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Report Highlights:

On March 27, 2025, The People's Republic of China (China's) National Health Commission (NHC) and the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) jointly released the National Food Safety Standard Code of Hygienic Practice of Producing Prepared Meat Products (GB 31661-2025). This new standard regulates the production of prepared meat products. The final standard will enter into force on March 16, 2026. China notified the draft standard to the WTO on November 15, 2021. This report provides an unofficial translation of the final standard. Stakeholders should conduct their own review of the regulations to assess any market or regulatory effect on their business.

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On March 27, 2025, The People's Republic of China (China's) National Health Commission (NHC) and the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) jointly released the National Food Safety Standard Code of Hygienic Practice of Producing for Prepared Meat Products (GB 31661-2025) (link in Chinese).

On November 15, 2021, China notified the draft standard to the WTO under G/SPS/N/CHN/1240. The standard applies to the production of prepared meat, and it will enter into force on March 16, 2026. The standard specifies requirements for the purchase of raw materials, principles for processing, packaging, storage, and transportation during the production of prepared meat products.

This report provides an unofficial translation of the final standard. Stakeholders should conduct their own review of the regulations to assess any market or regulatory effect on their business.

BEGIN TRANSLATION

National Food Safety Standard

Code of Hygienic Practice of Producing Prepared Meat Products

1 Scope

This standard specifies the basic requirements and management criteria for the sites, facilities, equipment, and personnel in the production processes of the prepared meat products. The production processes include procurement of raw materials, pretreatment, preparing and processing, cooling or freezing, packaging, storage, transportation, etc.

This standard applies to the production of prepared meat products.

2 Terms and Definitions

The terms and definitions defined in GB 14881[1], GB 2707[2], and GB 31646[3] and the following terms and definitions apply to this standard.

[1] National Food Safety Standard General Hygiene Regulation for Food Production GB14881-2013.
[2] National Food Safety Standard for Fresh and Frozen Livestock and Poultry Products GB 2707-2016.
[3] National Food Safety Standard for Code of Hygienic Practice for Quick Frozen Foods GB 31646-2018 (link in Chinese).

2.1 Prepared meat products

Non-ready-to-eat meat products that are made from fresh (frozen) livestock and poultry products as the main raw materials, are prepared through pretreatment of ingredients, preparation and processing, cooling or freezing, packaging, and require refrigerated or frozen storage and transportation, including refrigerated prepared meat products and frozen prepared meat products.

3 Site Selection and Plant Environment

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

4 Plants and Workshops

4.1 Design and layout

4.1.1 It shall comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

4.1.2 The layout of workshops and equipment shall comply with the processing requirements of prepared meat products and be convenient for cleaning and disinfection.

4.1.3 Pre-treatment workshops such as thawing rooms and cutting rooms, preparation and processing workshops such as pickling rooms, molding rooms, and hot processing rooms, as well as other workshops such as cooling rooms, freezing rooms, inner packaging rooms, outer packaging rooms, raw material storage warehouses, refrigerated product storage warehouses, frozen product storage warehouses, packaging materials storage warehouses, etc. can be set up according to the processing requirements.

4.1.4 The pre-treatment of raw materials and auxiliary materials shall be carried out in separate rooms or zones.

4.1.5 The entrance of raw materials and auxiliary materials shall be separated from the exit of semi-finished and finished products.

4.1.6 The storage warehouse or storage area of raw materials and auxiliary materials shall be set up according to the different categories, odors, and other characteristics.

4.1.7 Inner and outer packaging materials shall be stored separately in special warehouses or special areas.

4.2 Internal structure and materials of the building

4.2.1 It shall comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

4.2.2 The ceiling shall be easy to clean and disinfect, and the structure shall effectively prevent condensation from dripping vertically to prevent insects and pests and the growth of mold.

4.2.3 The workshop should have sufficient space and height to meet the needs of equipment installation and maintenance, production operations, sanitation and cleaning, materials transfer, lighting and ventilation, and sanitation inspection.

5 Facilities and Equipment

5.1 General requirements

5.1.1 It shall comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881 and GB 31646.

5.1.2 The structural design and placement of facilities and equipment shall be easy for cleaning and disinfection to avoid the retention and growth of contaminants containing harmful microorganisms.

5.1.3 Facilities and equipment shall be regularly inspected and repaired, and the damaged parts shall be replaced in a timely manner to prevent metal debris, lubricating oil, and other substances from contaminating the products.

5.2 Ventilation facilities and equipment

Hot processing rooms with scalding, steaming, frying, smoking, and other heating processes should be equipped with good ventilation facilities and equipment.

5.3 Cleaning and disinfection facilities and equipment

5.3.1 Workshops with different cleaning requirements should be equipped with necessary cleaning and disinfection facilities and equipment.

