Retail Food Establishments: Sushi Rice Guidelines

Regulation 61–25: Retail Food Establishments

Retail Food Establishments that prepare sushi rice must take additional measures to ensure the safety of those that consume it. In addition to the standard temperature requirements, sushi rice safety may also be controlled by time or pH standards. The Department of Health and Environmental Control requires one of the following bolded methods be implemented for safe sushi rice production:

1) Maintaining Temperature Control

» Maintain sushi rice below 41°F or above 135°F; if held cold, it must follow criteria for proper cooling. **(3-501.14)**

» See Proper Holding Temperatures Fact Sheet for additional information.

2) Use Time as a Public Health Control (TPHC)

» Submit a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the production, time marking of the rice, and disposal of unused product. (3-501.19)

» See Time as a Public Health Control Fact Sheet for additional information.

3) Product Assessment (PA) & pH Monitoring

» The target pH range used for the sushi rice must allow for variations in the characteristics of the rice, as well as variations in the acidity of the vinegar, and must be less than 4.2 to prevent the microbiological hazards that are likely to occur in rice.

» The pH must be measured within 30 minutes of adding vinegar. If sushi rice pH measures above the target pH range stated in your procedure, corrective action is required. The pH must be retested within 30 minutes of the corrective action.

» If using pH strips or a pH meter as the monitoring method, then a PA must be submitted. The PA letter or laboratory report must be completed by a recognized process authority or an accredited commercial food laboratory. A new PA is required if the process is modified after approval by the Department. **(1-201.10)(B)(93)**

» The PA must be submitted along with the SOP(s) for the sushi rice-making process and routine pH monitoring. Submission of a pH logbook, which includes any corrective actions taken, is also required. See the template on the reverse side of this page.

A) PA and pH monitoring by pH strips

• Testing strips for pH must have a working range from 2.5 to 4.5 pH units.

• The target pH in the product must allow for the sensitivity of the pH strip. For example, if using a pH strip with a sensitivity of 0.2 pH units, the target pH must be 4.0 pH or less.

B) PA and pH monitoring using pH meter

• Submit SOP(s) for your pH meter calibration, cleaning, and corrective actions.

• Follow manufacturer instructions for calibration and maintenance of the instrument, and maintain calibration and testing records. Use of a temperature-compensating pH meter is a best practice, and is recommended by DHEC, since the accuracy of pH measurements is affected by the temperature if not compensated.

4) Submit a HACCP Plan to the Department for Review.

» Contact the Variance Committee at FoodVariances@dhec.sc.gov or 803-896-0640 to discuss implementing a Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points Plan. **(8-201.13-14)**

All of these options require the submission of the Request for a Special Process – Sushi Rice form (DHEC-1849) and any other required documents listed here, to the Variance Committee FoodVariances@dhec.sc.gov. Be prepared to demonstrate your testing procedure upon request during inspections.

Further information can be obtained by visiting www.scdhec.gov/food.

Monthly Sushi Rice pH Log

Keep the current copy of this log near the sushi rice preparation area. Check the pH of sushi rice using a calibrated pH meter or pH test strip accurate to 0.2-0.3 pH units. Sushi rice must be tested on a **daily/weekly** basis. If the pH of the sushi rice is above ___.__ **pH**, record the corrective action in the last column.

Facility Name and address: _____

Month: Jan / Feb / Mar / Apr / May / Jun / Jul / Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec

Day	pH of Rice	Corrective Action
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
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