

## Advisory to food premises serving raw oysters

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June 21, 2013

We would like to remind restaurant owners, Chefs, food handlers, retail dealers and suppliers of shellfish of the importance of **TEMPERATURE CONTROL** to reduce the chance of bacteria causing illnesses, such as *Vibrio*, to grow in the raw shellfish.

### Safe handling of raw shellfish:

- Delivery trucks for raw shellfish should be refrigerated.
- Check that incoming shipments of raw shellfish are received in ice (temperature should be at or below 4°C). If they are not, **refuse and return the shipment.**
- Record receiving temperatures for accepted products.
- Put delivered product into refrigeration immediately upon receipt (4°C).
- Monitor and record onsite storage temperatures at regular intervals.
- Minimize time that oysters are out of refrigerated controls, such as during washing periods.
- Ensure raw shellfish on display are embedded in ice.
- All raw shellfish should come with a tag.
  - Write the date you start serving these shellfish to customers.
  - Write the date you finish serving these shellfish.
  - Keep the tags for a minimum of 90 days.

A raw shellfish receiving log and an example food safety plan for the service of raw oysters can also be accessed on the [BCCDC web-site](#)

[Food Safety Plan for Oysters](#)

[Raw Shellfish Receiving Log](#)

### ***Please ensure all staff are following these recommendations***

In the summer of 2012, there was a significant increase in reports of confirmed *Vibrio* illness associated with raw oyster consumption received by the BC Centre for Disease Control.

*Vibrio* is a naturally occurring bacteria in sea water. This bacteria can grow in shellfish, especially when the sea water temperatures are warmer. Higher water temperatures favour higher levels of bacteria. The *Vibrio* bacteria can propagate due to temperature abuse, which can occur anywhere along the distribution chain.