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Working Together for a Healthy Community

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Summary of Labeling Requirements

This document is intended only as a summary of the requirements of the federal Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (FPLA) and "A Food Labeling Guide." Please refer to the FPLA or "A Food Labeling Guide" for the complete labeling regulations, or visit http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/2lg-toc.html for further information.

All product labels must have the following four required statements:

(1) An identity statement,
(2) a net weight statement,
(3) a list of ingredients, and
(4) the company name with address.

The minimum print size for each of the four required statements is 1/16 inch. The size of the characters in the net weight statement is determined by the area of the principal display panel (see items 6 and 7 under Net Weight or Net Contents) and may be greater than 1/16 inch.

I. Identity

Identity is the common name of the food, or an appropriate descriptive term. A fanciful name commonly used by the public is acceptable when the nature of the food is obvious. Any name may be used as long as it is qualified by a descriptive name of what the product actually is. Brand names, trademarks, or product identities that are misleading will not be allowed (i.e. Mountain Water, when the water is from a well on the plains).

II. Net Weight or Net Contents

1. The net contents are listed in either ounces, pounds, fluid ounces, pints and/or quarts depending on the consistency of the product and common practice.

2. The net weight statement shall have the words Net Weight, or Net Wt. for food products sold by weight. . The terms Fl. oz., or Net_ fl. oz. or Net Contents_ fl. oz. shall be used for products sold by fluid measure.

3. It is highly recommended that a metric equivalent be included as a parenthetical statement in the net weight statement.
   EXAMPLES: Net Wt. 1lb. (454 g.) or I pt. (473 ml) or Net 1 fl. oz. (29.5 ml).

4. The net weight statement must be parallel to the base of the package and shall be in the lower 30% of the label.

5. An empty space void of printing must be maintained between any printed matter appearing above, below, to the left, or the right of the net weight statement. The empty space above and below the net weight statement shall be equal to the height of the characters in the net weight statement. The empty space to the left and the right of the net weight statement shall be equal to twice the width of the letter "N" used in the style of printing in the net weight statement.

6. The size of the characters in the net weight statement is determined by the area of the surface or side of the food package on which the label is displayed. This surface or side is called "the area of the principal display panel". The following information should be used to determine the area of the principal display panel:

    a) For rectangular packages, multiply the length of the package by the width of the package.
    b) For cylindrical or nearly cylindrical containers, multiply 40% of the height of the container by the circumference of the container.
    c) Determine 40% of the surface area for containers with an otherwise different shape.

7. **All** numbers and letters (including the "e" in net) shall have the minimum heights indicated by the table below:

Label area of the package surface	Size of net wt. Characters
5 square inches or less	1/16" min. height
More than 5 square inches but not more than 25 square inches	1/8" min. height
More than 25 square inches but not more than 100 square inches	3/16" min. height
Greater than 100 square inches	1/4" min. height

The product identity and net weight statements must appear on the portion of the label displayed to the consumer.

III. Ingredients

1. Ingredients are listed in decreasing order of predominance from most to least. The ingredient present in the greatest quantity is listed first and the least is listed last.

2. All of the food ingredients must be listed by their common or usual name. Ingredients containing two or more ingredients such as baking powder, salsa, soy sauce, prepared mustard, etc., must have a breakdown of the ingredients. A simple way to list these ingredients is to list the contents of an ingredient in parentheses behind the ingredient, for

example, would be listed as soy sauce (water, wheat, soy beans, salt, spices, etc.). After the parentheses, continue on with the remaining ingredients.

3. Shortening or oils must be identified by the common name such as soybean oil, corn oil, lard, etc.

4. Spices except for salt, garlic, celery and onions can generally be described as spices, but other spices may need to be identified.

IV. Company Name and Address

1. The name and complete address (including street address, city, state, and zip code) of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor of the product must be listed on the label.

2. Post office boxes cannot be substituted for physical addresses.

3. The street address can be omitted if the business name, as it appears on the label, is listed in either the telephone book or can be obtained from directory assistance for the city listed on the label.

4. If the firm listed on the label does not manufacture the food, then the relation between the firm and the food must be declared with a term such as "Distributed by" or "Packed by" or "Manufactured for".

The ingredient listing and company name statements must be conspicuously listed on the package.

All required statements must be in common English terminology.

<u>Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) stipulations:</u>

A nutrition facts panel may be required if nutritional claims are made on the label, or if the company is producing more than 100,000 units annually and has more than 100 employees.

For more information refer to the FPLA or “A Food Labeling Guide” and/or feel free to contact the Consumer Protection Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment at (303) 692-3620.