



RESTRICTIONS ON RAW GULF OYSTERS

New limitations on the Sale of Raw Gulf Oysters In California Effective April 1, 2015



Effective April 1, 2015, the California Department of Public Health, Food and Drug Branch (CDPH-FDB), Molluscan Shellfish Program will adopt a new standard for the level of *Vibrio Vulnificus* (*V. vulnificus*) for post-harvest processed raw Gulf Oysters. California's existing standard for the level of *V. vulnificus* in post-harvest processed oysters is set at less than 3 MPN per gram and the revised standard will be set at less than 30 MPN per gram. This revision harmonizes California's Molluscan Shellfish Program standard for post-harvest processed raw Gulf Oysters with the other participating states of the National Sanitation Shellfish Program.

Californians have become seriously ill and died after consuming raw oysters harvested from the states bordering the Gulf of Mexico (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas), that are contaminated with the pathogen *V. vulnificus*. *V. vulnificus* bacteria are naturally present in marine environments. However, the bacteria are at some of their highest levels in Gulf coast waters and oysters, especially during the warm summer months.

Title 17, CCR, Section 13675, was established to prevent *V. vulnificus* illnesses and deaths associated with the consumption of raw Gulf oysters. The most significant provision restricts the sale of raw oysters harvested from the Gulf of Mexico during April 1 through October 31, unless the oysters are treated with a scientifically validated process to reduce the level of *Vibrio vulnificus* to less than 30 MPN per gram.

CDPH is working with retailers and local health departments to implement the requirements of Title 17, CCR, Section 13675. If you have any questions regarding this notice contact the California Department of Public Health, Food and Drug Branch (FDB) at (916) 650-6500.