production of dinners, entrees, other food items containing at least 2% cooked or 3% raw meat or poultry for wholesale		Wholesale production of candy	
		Production of animal feeds (dog food)	
		Sales of frozen desserts (ice cream, frozen yogurt shops)	
		Slaughter and processing of rabbits & quail	
		Wholesale and retail of whole eggs	
		Raw fruit and vegetable stands	

Attachment 2

MPID Consumer Complaint Response Matrix for Compliance Officers

Risk Level	Time to contact	Time to complete
1	Upon receipt of complaint	Within 3 business days
2	Within 24 hours of receipt of complaint	Within 1 week
3	Within 24 hours of receipt of complaint	Within 1 week
4	Within 48 hours of receipt of complaint	Within 2 weeks

Risk Level Definitions

- 1 - Highest Priority:** foodborne illness confirmed by doctor, hospitalization, multiple incidents that seem related
- 2 - High Priority:** suspected foodborne illness; no medical confirmation of illness
- 3 - Medium Priority:** no illness reported, product could cause illness/harm to consumer (ex. foreign material)
- 4 - Low Priority:** no illness reported, product complaint is quality related and/or not likely to cause illness/harm to consumers (e.g., food tastes/smells bad)

Complaints regarding **USDA inspected product:** refer to USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at **1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854)**

Complaints regarding **unfair business practices:** refer to NC Attorney General's Office of Consumer Protection at **1-877-566-7226**