



United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection Division

PATCH # 053

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REMARKS: This information pertains to Condition of Container Examination for fruits and vegetables procured by the Commodity Procurement Program (CPP), regarding formal examination requests at destination for non checkloaded products.

BACKGROUND:

Fruits and Vegetables with no checkloading requirements will rely on the commercial practices of the contactors to supply the correct product, quantity, and commodity condition, including transportation conditions and sealing. Occasionally a load of government furnished fruits and vegetables will arrive at its destination in poor condition (shifted pallets, crushed cases), or in an unsealed conveyance and will be “rejected” by the receiver.

For loads “rejected” at destination, and at the contractors’ request, CPP may grant acceptance of the load following an SCI Division Condition of Container examination. SCI will verify the load as previously certified, verify count, and document the current condition of product containers.

All SCI Agricultural Commodity Graders (ACGs) and Federal-State licensees must be trained in procedures for the examination of the condition of food containers at destination.

Procedures for Condition of Container Examinations at Destination

The following procedures will be used when a request for examination of the condition of food containers for product at destination has been submitted.

Contractor responsibilities

- Request COC via submitting a completed SC-237 or SC-356 to the appropriate inspection office.
 - The SC-237 will designate “Other, Specify” under “Inspection Requested For” and state “Condition of Containers.”

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- The SC-356 will designate “Condition of Container Examination” under the “Additional Requirements” section.
- Supply SCI Representative with proper documentation to verify identity (certificates, shipping documentation etc.).
- Coordinate with the receiver to arrange for the COC examination including:
 - Arranging all containers so they are readily accessible for sampling.
 - Providing necessary labor and equipment for handling the product including re-stacking pallets that may have shifted.
 - Supplying adequately lighted facilities.
 - Re-casing product involved in the inspection when applicable

SCI Division Responsibilities

- Verify lot identity by cross referencing shipping documentation, inspection documentation, and code marks on containers (if any).

NOTE: If lot identity cannot be determined as previously certified, a re-inspection will be required.
- Verify count
- After lot identity has been confirmed, perform COC examination as outlined in this manual and in accordance with The U.S. Standards for condition of food containers, 7 CFR 42. The normal double sampling rate will apply to all COC inspections performed at destination (see [7 CFR 42.109](#) Table I-A) however, if abnormal conditions are observed upon arrival (i.e. shifted pallets, wet cases, leakers, or other applicable abnormalities) the tightened rate may be applied at SCI Divisions discretion (see [7 CFR 42.110](#) Table II-A).
- Record results regarding examination on the appropriate AD forms based on type of primary and secondary containers in the load. This information then becomes a part of the inspection records. See [Condition of Food Container Manual, Addendum & Worksheets](#) for applicable AD forms and visual aids.
- Upon completion, make a copy and provide the contractor with the original signed COC examination worksheet.

NOTE: When requested by contractor, SCI will only perform a COC on the containers in the load. SCI will not seal trailers or certify the seal on the trailer. The only documentation provided to the contractor is the signed Condition of Container examination worksheet.

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Billing

Lot inspection fees will be charged as “actual time spent” in accordance with the USDA Sampling Manual “Time and Expense” section when billing for COC examinations of processed fruits and vegetables.

Hourly based inspection service fees will apply for COC inspections of fresh fruits and vegetables. For current hourly fee rate see the [General Market Manual](#) Appendix II – Schedule of User Fees

Billing for these services can be completed via FEIRS or BIIS as appropriate.

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