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# Transportation in the Chain of Custody

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Protecting the U.S. food supply has become an issue of significant importance to those playing a role in the chain of custody. Many reasons contribute to the heightened awareness, and the elevated role that people and business must assume, in making certain that both the food supply and consumer remain safe.



The Food Safety Modernization Act, (FSMA), signed into law in January of 2011, the creation of dramatically more stringent auditing schemes as part of the Global Food Safety Initiatives, (GFSI), addressing food, packaging, storage and distribution for producers, manufacturers and distributors, coupled with a growing media transparency that can broadcast a message to millions in just moments- have all contributed to the increased awareness and concern of food safety throughout the chain of custody. Evaluating all the areas where breaches or critical events can occur has been well documented over time, and successfully done for the larger part. Taking a moment to isolate the associated phases involved in the chain of custody seemed to resonate a repeated theme, that transportation and distribution of goods is often over looked, or minimized- and a closer look may help stimulate perspective.

Proper transportation of processed foods and raw commodities requires management of the systems that directly impact issues of spoilage, pest infestation, packaging integrity and food quality. Whether the delivery system is by rail, waterway or road, recognition of possible pitfalls and the implementation of best practices, will yield a better product and reduce risk to the general population. For example, do any of the outlined scenarios improve the chances that product will become pest infested during transport?

- *Transporting products in seasonally high temperatures or in warmer climates*
- *Understanding the delivery line on lengthy shipping times of imports at the port*
- *Shipment routes and handling that require product to stay on a vessel, ground transport or railcar longer than necessary*
- *Shipment of goods conducive to pest activity- flour, corn, wheat and most dried food products*
- *Products not packaged in metal, heavy plastic containers or tightly closed glass*
- *Unsanitary conditions or infestation present on transport vehicle*