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Date: January 25, 2007

To: Licensed Food Service Operators and Sushi/Sashimi Suppliers

From: Robert Miller, MPH, RS, Director of Health

Cc: Environmental Health Staff

Re: Clarification of regulatory practice for seafood served for raw consumption.

Recent inspections at food service establishments in the District serving seafood for raw consumption (sushi, sashimi) raised questions about the documentation meant to indicate that the seafood has been properly treated prior to service. The food compliance guide states:

"It is recommended that the director of health only approve fish that will be consumed raw or lightly cooked, such as sushi or sashimi, if documentation is provided indicating that it has been frozen at -4° F. for 7 days in a conventional, commercial freezer or it has been frozen at -31° F. for 15 hours in a blast freezer. Exceptions to this recommendation include tuna species *Thunnus alalunga*, *Thunnus albacares* (yellow tuna), *Thunnus atlanticus*, *Thunnus maccoyii* (blue fin tuna, southern), *Thunnus obesus* (big eye tuna), and *Thunnus thynnus* (blue fin tuna, northern)."

Henceforth, the following options will be acceptable as documentation for this purpose:

1. Written statements on the suppliers' letterheads that contain, at a minimum:

"To whom it may concern:

This letter is to certify that all frozen seafood items supplied to you are frozen throughout to a temperature of -4° F or below for 7 days or more, or to a temperature of -31° F or below for 15 hours or more."

These statements must be dated no more than 3 months prior to the date of inspection. Each supplier must provide this documentation.

2. Control forms maintained by the establishment that show that fish served raw has received the required cold treatment at that establishment, showing shipment number, date received, time period of treatment and temperature of freezer. Equipment capacity must support the process for this option to be used.
3. Shipment-specific documentation provided by the supplier, stating that the shipment referenced consists of items which have received the required treatment.

Beyond the expected sushi format restaurants, such raw service of fish may also be found in Chinese restaurants and even grocery stores.