

**Fish Products
Inspection Manual**

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nitrogen, ethanol, indole and histamine concentrations in a product, are indicators used to scientifically measure time / temperature abuse and/or chemical changes due to autolytic enzymatic processes.

Competent - an inspector is competent in sensory inspection when they have demonstrated the ability to determine a sample's compliance to the appropriate product standard, within an acceptable level of deviation. This is achieved through the completion of the mentorship program.

Expert panel - a group of three Analysts who are chosen to render sensory decisions on samples presented at the sensory workshops. Members of the expert panel must have successfully completed an assessment for the products presented, or demonstrated that they are able to consistently and accurately determine the quality of a product.

Mentoring - for the fish sensory inspection program, mentoring refers to the mandatory process of coaching and assessing Mentees prior to qualifying as an Analyst.

Product Category - product categories are used as a means to group related products for the purposes of training and assessment. For sensory training and assessment, product categories are consistent with the process operation types outlined in the Facilities Inspection Manual, i.e., canned; ready-to-eat; shellfish; pickled, spiced and marinated; salted and dried; fresh, frozen and semi-preserved; other.

Product Standard - a document which defines the minimum acceptable physical and sensory quality of a product with respect to taint, decomposition and unwholesomeness, and other applicable requirements.

Sample - a unit of product for which an individual result is expected. Such a sample could consist of a single piece of fish or fish product, several pieces of fish or fish product, an entire fish or more than one fish.

Science Branch's National Sensory and Chemical Indicators Group (NSCIG) - the NSCIG supplies the scientific support for existing and newly developed sensory attributes in the determination of taint, decomposition and unwholesomeness (TDU) of seafood products. The NSCIG also addresses the need for quality assurance and standardization of sensory evaluations within the Fish Inspection Program.



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administrative and technical support for both National and Regional Workshops.

- 7.4 Operations is responsible for identifying the training needs of inspectors, managing the mentoring process, coordinating and delivering Regional workshops and ensuring that Analysts are assessed regularly.

8. DIRECTIVES

- 8.1 Appendices A through D contain the following directives:

Appendix A - Mentorship Program
Appendix B - Sensory Training Workshops
Appendix C - Assessments
Appendix D - Check Sample Sessions

**APPENDIX A
MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Mentorship is a supportive learning relationship of peers between an Analyst (mentor) who shares his/her knowledge, experience and insights with an inspector (mentee) who is ready and willing to benefit from this exchange. Both parties are responsible for conducting themselves in an open and transparent manner
- 1.2 The mentee is responsible for active participation in the mentoring process. By actively engaging in mentorship activities, the mentee helps shape their overall learning experience.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Programs, Science Branch and PTD (Professional Technical Development) support the mentoring process by providing mentors with coaching and training development, sensory inspection guidance and communication, and by assessing the consistency of sensory evaluations.
- 2.2 Programs Branch provides mentorship oversight via the Area Program staff and the Program staff in Ottawa. The Area Program staff provide technical support for the delivery of the sensory inspection program including mentoring. The Program staff in Ottawa provide national program support and training development.
- 2.3 Operations Branch manages the mentoring process including the identification and training of mentors, the determination of training needs for mentees, the delivery of sensory mentoring, and the determination of Analyst status. More specifically, the supervisor will:
- ▶ establish access to mentors and, when appropriate, nominate new mentors,
 - ▶ arrange for training of potential mentors, where required,
 - ▶ determine training requirements for inspectors, and facilitate training, as needed, prior to mentoring,
 - ▶ initiate mentoring,
 - ▶ review individual mentoring plans,
 - ▶ facilitate of the accomplishment of the mentoring plan,
 - ▶ make the final assessment of achievement for Analyst

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- ▶ status based on recommendations from the mentor,
- ▶ hold and/or convey confidential records of mentoring, and
- ▶ communicate the names of mentors and personnel qualified as Analysts to Area personnel (e.g. Area Training Officer, Planning and Resource Officer or Regional Operations Coordinator) responsible for maintaining such records.

