

21 USC 348: Food additives

Text contains those laws in effect on April 14, 2026

From Title 21-FOOD AND DRUGS

CHAPTER 9-FEDERAL FOOD, DRUG, AND COSMETIC ACT

SUBCHAPTER IV-FOOD

Jump To:

[Source Credit](#)

[Miscellaneous](#)

[Amendments](#)

[Change of Name](#)

[Effective Date](#)

§348. Food additives

(a) Unsafe food additives; exception for conformity with exemption or regulation

A food additive shall, with respect to any particular use or intended use of such additives, be deemed to be unsafe for the purposes of the application of clause (2)(C) of section 342(a) of this title, unless-

- (1) it and its use or intended use conform to the terms of an exemption which is in effect pursuant to subsection (j) of this section;
- (2) there is in effect, and it and its use or intended use are in conformity with, a regulation issued under this section prescribing the conditions under which such additive may be safely used; or
- (3) in the case of a food additive as defined in this chapter that is a food contact substance, there is-
 - (A) in effect, and such substance and the use of such substance are in conformity with, a regulation issued under this section prescribing the conditions under which such additive may be safely used; or
 - (B) a notification submitted under subsection (h) that is effective.

While such a regulation relating to a food additive, or such a notification under subsection (h)(1) relating to a food additive that is a food contact substance, is in effect, and has not been revoked pursuant to subsection (i), a food shall not, by reason of bearing or containing such a food additive in accordance with the regulation or notification, be considered adulterated under section 342(a)(1) of this title.

(b) Petition for regulation prescribing conditions of safe use; contents; description of production methods and controls; samples; notice of regulation

(1) Any person may, with respect to any intended use of a food additive, file with the Secretary a petition proposing the issuance of a regulation prescribing the conditions under which such additive may be safely used.

(2) Such petition shall, in addition to any explanatory or supporting data, contain-

- (A) the name and all pertinent information concerning such food additive, including, where available, its chemical identity and composition;
- (B) a statement of the conditions of the proposed use of such additive, including all directions, recommendations, and suggestions proposed for the use of such additive, and including specimens of its proposed labeling;
- (C) all relevant data bearing on the physical or other technical effect such additive is intended to produce, and the quantity of such additive required to produce such effect;
- (D) a description of practicable methods for determining the quantity of such additive in or on food, and any substance formed in or on food, because of its use; and
- (E) full reports of investigations made with respect to the safety for use of such additive, including full information as to the methods and controls used in conducting such investigations.

(3) Upon request of the Secretary, the petitioner shall furnish (or, if the petitioner is not the manufacturer of such additive, the petitioner shall have the manufacturer of such additive furnish, without disclosure to the petitioner) a full description of the methods used in, and the facilities and controls used for, the production of such additive.

(4) Upon request of the Secretary, the petitioner shall furnish samples of the food additive involved, or articles used as components thereof, and of the food in or on which the additive is proposed to be used.

(5) Notice of the regulation proposed by the petitioner shall be published in general terms by the Secretary within thirty days after filing.

(c) Approval or denial of petition; time for issuance of order; evaluation of data; factors

(1) The Secretary shall-

- (A) by order establish a regulation (whether or not in accord with that proposed by the petitioner) prescribing, with respect to one or more proposed uses of the food additive involved, the conditions under which such additive may be safely used (including, but not limited to, specifications as to the particular food or classes of food in or in which such additive may be used, the maximum quantity which may be used or permitted to remain in or on such food, the

manner in which such additive may be added to or used in or on such food, and any directions or other labeling or packaging requirements for such additive deemed necessary by him to assure the safety of such use), and shall notify the petitioner of such order and the reasons for such action; or

(B) by order deny the petition, and shall notify the petitioner of such order and of the reasons for such action.

(2) The order required by paragraph (1)(A) or (B) of this subsection shall be issued within ninety days after the date of filing of the petition, except that the Secretary may (prior to such ninetieth day), by written notice to the petitioner, extend such ninety-day period to such time (not more than one hundred and eighty days after the date of filing of the petition) as the Secretary deems necessary to enable him to study and investigate the petition.