5.3.2 Cleaning facilities and equipment for livestock and poultry products and other auxiliary materials should be set up separately, and their configuration should be adapted to the processing capacity. Various facilities and equipment should have their uses clearly marked.

5.4 Temperature and humidity monitoring equipment

Control, display, and recording equipment for temperature and humidity should be installed and configured according to the environmental conditions control requirements, and it should be calibrated and maintained regularly.

5.5 Water supply and drainage facilities and equipment

5.5.1 Cold and hot water pipes should be installed separately at the positions for water use in the workshops according to the production process requirements. Cold and hot water pipes should be clearly distinguished and marked with flow directions.

5.5.2 The drainage outlet should be equipped with water-sealed floor drains, filters, and other devices to prevent turbid air from escaping and solid waste from clogging the drainage pipes.

5.6 Waste storage facilities

The workshop should be equipped with special facilities for storing waste that are leak-proof, corrosion-resistant, and easy for cleaning, and have clear distinguishing marks.

6 Hygiene management

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

7 Raw materials, food additives, and food related products

7.1 General requirements

7.1.1 It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

7.1.2 A special system should be established, and records should be maintained for the purchase, acceptance, storage, and use of food raw materials, food additives, and food related products.

7.2 Raw materials

7.2.1 Raw materials of livestock and poultry products should have quarantine certificates, and pork should also have meat quality testing certificates. Imported livestock and poultry products should have relevant certification documents.

7.2.2 Raw materials of fresh (frozen) livestock and poultry products should comply with the provisions of GB 2707 and relevant standards.

7.3 Auxiliary materials

7.3.1 Auxiliary materials such as starch, seasonings, spices, etc. should comply with relevant standards.

7.3.2 The qualification certificates of auxiliary materials should be checked, and they can only be used after qualification check.

7.4 Food additives

7.4.1 Food additives should comply with the requirements of the corresponding national food safety standards, and their use should comply with the provisions of GB 2760[4].

7.4.2 When accepting compound food additives, the specification instructions for the scope of use and maximum amount of addition (or usage amount) of compound food additives should be requested. The scope of use and limit of food additives in ingredients should comply with the provisions of GB 2760.

[4] National Food Safety Standard Usage Standard for Food Additives GB2760-2024.

7.4.3 A weighing and verification system should be established for the use of food additives.

7.5 Food related products

7.5.1 Packaging materials shall comply with food safety requirements.

7.5.2 If the prepared meat products need to be processed through heating with inner packaging, the inner packaging shall be made of heat-resistant materials; if the prepared meat products need to be frozen when they are stored, the inner packaging shall be made of low-temperature resistant materials.

7.5.3 The skewers used for prepared meat products shall comply with the provisions of GB 4806.9[5], GB 4806.12[6], etc.

7.5.4 The materials used for smoking shall comply with the relevant standards.

8 Food Safety Control of the Production Processes

8.1 General requirements

8.1.1 It shall comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

8.1.2 The water used for production shall comply with the relevant provisions of GB 5749[7].

8.1.3 The temperature and processing time of raw materials and semi-finished products shall be controlled in accordance with the product processing requirements.

8.1.4 When storing raw materials and auxiliary materials, if there are special requirements for storage temperature and humidity, effective measures should be taken to monitor the temperature and humidity of the storage environment, and records should be made. Fresh livestock and poultry raw materials should be stored in a warehouse at temperature of 0℃ to 4℃, and frozen livestock and poultry products should be stored in a storage warehouse below -18℃.

8.1.5 The storage of raw materials and auxiliary materials should follow the first-in-first-out principle.

8.2 Pretreatment of raw materials and auxiliary materials

8.2.1 Raw material pretreatment includes all or part of the production processes such as thawing, deboning, segmentation, sorting, mincing, and cutting (shredding).

[5] National Food Safety Standard Metal Materials and Products for Food Contacting Use GB4806.9-2023.
[6] National Food Safety Standard Food Contacting Materials of Bamboos and Woods GB4806.12-2022 (link in Chinese).
[7] National Food Safety Standard Drinking Water Quality GB5749-2022.

8.2.2 Appropriate thawing methods should be selected based on the characteristics of frozen livestock and poultry products and processing requirements. The central temperature of livestock and poultry products after thawing should not be higher than 4°C.

8.2.3 When air thawing is used, the ambient air should be non-toxic, harmless, free of abnormal odor, and comply with relevant standards. When static airflow thawing is used, the ambient temperature should not be higher than 18°C; when flowing air thawing is used, the ambient temperature should not be higher than 21°C.

8.2.4 When atmospheric pressure water thawing is used, the water temperature of static water for thawing should not be higher than 18°C, and the water temperature of flowing water for thawing should not be higher than 21°C. Raw materials of different livestock and poultry species should not be thawed in the same water medium.

