

Door to Door Meat Sales

Although there are many legitimate door-to-door food sales companies licensed in North Dakota, some companies continue to sell food without meeting the appropriate requirements and without proper licensure. In the interest of food safety, the Division of Food and Lodging recommends consumers consider the following safety measures prior to purchasing foods through door-to-door sales.

Ask to see the companies Retail Food License. The North Dakota Department of Health requires each truck that is used for door-to-door food sales to be properly licensed and inspected. The operators are required to carry the permit in their unit at all times. You can also call our Department during normal business hours at 701-328-1291 and we can check our current establishment's listings for you at that time.

Ask to see literature from the company (brochure, business card, etc. for review. It is important to get the company's name, place of origin, address, phone number, salesperson's name, and product return policy – prior to making a purchasing decision. It is also beneficial to ask how long the company has been in business and obtain the owner's name.

If it is a meat product, check the product grading and inspection information. Inspection of the meat by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is mandatory, (but grading is not) and the information about the plant's inspection number must be provided on the label. If it is not, or if you are being asked to buy meat in bulk lacking sufficient labeling, you cannot be sure the meat has been properly inspected as required by the Federal government. Be wary of marketing such as "restaurant quality" as these descriptions have nothing to do with the meat's quality.

Always check to see that the products, if necessary, have been transported in a refrigerated vehicle. Never buy products that have been stored in the vehicle's trunk or in an unrefrigerated vehicle. The product may be unsafe because bacteria and pathogens can multiply rapidly during times of elevated temperatures. Frozen food should be stored at 0°F and fresh foods should be stored at 41°F or below at all times to prevent bacterial growth and spoilage.

NEVER buy products without getting a receipt with the company's name and address on it. If you change your mind about your purchase, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) "Cooling-Off Rule" gives you three days to cancel purchases that are made in your home or at a location that is not the permanent place of business or local address of the seller. (This Rule does not cover sales of \$25 or under.) Under the Rule, the salesperson must orally inform you of your cancellation rights at the time of the sale. You must also be given two copies of a cancellation form and a copy of your contract or receipt. The contract or receipt should include a date, show the name and address of the seller, and explain your right to cancel. For more information on this Rule, you can visit the Federal Trade Commission's website at <http://www.ftc.gov>.

Warning signs for possible illegal door-to-door food sales:

Sales pitches such as:

- “A restaurant refused the order and I can’t take this meat back to my company – I’ll sell it to you at wholesale.”
- My truck is broken down at the corner and I’ve got to sell this meat before it goes bad.”
- The person who purchased this meat wasn’t home – and I need to sell this meat before the end of the day or I’ll be in trouble with my boss. I’ll make you a good deal.”
- The salesperson sells from a vehicle with an ordinary freezer on the back that is unplugged.
- The truck has no permanent markings identifying the business name.
- The food lacks sufficient labeling or markings.

Please call our office at 701-328-1291 to report attempted door-to-door sales by unlicensed companies. It is extremely helpful to obtain the vehicle license number (and state), a detailed description of the vehicle, the company name (if provided), a description of the driver(s), and any literature about the company or the salesperson(s).