(3) No such regulation shall issue if a fair evaluation of the data before the Secretary-

(A) fails to establish that the proposed use of the food additive, under the conditions of use to be specified in the regulation, will be safe: *Provided*, That no additive shall be deemed to be safe if it is found to induce cancer when ingested by man or animal, or if it is found, after tests which are appropriate for the evaluation of the safety of food additives, to induce cancer in man or animal, except that this proviso shall not apply with respect to the use of a substance as an ingredient of feed for animals which are raised for food production, if the Secretary finds (i) that, under the conditions of use and feeding specified in proposed labeling and reasonably certain to be followed in practice, such additive will not adversely affect the animals for which such feed is intended, and (ii) that no residue of the additive will be found (by methods of examination prescribed or approved by the Secretary by regulations, which regulations shall not be subject to subsections (f) and (g)) in any edible portion of such animal after slaughter or in any food yielded by or derived from the living animal; or

(B) shows that the proposed use of the additive would promote deception of the consumer in violation of this chapter or would otherwise result in adulteration or in misbranding of food within the meaning of this chapter.

(4) If, in the judgment of the Secretary, based upon a fair evaluation of the data before him, a tolerance limitation is required in order to assure that the proposed use of an additive will be safe, the Secretary-

(A) shall not fix such tolerance limitation at a level higher than he finds to be reasonably required to accomplish the physical or other technical effect for which such additive is intended; and

(B) shall not establish a regulation for such proposed use if he finds upon a fair evaluation of the data before him that such data do not establish that such use would accomplish the intended physical or other technical effect.

(5) In determining, for the purposes of this section, whether a proposed use of a food additive is safe, the Secretary shall consider among other relevant factors-

(A) the probable consumption of the additive and of any substance formed in or on food because of the use of the additive;

(B) the cumulative effect of such additive in the diet of man or animals, taking into account any chemically or pharmacologically related substance or substances in such diet; and

(C) safety factors which in the opinion of experts qualified by scientific training and experience to evaluate the safety of food additives are generally recognized as appropriate for the use of animal experimentation data.

(d) Regulation issued on Secretary's initiative

The Secretary may at any time, upon his own initiative, propose the issuance of a regulation prescribing, with respect to any particular use of a food additive, the conditions under which such additive may be safely used, and the reasons therefor. After the thirtieth day following publication of such a proposal, the Secretary may by order establish a regulation based upon the proposal.

(e) Publication and effective date of orders

Any order, including any regulation established by such order, issued under subsection (c) or (d) of this section, shall be published and shall be effective upon publication, but the Secretary may stay such effectiveness if, after issuance of such order, a hearing is sought with respect to such order pursuant to subsection (f).

(f) Objections and public hearing; basis and contents of order; statement

(1) Within thirty days after publication of an order made pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section, any person adversely affected by such an order may file objections thereto with the Secretary, specifying with particularity the provisions of the order deemed objectionable, stating reasonable grounds therefor, and requesting a public hearing upon such objections. The Secretary shall, after due notice, as promptly as possible hold such public hearing for the purpose of receiving evidence relevant and material to the issues raised by such objections. As soon as practicable after completion of the hearing, the Secretary shall by order act upon such objections and make such order public.

(2) Such order shall be based upon a fair evaluation of the entire record at such hearing, and shall include a statement setting forth in detail the findings and conclusions upon which the order is based.

(3) The Secretary shall specify in the order the date on which it shall take effect, except that it shall not be made to take effect prior to the ninetieth day after its publication, unless the Secretary finds that emergency conditions exist necessitating an earlier effective date, in which event the Secretary shall specify in the order his findings as to such conditions.

(g) Judicial review

(1) In a case of actual controversy as to the validity of any order issued under subsection (f), including any order thereunder with respect to amendment or repeal of a regulation issued under this section, any person who will be adversely affected by such order may obtain judicial review by filing in the United States Court of Appeals for the circuit wherein such person resides or has his principal place of business, or in the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, within sixty days after the entry of such order, a petition praying that the order be set aside in whole or in part.