8.2.5 When deboning, splitting, sorting, cutting (shredding), or mincing livestock and poultry products, the ambient temperature should not be higher than 12°C, the operation should be as quick as possible, the temperature of raw meat should be controlled below 7°C, and measures should be taken to dissipate heat and prevent backlog of products.

8.2.6 Auxiliary materials should be selected and trimmed according to process requirements. Auxiliary materials that need to be washed should be washed with running water.

8.3 Preparation Processing

8.3.1 Preparation processing includes all or part of the processes such as pickling, injection, rolling, tenderization, stirring, chopping, emulsification, molding (infusion, skewering, etc.), coating (coating with powder, sizing, etc.), steaming, braising, frying, smoking, and baking.

8.3.2 Select appropriate pickling methods and control pickling time according to the characteristics and process requirements of livestock and poultry products. During the pickling process, the pickling agent or pickling solution should be evenly dispersed, and the ambient temperature of pickling should not be higher than 4°C. The pickling solution should be prepared and used on the same day.

8.3.3 Appropriate stirring and rolling methods should be used according to the characteristics and processing requirements of livestock and poultry products. The central temperature of the product after stirring and rolling should not be higher than 12°C. The ambient temperature for the rolling process should not be higher than 4°C.

8.3.4 When coating with powder, batter, and sizing, the auxiliary materials should be evenly coated on the product, and the time for coating with powder, batter, and sizing should be shortened as much as possible.

8.3.5 The temperature and heating time of heat treatment processes such as steaming, frying, and baking should be strictly controlled according to process requirements. The heating medium such

as frying oil should maintain an appropriate heating temperature and be adjusted as needed. The heat-treated products should be cooled as soon as possible according to processing requirements.

8.4 Cooling and freezing

8.4.1 When producing refrigerated prepared meat products, the cooling process should be carried out in an environment with temperature between 0 ℃ to 4 ℃, and the central temperature of the product should be reduced to 4 ℃ or below.

8.4.2 When producing frozen prepared meat products, the freezing process should be carried out in an environment with temperature below -23 ℃, and the central temperature of the product should be reduced to -18 ℃ or below. The production processes using quick freezing technology should also comply with the relevant provisions of GB 31646.

8.5 Packaging

8.5.1 Before packaging, the inner packaging materials should be cleaned and disinfected as needed.

8.5.2 The ambient temperature of the inner packaging should be controlled below 12°C.

8.5.3 The packaged products should be placed in the storage warehouse in a timely manner.

8.6 Waste disposal

Waste generated during the production processes should be classified and stored in special facilities according to their characteristics and should be transported and disposed of in a timely manner.

9 Contamination Control During the Production Process

9.1 General requirements

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

9.2 Biological contamination control

9.2.1 Cleaning and disinfection

9.2.1.1 Processing facilities, equipment, and tools should be cleaned and disinfected in a timely manner after use to prevent cross contamination of subsequent products.

9.2.1.2 When manual operation is required (such as manual skewering), employees should conduct pre-shift hygiene as required, including cleaning and disinfection of workstations, hands, etc.

9.2.1.3 The processing workshop should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

9.2.1.4 When hot water is used for cleaning and disinfection, the temperature of the water for cleaning should not be lower than 40°C, and the water temperature for disinfection should not be lower than 82°C.

9.2.2 Monitoring of microorganisms during production

9.2.2.1 It is advisable to determine the possible microbial contamination risks in the production process and production environment through Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and take effective control measures.

9.2.2.2 If necessary, a microbial monitoring procedure for the production processes of prepared meat products should be established, including microbial monitoring indicators, sampling points, monitoring frequency, sampling and testing methods, evaluation principles, and disposal of non-conformities, etc., which can be implemented with reference to Appendix A.

9.3 Chemical contamination control

9.3.1 Tools, facilities, and equipment that are in contact with the product should be made of corrosion-resistant and non-toxic materials.

9.3.2 Effective measures should be taken to control the generation of secondary harmful chemicals during processing. Develop and verify relevant process parameters, and strictly control the temperature and time for frying, smoking, and other production processes.

9.3.3 During the frying process, the residues in the frying oil should be removed in a timely manner. The oil replacement plan should be made, and the frying oil should be regularly replaced according to the plan. The edible vegetable oil used in the frying process should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 2716[8].

9.3.4 Appropriate cleaning and disinfecting agents should be selected based on the chemical properties of the facilities, equipment, and tools that are in direct contact with the products to ensure that no chemical reaction occurs with the surface of the product during cleaning and disinfection. After disinfection, they should be thoroughly cleaned to avoid chemical residues.

