

ACTION BY: Regional Directors, Area and Circuit Supervisors,  
Employees Assigned to Poultry Plants, and  
Owners and Operators of Official Poultry Plants

Plant Operating Schedules - Working  
Conditions, Poultry Plants

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is developing regulatory provisions concerning schedules of establishment operations in relation to working conditions of Meat and Poultry Inspection Program personnel. Some consultation with employees has been effected, with more pending.

This bulletin provides interim guidelines for operations in poultry plants. Pending promulgation of the above noted provisions, operating schedules will be governed by the following:

1. Plants having one full production shift shall be provided, without charge, 8 consecutive hours of inspection per day (excluding the lunch period) for 5 consecutive days per week, Monday through Saturday.
2. Plants having an approved second production shift will also be provided 8 hours of inspection without charge daily for that shift. The time lapse between shifts shall be so scheduled as to be reasonably short at one end, leaving a lapse of several hours at the other.
3. One lunch period is the only official authorized interruption in the inspector's tour of duty, once it is begun. Lunch periods may be 30 minutes, 45 minutes, or in any case not exceed 1 hour in duration. Once established, the lunch period must remain relatively constant as to time and duration. Lunch periods for inspectors shall not, except as provided herein, occur prior to 4 hours after the beginning of duty nor later

---

DISTRIBUTION: S-12, S-13, ES-14, S-15, ES-16,  
ES16-1, ES16-2, S-17, S-18 (Poultry Plants)

OPI: FO  
June 23, 1972


than 5 hours after commencing duty. In plants where a company rest break of not less than 30 minutes is regularly observed, approximately midpoint between start of work and the lunch break, the lunch period may be scheduled as long as 5½ hours after the beginning of the inspector's tour of duty. Any time granted by plant management for lunch in excess of 1 hour will be counted towards an employee's tour of duty as well as towards the plant's operating schedule for the day. The above rule for lunch periods applies to regular days, holidays, and overtime work on nonscheduled workdays.

4. When a substantial period of overtime is to be performed at the conclusion of a regular schedule on a normal workday, a second lunch period should be provided. Such lunch periods of up to 1-hour's duration will not count as overtime either for the inspector or the plant. If the overtime is to be of short duration, or if the break is to be of less than 30-minutes duration, the inspector in charge should refuse to officially recognize a second lunch break. In such instances, the employees will remain in overtime status during the plant break and the plant will be billed overtime for any such period. It will be the duty of the inspector in charge to intervene with plant management to obtain reasonable compliance with these guidelines. Inspectors in charge are expected to make a decision based on justification and reasonableness in a given situation if they grant exceptions to the guidelines contained herein.
5. Generally, the hours of duty of inspectors are based on plant operating schedules, plus any overtime inspection work required by plant operations. However, it is the general policy of Field Operations that a minimum of 12 hours elapse between the end of any one day and the beginning of work on the next day. Further, it will be necessary for plant managers to schedule poultry through slaughter plants in a manner which will not result in line work exceeding 10-hours duration on any shift on any day. An infrequent need for exceptions is recognized. Inspectors in charge granting such must document the circumstances in writing, for review by the circuit supervisor.



6. Reasonable uniformity in starting hours from day to day is required as a condition of continued approval of plant's operating schedule. Deviation from the normal starting time in a plant must be made known by plant management to the inspector in charge some time during the working day preceding the change, and the inspector in charge shall so inform all other inspection personnel. The starting time of an inspector's tour of duty must always be expressed as a specific clock time.
7. Regional Directors are authorized to approve plant operating schedules. Standard operating schedules of five 8-hour days, Monday through Friday, do not need formal approval. Changes of schedules from Monday through Friday to Tuesday through Saturday or vice versa must become effective at the beginning of a pay period for Government employees.

You are reminded that when an employee begins a workweek and later does work in other plants having different tours of duty for pay and leave purposes, this employee maintains the tour of duty with which he began the week for the entire week. No administrative discretion is possible.

  
Fred J. Fullerton  
Acting Deputy Administrator  
Field Operations