(2) A copy of such petition shall be forthwith transmitted by the clerk of the court to the Secretary, or any officer designated by him for that purpose, and thereupon the Secretary shall file in the court the record of the proceedings on which he based his order, as provided in section 2112 of title 28. Upon the filing of such petition the court shall have jurisdiction, which upon the filing of the record with it shall be exclusive, to affirm or set aside the order complained of in whole or in part. Until the filing of the record the Secretary may modify or set aside his order. The findings of the Secretary with respect to questions of fact shall be sustained if based upon a fair evaluation of the entire record at such hearing.

(3) The court, on such judicial review, shall not sustain the order of the Secretary if he failed to comply with any requirement imposed on him by subsection (f)(2) of this section.

(4) If application is made to the court for leave to adduce additional evidence, the court may order such additional evidence to be taken before the Secretary and to be adduced upon the hearing in such manner and upon such terms and conditions as to the court may seem proper, if such evidence is material and there were reasonable grounds for failure to adduce such evidence in the proceedings below. The Secretary may modify his findings as to the facts and order by reason of the additional evidence so taken, and shall file with the court such modified findings and order.

(5) The judgment of the court affirming or setting aside, in whole or in part, any order under this section shall be final, subject to review by the Supreme Court of the United States upon certiorari or certification as provided in section 1254 of title 28. The commencement of proceedings under this section shall not, unless specifically ordered by the court to the contrary, operate as a stay of an order.

(h) Notification relating to food contact substance

(1) Subject to such regulations as may be promulgated under paragraph (3), a manufacturer or supplier of a food contact substance may, at least 120 days prior to the introduction or delivery for introduction into interstate commerce of the food contact substance, notify the Secretary of the identity and intended use of the food contact substance, and of the determination of the manufacturer or supplier that the intended use of such food contact substance is safe under the standard described in subsection (c)(3)(A). The notification shall contain the information that forms the basis of the determination and all information required to be submitted by regulations promulgated by the Secretary.

(2)(A) A notification submitted under paragraph (1) shall become effective 120 days after the date of receipt by the Secretary and the food contact substance may be introduced or delivered for introduction into interstate commerce, unless the Secretary makes a determination within the 120-day period that, based on the data and information before the Secretary, such use of the food contact substance has not been shown to be safe under the standard described in subsection (c)(3)(A), and informs the manufacturer or supplier of such determination.

(B) A decision by the Secretary to object to a notification shall constitute final agency action subject to judicial review.

(C) In this paragraph, the term "food contact substance" means the substance that is the subject of a notification submitted under paragraph (1), and does not include a similar or identical substance manufactured or prepared by a person other than the manufacturer identified in the notification.

(3)(A) The process in this subsection shall be utilized for authorizing the marketing of a food contact substance except where the Secretary determines that submission and review of a petition under subsection (b) is necessary to provide adequate assurance of safety, or where the Secretary and any manufacturer or supplier agree that such manufacturer or supplier may submit a petition under subsection (b).

(B) The Secretary is authorized to promulgate regulations to identify the circumstances in which a petition shall be filed under subsection (b), and shall consider criteria such as the probable consumption of such food contact substance and potential toxicity of the food contact substance in determining the circumstances in which a petition shall be filed under subsection (b).

(4) The Secretary shall keep confidential any information provided in a notification under paragraph (1) for 120 days after receipt by the Secretary of the notification. After the expiration of such 120 days, the information shall be available to any interested party except for any matter in the notification that is a trade secret or confidential commercial information.

(5)(A)(i) Except as provided in clause (ii), the notification program established under this subsection shall not operate in any fiscal year unless-

(I) an appropriation equal to or exceeding the applicable amount under clause (iv) is made for such fiscal year for carrying out such program in such fiscal year; and

(II) the Secretary certifies that the amount appropriated for such fiscal year for the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition of the Food and Drug Administration (exclusive of the appropriation referred to in subclause (I)) equals or exceeds the amount appropriated for the Center for fiscal year 1997, excluding any amount appropriated for new programs.

