



Parts of a Food Label Guide*

*NOTE: *Parts of a Food Label Guide* provides basic packaged food labeling requirements ONLY. It does not include every requirement or every exemption for all food products. For further information, see the federal regulatory guidance documents.

FOR MEAT, POULTRY, and EGGS:

www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Labeling_Requirements_Guide.pdf

ALL OTHER FOODS and NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:

<http://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/guidancedocumentsregulatoryinformation/labelingnutrition/ucm2006828.htm>

1. NAME OF FOOD - 21 CFR 101.3

The common name or descriptive phrase on a food package must be easy to understand by the customer who buys the food product. The name or phrase must be on the part of the package that the customer is most likely to see first (usually, the front or the top of the package). The species of fish (example: *dried herring*) or the type of nut (example: *walnut*) must be listed.

Example: *Crab Meat*

2. NAME AND ADDRESS OF RESPONSIBLE FIRM – 21 CFR 101.5

The name and address the manufacturer (OR another firm who packs, imports, or distributes the product) must be on the label. If you are the *manufacturer* (you make the product), your street, city, state, and zip code must be on the label. A street address is not required if your firm is in the local telephone directory. (A website cannot be used instead of an address).

OR

If you are NOT the manufacturer, the label must state your relationship to the product. For example, *Packed for, Manufactured for, Imported by, or Distributed by (Your Business)* and your street, city, state, and zip code. A street address is not required if your firm is in the local telephone directory. A website cannot be used instead of an address.

Example: *Packed for: Eastern Seafood, Inc., 112 Broad Street, Newark, NJ 07104*

3. LIST OF INGREDIENTS - 21 CFR 101.4

All ingredients in a food product must be listed in order by weight. The ingredient that weighs the most is first, and the ingredient that weighs the least is last.

Example: *Ingredients: crabmeat, water, salt, citric acid, and sodium metabisulfite as a preservative*

THE 9 MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS

(Eggs, Fish, Milk, Peanuts, Shellfish, Soy, Tree Nuts, Wheat, Sesame)

INGREDIENTS THAT ARE MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS MUST BE ON THE LABEL!

If a food product contains a major food allergen, the allergen must be on the label. For tree nuts, labels must state the exact type (examples: almonds, pecans, walnuts). For fish and shellfish, labels must state the species (examples: crab, flounder, shrimp).

List food allergens in at least ONE of three ways:

1. Name of allergen in the list of ingredients (example: *crabmeat*)
2. Name of allergen next to ingredient that does not say what allergen is in it (example: *flour (wheat)*)
3. All major food allergens after the word "contains" (example: *Contains: egg, soy, wheat*)

4. NET WEIGHT – 21 CFR 101.105

The total weight of a food product must be on the bottom 30% of the *principal display panel* (the front or top of the package). See the crabmeat example for correct location of net weight. For most food products, the weight must be in both ounces, pounds, or fluid ounces AND in grams, kilograms, milliliters, or liters. (Grams, kilograms, milliliters, or liters are not required for meat and poultry products). In Oklahoma, net weight is enforced by the Oklahoma State Department of Agriculture Food and Forestry. Their contact number is: [\(405\) 522-5968](tel:4055225968).

Example: *Net Wt. 6 oz. (170g)*

5. NUTRITION FACTS PANEL – 21 CFR 101.9

The Nutrition Facts panel is required on most food labels, but not all. Products that are *exempt* do not need to have a Nutrition Facts panel. For example, food served in a restaurant is exempt. Food manufactured by a small business can be exempt, but a small business must apply yearly to the FDA for an exemption. Nutrition labeling is now required on all whole raw meat and poultry products.

NOTE: If the food product is *exempt*, but the package makes a nutrition claim (examples: low fat, cholesterol free), then a Nutrition Facts panel is needed!

6. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING (COOL) - 19 CFR 134

Food and non-food products that come from outside the U.S. must have the statement, “*Product of (English name of country where product is made)*” on the label, per U.S Customs requirements.

Meat and poultry sold in butcher shops and fish sold in retail fish markets may be exempt from this requirement. In Oklahoma, COOL is enforced by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Food and Forestry.

Their contact number is: [\(405\) 522-5976](tel:4055225976). For the USDA requirements go to: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/cool>

Example: *Product of Thailand*

7. SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS – 21 CFR 101.17, 9 CFR 317.2

Raw and partially cooked meat and poultry labels must have safe handling instructions that help people know how to handle and cook the product safely. On the right is a standard label. Any safe handling instructions on meat or poultry labels must look exactly like this. →

Safe Handling Instructions

This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.

-  Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.
-  Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.
-  Cook thoroughly.
-  Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

8. ALL FOOD LABELS MUST BE IN ENGLISH! – 21 CFR 101.15

A label may have information in another language, but all the required parts of a food label must be in English AND in the other language. No English on a label may lead to problems during an inspection.

If you need labeling assistance on a regular basis, you may want to hire a labeling consultant. A consultant may be found through internet searches, trade associations, universities/colleges, or in industry publications.