2.4 It is the role of the mentor to coach the mentee by sharing knowledge and experience and help the mentee to develop their own expertise. This is achieved by:

- ▶ developing the mentoring plan in consultation with the mentee and supervisor,
- ▶ establishing goals for each mentoring session,
- ▶ providing advice and guidance to the mentee,
- ▶ making a record of the mentee's accomplishments,
- ▶ communicating the mentee's progress regularly with both the mentee and supervisor and identifying areas that require support,
- ▶ providing the supervisor with objective evidence for use in the assessment of the mentee's qualifications, and
- ▶ making recommendations to the supervisor, as to when the mentee is fully trained in sensory analysis.

2.5 It is the role of the mentee to actively participate in the design and completion of the Sensory Mentoring Program as developed in conjunction with their mentor.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF MENTORS

3.1 Supervisors nominate operational personnel (e.g., inspectors, supervisors, specialists, and others) to become mentors by completing a Sensory Inspection Mentor Recommendation Report (Form A). The report describes the attributes required for a Sensory Mentor, and how the nominee demonstrates each attribute. The required attributes are:

- the nominee has achieved Analyst status by completion of the mentorship process, or equivalent, and demonstrates knowledge and skill in conducting sensory inspections,
- the nominee has, and demonstrates, the ability to:
 - share and communicate their knowledge and expertise in a way that supports and challenges others,
 - transfer information in a clear, non biased and constructive manner,
 - determine a colleague's accomplishments and



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communicate with the colleague in a positive manner,

- the nominee is able to adapt to change (e.g. technology, new products and new programs)
- the nominee is recognized by their peers as possessing these qualities, and
- the nominee is willing to mentor others.

3.2 The Inspection Manager has the responsibility for accepting or declining the mentor nomination and advising the supervisor accordingly. The names of mentors should be communicated to the Area Training Officer and Program Manager.

3.3 It is recommended that mentors participate in coaching and mentorship courses.

4. PAIRING A MENTEE WITH A MENTOR

4.1 The supervisor identifies an inspector for mentoring and, by completing a Sensory Inspection Mentoring Entry Form (Form B), verifies that the inspector is designated under the appropriate legislation, and available to begin the sensory mentoring process.

4.2 The supervisor arranges for a mentor to be paired with the mentee and notifies both parties.

4.3 The mentor will contact the mentee to schedule an initial meeting with the objective to discuss the mentoring process and the mentoring plan. At the initial meeting, the mentor will explain the mentor-mentee-supervisor relationship, the mentoring process, the mentoring plan, and the final assessment by the supervisor.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MENTORING PLAN

5.1 To aid in the development of an individual mentoring plan, the supervisor provides the mentor with the completed Sensory Inspection Mentoring Entry Form (Form B) which contains a summary of the mentee's training and experience. The mentor collaborates with the supervisor and the mentee to identify the individual needs to be addressed in the mentoring plan.

5.2 The Sensory Inspection Mentoring Plan (Form C) is a schedule of mentoring sessions, sensory-related inspection activities and training (if applicable), that will be conducted during the mentorship process.



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5.3 The mentoring plan is designed to build on the experience of the mentee and provide any additional experience necessary to achieve Analyst status. The plan must be designed to ensure that the mentee experiences sensory inspections for all types of products that they will be responsible for inspecting.

5.4 The activities in the mentoring plan should increasingly challenge the mentee's developing sensory skills. In the beginning, the mentoring activities are usually carried out with close interaction between the mentor and mentee and gradually move toward independent actions as the mentee acquires and develops the required skill sets and abilities. It is important that training needs are met before sensory inspection activities requiring specialized knowledge are carried out.

6. COMPLETION OF THE MENTORING PLAN

6.1 The mentor oversees the completion of the mentoring plan but the mentor is not required to accompany the mentee at every exercise. Since the mentee is unable to make official sensory decisions, other Analysts may assist the mentee when the mentor is unavailable.

6.2 The mentor schedules meetings regularly or on an as-needed basis, with the mentee and supervisor. These meetings are an opportunity to discuss the progress of the mentee and to identify issues which may be hindering the mentoring process. The supervisor and/or the mentee may also request meetings as required.

6.3 The mentor uses the Sensory Inspection Mentoring Achievement Report for Analyst Status (Form D) to record the mentee's progress (the mentor provides objective evidence and constructive remarks only). Upon completion of the mentoring plan, the mentor will present the report with accomplishments indicated to the supervisor.

