

		West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources			
		MANUAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROCEDURES			
Section	Food	Date	November 12, 1987	Procedure #	F-5
Subject	Damaged Metal Food Containers (Tinned Cans)			Page	1 of 2

Most containers of processed foods are closed in a manner which produces a vacuum in the container. This creates a condition whereby anything less than a secure seal could permit "sucking in" or aspiration of air, water, or other material. One of the probable results other than the undesirable loss of vacuum would be spoilage of the product due to the entrance of bacteria in the aspirated material.

Frequently food containers are subjected to abuse at the manufacturing plant, warehouse, or delivery vehicles, or at the retail establishment which breaks down the integrity of the container and possibly subjects the contents to contamination.

Any of the following conditions of a metal container of food (canned foods) strongly indicates that the contents have spoiled or are in the process of spoiling; therefore, the sale or use thereof is prohibited.

1. FLIPPER – A can that normally appears flat, but when brought down sharply on its end on a flat surface, one end flips out. When pressure is applied to this end, it flips in again and the can appears flat.
2. SPRINGER – A can with one end permanently bulging. When sufficient pressure is applied to this end, it will flip in, but the other end will flip out.
3. SOFT SWELL – A can bulged at both ends but not so tightly the ends cannot be pushed in somewhat with thumb pressure.
4. HARD SWELL – A can bulged so tightly at both ends that no indentation can be made with thumb pressure. A hard swell will generally "buckle" before the can bursts. Bursting usually occurs at the double seam, over the side seam lap, or in the middle of the seam.

CONTAINERS OF FOOD WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED CHARACTERISTICS SHALL NOT BE USED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

Food contents in containers with missing labels or in which the containers have been, or appear to have been damaged by fire, flooding or flood waters, are not to be used or sold or offered for human consumption. Any food container which has been dented at the seams would render the contents SUSPECT. The food contents in a container that is severely dented at the seam shall not be used, nor shall food from a container which is, or has been leaking. The food is not to be used from containers with severe "V-shaped" dent(s) as the metal of the container may have been stretched.

Containers with minor dents are acceptable; however, the contents should be used immediately. Rusted cans, prior to use, shall be thoroughly inspected for evidence of spoilage and/or leakage. If spoilage or leakage is evident, the contents of these containers shall not be used. If spoilage or leakage is not evident, the contents of rusted containers may be used PROVIDED they are used IMMEDIATELY. IMMEDIATELY as used herein shall mean within twenty-four (24) hours.

References

History

Old procedure number F-31

Attachments