(ii) The Secretary shall, not later than April 1, 1999, begin accepting and reviewing notifications submitted under the notification program established under this subsection if-

(I) an appropriation equal to or exceeding the applicable amount under clause (iii) is made for the last six months of fiscal year 1999 for carrying out such program during such period; and

(II) the Secretary certifies that the amount appropriated for such period for the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition of the Food and Drug Administration (exclusive of the appropriation referred to in subclause (I)) equals or exceeds an amount equivalent to one-half the amount appropriated for the Center for fiscal year 1997, excluding any amount appropriated for new programs.

(iii) For the last six months of fiscal year 1999, the applicable amount under this clause is \$1,500,000, or the amount specified in the budget request of the President for the six-month period involved for carrying out the notification program in fiscal year 1999, whichever is less.

(iv) For fiscal year 2000 and subsequent fiscal years, the applicable amount under this clause is \$3,000,000, or the amount specified in the budget request of the President for the fiscal year involved for carrying out the notification program under this subsection, whichever is less.

(B) For purposes of carrying out the notification program under this subsection, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1999 through fiscal year 2003, except that such authorization of appropriations is not effective for a fiscal year for any amount that is less than the applicable amount under clause (iii) or (iv) of subparagraph (A), whichever is applicable.

(C) Not later than April 1 of fiscal year 1998 and February 1 of each subsequent fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate that provides an estimate of the Secretary of the costs of carrying out the notification program established under this subsection for the next fiscal year.

(6) In this section, the term "food contact substance" means any substance intended for use as a component of materials used in manufacturing, packing, packaging, transporting, or holding food if such use is not intended to have any technical effect in such food.

(i) Amendment or repeal of regulations

The Secretary shall by regulation prescribe the procedure by which regulations under the foregoing provisions of this section may be amended or repealed, and such procedure shall conform to the procedure provided in this section for the promulgation of such regulations. The Secretary shall by regulation prescribe the procedure by which the Secretary may deem a notification under subsection (h) to no longer be effective.

(j) Exemptions for investigational use

Without regard to subsections (b) to (i), inclusive, of this section, the Secretary shall by regulation provide for exempting from the requirements of this section any food additive, and any food bearing or containing such additive, intended solely for investigational use by qualified experts when in his opinion such exemption is consistent with the public health.

(k) Food additives intended for use in animal food

(1) In taking action on a petition under subsection (c) for, or for recognition of, a food additive intended for use in animal food, the Secretary shall review reports of investigations conducted in foreign countries, provided by the petitioner.

(2) Not later than 12 months after August 14, 2018, the Secretary shall post on the internet website of the Food and Drug Administration-

(A) the number of petitions for food additives intended for use in animal food filed under subsection (b) that are pending;

(B) how long each such petition submitted under subsection (b) has been pending, including such petitions the Secretary has extended under subsection (c)(2); and

(C) the number of study protocols that have been pending review for over 50 days, and the number that have received an extension.

(3) In the case of a food additive petition intended for use in animal food, the Secretary shall provide information to the petitioner on the required contents of such petition. If the Secretary requires additional studies beyond what the petitioner proposed, the Secretary shall provide the scientific rationale for such requirement.

(June 25, 1938, ch. 675, §409, as added Pub. L. 85-929, §4, Sept. 6, 1958, 72 Stat. 1785 ; amended Pub. L. 86-546, §2, June 29, 1960, 74 Stat. 255 ; Pub. L. 87-781, title I, §104(f)(1), Oct. 10, 1962, 76 Stat. 785 ; Pub. L. 98-620, title IV, §402(25)(B), Nov. 8, 1984, 98 Stat. 3359 ; Pub. L. 105-115, title III, §309, Nov. 21, 1997, 111 Stat. 2354 ; Pub. L. 115-234, title III, §306(a), Aug. 14, 2018, 132 Stat. 2440 .)

EDITORIAL NOTES

AMENDMENTS

2018-Subsec. (k). Pub. L. 115-234 added subsec. (k).