9.4 Physical contamination control

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

10 Testing

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

[8] National Food Safety Standard Vegetable Oil GB2716-2018.

11 Storage and Transportation

11.1 General requirements

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881 and GB 31621.

11.2 Storage

11.2.1 Refrigerated prepared meat products should be stored in a storage warehouse for refrigerated products at temperature of 0℃ to 4℃, and frozen prepared meat products should be stored in a storage warehouse for frozen products not higher than -18℃.

11.2.2 Stored products should be stacked and placed in different areas according to product categories, and the stacking should be kept at an appropriate distance from the wall and the ground. The stacking height should ensure that the packaging box does not deform under pressure and the number of layers is appropriate. The stacking method should not affect the circulation of the cooling air.

11.2.3 Products that may cause cross contamination or mixed odor should not be stored in the same storage warehouse.

11.3 Transportation

11.3.1 It shall comply with the relevant provisions of GB 31605.

11.3.2 Transport vehicles for refrigeration shall be used during transportation.

11.3.3 The temperature inside the refrigerated transport vehicle shall be precooled to 10℃ or below before loading.

11.3.4 The temperature inside the transport vehicle for transporting refrigerated prepared meat products shall be controlled within the range of 0℃ to 4℃, and the temperature inside the transport vehicle for transporting frozen prepared meat products shall be controlled at -18℃ or below.

11.3.5 The loading operation time shall be strictly controlled, and the temperature increase of food during loading and unloading shall not exceed 3℃.

11.3.6 The temperature inside the vehicle shall be monitored during transportation, and the monitoring device shall be calibrated regularly. When the temperature inside the vehicle exceeds the set range, corrective actions should be taken immediately, and the range and time of over-temperature shall be recorded truthfully.

12 Product Traceability and Recall Management

It shall comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881 and relevant national laws and regulations

13 Training

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

14 Management System and Personnel

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

15 Record and File Management

It should comply with the relevant provisions of GB 14881.

Appendix A

Guidelines for Microbial Monitoring Procedures in the Production of Prepared Meat Products

A.1 This appendix provides the requirements for microbial monitoring of the environment and products in the production processes for the prepared meat products. Enterprises may make appropriate adjustments based on product characteristics and production processes.

A.2 Enterprises should carry out inspection activities in accordance with internal quality control requirements, verify the cleaning effect, and monitor raw materials and auxiliary materials, semi-finished products, finished products, and the production environment. Please refer to Table A.1 for implementation.

A.3 Enterprises that carry out microbial monitoring should be equipped with appropriate testing equipment, facilities, and reagents. The number of testing equipment should be consistent with the production capacity of the enterprise.

A.4 When establishing an environmental microbial monitoring procedure, it should be implemented in accordance with the relevant provisions of GB 14881. The collection, disposal, and testing methods of samples should be determined in combination with the actual production situation.

A.5 Environmental microbial sampling points should mainly focus on cooling rooms and inner packaging workshops, and other workshops can be monitored as needed.

Table A.1 Requirements for Microbial Monitoring during the Processing of Prepared Meat Products

Monitoring Item		**Sampling Points [a]**	**Microorganisms [b]**	**Monitoring Frequency [c]**	**Indicator Limits**
Environmental Microbial Monitoring	Food Contact Surfaces	Hands, work uniforms and gloves of production personnel; conveyor belts; tools and utensils; workstation surfaces and other equipment surfaces that directly contact prepared	Total bacterial count, Coliforms group, Listeria monocytogenes, etc.	Cleaning validation should be conducted after cleaning and disinfection; other monitoring activity needs to be conducted at least once a month.	Determined based on actual production conditions

		meat products			
	Surfaces Close to Food or Food Contacting Surfaces	Outer surfaces of equipment, surfaces of stands and control panels, etc.	Total bacterial count, Coliforms group, Listeria monocytogenes, etc.	At least once a month.	Determined based on actual production conditions
	Environmental Air in Processing Areas	Air near to the actual products without packaging	Total bacterial count, Salmonella, etc.	At least once a month.	Determined based on actual production conditions
	Drainage Facilities	Drainage ditches in each workshop, especially for low-temperature workshops such as cooling rooms, etc.	Listeria monocytogenes	At least once a month.	Determined based on actual production conditions
Microbial Monitoring in Production Processes		Auxiliary materials, pre-heated semi-finished products, and products to be packaged at the end of the production line.	Total bacterial count, Coliforms group, Salmonella, etc.	At least once a month.	Determined based on actual production conditions
[a] Sampling points can be selected based on food characteristics and actual processing conditions. [b] One or more indicator bacteria can be selected for monitoring as needed. [c] The monitoring frequency can be determined based on the risk of specific sampling points.					

Attachments:

GB 31661-2025.pdf