6.4 The supervisor uses the completed Mentoring Plan and Sensory Inspection Mentoring Achievement Report for Analyst Status, communication with the mentee and mentor, and other activities as required, to assess if the mentee has achieved Analyst status. The supervisor may also determine that additional mentoring and/or training is required; this decision could initiate another cycle of mentoring including a succeeding mentoring plan.



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7. RECORD KEEPING

- 7.1 The supervisor uses the Mentee Assessment Report (Form E) to record and communicate the achievement of Analyst status to the mentee and the mentor. Copies should also be provided to the Area Training Officer and the Fish Program Manager through regular communication channels.
- 7.2 All records of mentoring are protected. When the mentoring plan is accomplished, the mentor transfers all reports of mentoring to the mentee's supervisor who takes responsibility for handling the file.

8. FORMS

- Form A - Sensory Inspection Mentor Recommendation Report
- Form B - Sensory Inspection Mentoring Entry Form
- Form C - Sensory Inspection Mentoring Plan
- Form D - Sensory Inspection Mentoring Achievement Report for Analyst Status
- Form E - Sensory Inspection Mentee Assessment Report



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**APPENDIX B
SENSORY TRAINING WORKSHOPS**

1. National and regional workshops are conducted to train inspectors in the interpretation and application of general and/or specific product standards and to evaluate the ability of Analysts to interpret and apply product standards.
2. National workshops play an important role in ensuring national interpretation of product standards. Regional workshops play an important role in developing and maintaining the sensory abilities of inspectors.
3. Sensory training workshops will be combined with an assessment.
4. For Regional workshops, priority to attend should be given to those who have not been previously assessed.
5. National workshops will be held in rotating locations in the Areas. The majority of participants will attend from the Region in which the workshop is held, along with at least one participant from each of the other Areas.
6. Operations will nominate the attendees for the National workshops and provide a list of the attendees to Programs. Priority should be given to those who will be responsible for mentorship and the delivery of training in the Regions. This will ensure that a national interpretation of product standards is being used to train new Analysts across the country.

**APPENDIX C
ASSESSMENTS**

1. Assessments are conducted to assess the competency of inspectors in evaluating a set of samples against a calibrated Expert Panel and, where appropriate, correlated chemical indicators of spoilage.
2. Regions are responsible for ensuring that Analysts are assessed regularly. A guideline for regular assessment is once every three years for each product category.
3. When the results from an assessment indicate that an Analyst is unsuccessful at meeting the standard for a product from one or more product categories, they will no longer be considered an Analyst for that category. As such, they will not be permitted to render decisions on products from that category. The individual will be considered a mentee for that product category until they receive additional training and mentoring and have either been reassessed or signed off as an Analyst by their mentor and supervisor.
4. The Inspection Manager and/or Supervisor are responsible for any resultant action due to the loss of the Analyst status, and to arrange the follow-up training for the individual to regain Analysts status in that product category. Steps should be taken to determine the cause for the failure. In situations where there is a repeated loss of status in one or more product categories by an Analyst, consideration should be given to the need of this individual to maintain this status before follow-up training is initiated.
5. To regain Analyst status for a product category, the individual should receive follow-up training specific to that product category from other Analysts and/or mentors in their Area. The individual must successfully demonstrate their ability to assess that product category for compliance to the set standard through the mentorship program or through successful completion of a regional or national assessment.

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**APPENDIX D
CHECK SAMPLE SESSIONS**

1. Check sample sessions provide a means of monitoring the national consistency of sensory evaluation activities. The objectives of the check sample sessions are:
 - ▶ to evaluate if product standards are being consistently applied across the country,
 - ▶ to monitor Analyst performance and provide Analysts with feedback on their application of the standard from year to year,
 - ▶ to reduce drift in an Analyst's application of a product standard,
 - ▶ to provide Regional management and workshop coordinators with data to evaluate the overall consistency of sensory evaluation activities, and to determine if Analysts require further training.
2. The number of products and samples to be evaluated during check sample sessions will be determined each year as part of the annual workplanning process.
3. Samples for the check sample sessions are prepared by the NSCIG to ensure accuracy and national consistency.
4. Where the results of a check sample session indicate that an Analyst requires further training, it is the responsibility of the Inspection Manager and/or Supervisor to investigate the cause of the Analyst's performance and arrange for appropriate follow-up mentoring or training.