

Alternative 3

9 CFR 430.4(b)(3) Use of sanitation measures only
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If the establishment does not use a post-lethality treatment and/or an antimicrobial agent or process, or, is unable to validate the effectiveness of their post-lethality treatment or antimicrobial process or agent, they may decide to control *Lm* in the post-lethality processing environment through the use of sanitation measures only. Such sanitation measures must include testing of food contact surfaces in the post-lethality processing environment to ensure that the surfaces are sanitary and free of *Lm* or an indicator organism in accordance with 430.4(b)(3)(i).

Under Alternative 3, establishments that produce a deli or hot dog product must meet more prescriptive requirements than other post-lethality exposed RTE products produced under Alternative 3. In these situations the plants must initiate corrective actions with respect to sanitation after an initial positive test result for *Lm* or an indicator organism on a food contact surface. If the establishment obtains a second positive test result for *Lm* or indicator organism during follow-up testing, it must hold lots of product until the plant can show that they have corrected the problem by obtaining negative test results on those implicated food contact surfaces. Before lots of product that have tested positive for an indicator organism can be released into commerce, the establishment must sample and test the lots of product for *Lm* or an indicator organism or rework the product in a manner destructive to *Lm* in accordance with 430.4(b)(3)(ii). Product that has tested positive for *Lm* is considered adulterated, and it cannot be re-sampled in order to release the product.

Alternative 3 inspection verification example: As part of the 03F01 procedure, you verify that the establishment is meeting the requirements of Part 430 and Alternative 3. You review the plant's hazard analysis for heat treated shelf-stable product such as pepperoni, summer sausage, etc., packaged and sold un-refrigerated. You find that the fermentation, heating and drying steps have been identified as CCPs in the hazard analysis and have been incorporated into the HACCP plan to control hazards other than *Lm*. *Lm* was considered a potential hazard at the packaging step but the establishment concluded that it was a hazard not likely to occur because it has *Listeria* control measures in a prerequisite program to prevent *Lm* in the post-lethality processing environment. You request the supporting documentation for the decision that *Lm* is not likely to occur in the post-lethality environment. You review the establishment's prerequisite program and records and find that the plant is testing food contact surfaces in the post-lethality processing environment to ensure that the surfaces are sanitary and free of *Listeria* spp. It also has identified the conditions under which it will implement hold-and-test procedures following a positive test of a food contact surface for *Listeria* spp., the size and location of the sample sites, and testing frequency. The establishment provided a thought process as to why

the testing frequency it selected is sufficient to ensure that effective control of *L. monocytogenes*, or an indicator organism, is maintained. Based upon your review, you determine that the establishment is in compliance with §430.4(b)(3).

Noncompliance with Alternative 3

The following are examples of noncompliance with Alternative 3.

1. The establishment does not have sanitation measures incorporated into its HACCP, Sanitation SOP, or other prerequisite program. (Cite 430.4(b)(3), and 417.5(a)1&2.)
2. The written sanitation procedures the establishment is using to meet the requirements of this alternative only address the testing of non-food contact surfaces in the post-lethality processing environment to ensure that the surfaces are sanitary and free of *Lm* or of an indicator organism. (Cite 430.4(b)(3), and 417.5(a)1&2.)