

Who We Inspect

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Meat and Poultry Inspection Division provides continuous inspection of commercial slaughter and processing facilities, periodic inspection of custom plants, and conducts random and planned compliance reviews of meat and poultry distributors.

Who Needs to be Licensed

Every commercial slaughterer, custom slaughterer, commercial processor, custom processor, or distributor must obtain a license from the Commissioner of Agriculture prior to initiation of operations. Commercial plants are engaged for profit in the business of slaughtering animals or poultry and/or processing carcasses, meat products or poultry products for human consumption, which are to be sold or offered for sale through a commercial outlet or establishment. Licensed commercial facilities may also choose to provide custom slaughter or processing services. Custom plants are engaged for profit in the business of slaughtering animals or poultry and/or producing meat or poultry products for human consumption which are not to be sold or offered for sale through a commercial outlet, commercial establishment distributor, or to an individual. Basically, this means that if you have an animal you would like to use as food for your family and nonpaying guests you could take that animal to a custom facility to have it slaughtered and processed. A custom operator provides his service, but meat remains the animal owner's property. The owner takes home all parts of the animal for his or her use. No part of the animal can be offered for sale since it has not been inspected before slaughter and during processing. Distributors are engaged for profit in the business where carcasses, meat products or poultry products are received from state inspected establishments, or establishments inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture and who store and distribute to commercial outlets, processors or individuals, and who conduct no processing. Distributors handle only products packaged at the establishment where they were manufactured, and are not allowed to open individual packages for any further processing.

How to Apply for Inspection

An applicant for a license shall complete the application to include all information requested. An application fee is required based on the number of animals slaughtered or the number of pounds processed. Distributors pay only a \$5 annual application fee. Only the applicant named in the application may conduct operations at the establishment for which the license is granted. Applicants must submit three sets of complete drawings containing a plot plan showing the limits of the establishment's premises, locations in outline of buildings on the premises, cardinal points of the compass, and roads and railroads serving the establishment; the floor plans of the establishment for which inspection is requested, showing the locations of principle pieces of equipment, floor drains, principle drainage lines, handwashing basins and hose connections for cleanup purposes; and a room schedule showing the finish of walls, floors, and ceilings of all rooms in the establishment. Three sets of specifications must also be submitted. These specifications should include statements describing water supply, plumbing, drainage, refrigeration, equipment, lighting, and operations to be performed at the establishment. Finally, a current potable water certificate and sewage approval must be obtained from your local health department. Prepare to Open Your Business When these documents have been submitted to our Division, our resident experts will examine them and give approval for you to begin building your facility. If the drawings do not guarantee that the proposed facility will create conditions for slaughter and/or processing under sanitary conditions, they will be returned along with our recommendations on the changes or improvements needed to comply with technical requirements for a proposed facility. If you would like to use an existing facility, our review team will visit your establishment and make suggestions to enable your facility to begin operations as soon as all the minimum requirements are met.

Mandatory Requirements for Licensed Facilities

Licensed facilities must be able to provide a clean and sanitary environment for the production of wholesome and unadulterated meat and poultry products. In order to do that, certain precautions should be taken to prevent possible contamination. You should contact our office for a booklet containing a total list of mandatory requirements for licensed plants and to discuss which requirements would be applicable to your plant.

Thank you for visiting our webpage. When you shop, look for meat and poultry products carrying West Virginia inspection legends for a guarantee of wholesomeness and quality.

