

## **Parasite Destruction Letter Requirement for Raw or Undercooked Fish**

If a restaurant serves raw or undercooked (less than 145°F) fish the restaurant operator must provide proof that the fish has been frozen for *parasite destruction* according to the Fairfax County Food Code Section 3-402.11. Some species of fish carry parasites which may be harmful to humans if eaten. Freezing is a method of killing the parasites before serving the fish to the consumer. Fairfax County Health Department will review the records of parasite destruction during the restaurant inspection process.

Fish may be frozen for parasite destruction in the following manner:

- (1) Frozen and stored at a temperature of -20°C (-4°F) or below for a minimum of 168 hours (7 days) in a freezer;
- (2) Frozen at -35°C (-31°F) or below until solid and stored at -35°C (-31°F) or below for a minimum of 15 hours; or
- (3) Frozen at -35°C (-31°F) or below until solid and stored at -20°C (-4°F) or below for a minimum of 24 hours.

If the operator freezes the fish on-site, very specific records must be kept. You may review the requirements with your local Health Department representative.

If the restaurant purchases its fish from a supplier, a letter must be provided which states that the fish provided by the supplier is frozen for parasite destruction according to the Food Code requirements above. Below is the information which must be provided in the *parasite destruction letter* from the supplier:

- 1) Name and address of the establishment;
- 2) Name and address of the supplier;
- 3) All species of fish that are frozen for parasite destruction and provided to the establishment;
- 4) Exact temperature to which the fish specified in (3) above are frozen;
- 5) The length of time for which the fish specified in (3) above are frozen at the temperature specified in (4) above;
- 6) Contact name and phone number for person in charge of parasite destruction operations at the supplier; and
- 7) Signature of contact person listed in (6) above.

There are some species of fish which are exempted from the parasite destruction requirement. Contact your local Health Department representative for more details. If you have any questions, you may contact the Food Safety Program of the Health Department at 703-246-2444.

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Food Safety Program  
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