

Identifying Allergens: Fish

Retail Food Establishments – Food Safety



People with food allergies have symptoms that range from mild (e.g., hives, itching, flushing) to life-threatening (e.g., loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, extensive swelling, dizziness due to drop in blood pressure). The onset of symptoms may occur within minutes, hours or days after eating a food that is an allergen or eating a food that contains an allergen.

R.61-25, Chapter 3, Section 3-602.11 requires labeling of grab-and-go foods and bulk customer self-service foods in a retail food establishment. Along with listing all ingredients, the label must clearly list all major food allergens in the product.



Labeling does not apply to table service or foods packaged for a to-go order. Customers with allergy concerns may ask questions about ingredients, or how a product is prepared. As a person-in-charge, a server, or other food staff, you play an important role in helping the customer make informed decisions about their food choices.

A food may contain more than one ingredient identified as an allergen.

Fish is listed as one of the major food allergens.

FISH

[Regulation 61-25, Retail Food Establishments](#) defines **fish** in part as fresh or saltwater finfish, crustaceans, mollusks and other forms of aquatic life. However, **fish as a listed allergen refers to finfish**. These bony fish with fins, gills and scales are sometimes called “true fish”.

There are over 25,000 known species of finfish. Some of the common finfish **species** served in South Carolina food establishments are:

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|---------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| • Alaskan Whitefish | • Cod | • Mahi Mahi | • Trout |
| • Anchovy | • Croaker | • Perch | • Tuna |
| • Bass | • Flounder | • Salmon | • Whiting |
| • Bream | • Grouper | • Snapper | |
| • Catfish | • Haddock | • Swordfish | |
| | • Halibut | • Tilapia | |



Labeling for prepared and packaged grab-and-go foods that contain finfish, must list the **species**.



Fish and processed fish byproducts may be added as an ingredient in a variety of food products. For example:

- **Fish gelatin** (e.g., soups, marshmallows, jellybeans, gummy candies, ice cream and other desserts)
- **Sauce ingredient** (e.g., Worcestershire, barbecue, nam pla, nuoc cham)
- **Surimi** - Fish paste used to make imitation crustacean shellfish (e.g., crab, lobster).



Eggs (fish roe including caviar) from finfish are also considered allergens.

Along with being aware of which menu item(s) contain fish, food staff should also be aware that:

Cross-contamination may occur if in-use utensils or equipment that have been in contact with finfish are used for other menu items.

For example:

- Fries cooked in a fry vat that was used to cook fish.
- Utensils used to prepare or serve fish that are used with other foods.



Additional information and guidance on **Major Food Allergens** may be found in [Regulation 61-25, Retail Food Establishments](#), Chapter 1, Section 1-201.10(B)(64) and the Conference of Food Protection [CFP -Major Food Allergen Framework](#).