1997-Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 105–115, §309(a)(4), in closing provisions, substituted "While such a regulation relating to a food additive, or such a notification under subsection (h)(1) relating to a food additive that is a food contact substance, is in effect, and has not been revoked pursuant to subsection (i), a food shall not, by reason of bearing or containing such a food additive in accordance with the regulation or notification, be considered adulterated under section 342(a)(1) of this title." for "While such a regulation relating to a food additive is in effect, a food shall not, by reason of bearing or containing such an additive in accordance with the regulation, be considered adulterated within the meaning of clause (1) of section 342(a) of this title."

Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 105–115, §309(a)(1), substituted "subsection (j)" for "subsection (i)".

Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 105–115, §309(a)(1)(B), (2), (3), added par. (3).

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 105–115, §309(b)(2), added subsec. (h). Former subsec. (h) redesignated (i).

Subsec. (i). Pub. L. 105–115, §309(b)(1), (3), redesignated subsec. (h) as (i) and inserted at end "The Secretary shall by regulation prescribe the procedure by which the Secretary may deem a notification under subsection (h) to no longer be effective."

Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 105–115, §309(b)(1), (4), redesignated subsec. (i) as (j) and substituted "subsections (b) to (i)" for "subsections (b) to (h)".

1984-Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 98–620 struck out provision that required the court to advance on the docket and expedite the disposition of all causes filed therein pursuant to this section.

1962-Subsec. (c)(3)(A). Pub. L. 87–781 excepted proviso from applying to use of a substance as an ingredient of feed for animals raised for food production, if under conditions of use specified in proposed labeling, and which conditions are reasonably certain to be followed in practice, such additive will not adversely affect the animals and no residue will be found in any edible portion of such animal after slaughter, or in any food from the living animal.

1960-Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 86–546 substituted "forthwith transmitted by the clerk of the court to the Secretary, or any officer" for "served upon the Secretary, or upon any officer", "shall file in the court the record of the proceedings on which he based his order, as provided in section 2112 of title 28" for "shall certify and file in the court a transcript of the proceedings and the record on which he based his order", and "Upon the filing of such petition the court shall have jurisdiction, which upon the filing of the record with it shall be exclusive," for "Upon such filing, the court shall have exclusive jurisdiction", and inserted sentence authorizing the Secretary to modify or set aside his order until the filing of the record.

STATUTORY NOTES AND RELATED SUBSIDIARIES

CHANGE OF NAME

Committee on Commerce of House of Representatives changed to Committee on Energy and Commerce of House of Representatives, and jurisdiction over matters relating to securities and exchanges and insurance generally transferred to Committee on Financial Services of House of Representatives by House Resolution No. 5, One Hundred Seventh Congress, Jan. 3, 2001.

Committee on Labor and Human Resources of Senate changed to Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of Senate by Senate Resolution No. 20, One Hundred Sixth Congress, Jan. 19, 1999.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1997 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 105–115 effective 90 days after Nov. 21, 1997, except as otherwise provided, see section 501 of Pub. L. 105–115, set out as a note under section 321 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1984 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 98–620 not applicable to cases pending on Nov. 8, 1984, see section 403 of Pub. L. 98–620, set out as an Effective Date note under section 1657 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1962 AMENDMENT; EXCEPTIONS

Amendment by Pub. L. 87–781 effective Oct. 10, 1962, see section 107 of Pub. L. 87–781, set out as an Effective Date of 1962 Amendment note under section 321 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Sept. 6, 1958, see section 6(a) of Pub. L. 85–929, set out as an Effective Date of 1958 Amendment note under section 342 of this title.

GUIDANCE ON PRE-PETITION CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR ANIMAL FOOD ADDITIVES

Pub. L. 115–234, title III, §306(c), Aug. 14, 2018, 132 Stat. 2441 , provided that:

"(1) IN GENERAL.-Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act [Aug. 14, 2018], the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this subsection as the 'Secretary') shall publish draft guidance relating to the voluntary pre-petition consultation process for food additives intended for use in animal food.

"(2) CONTENTS.-The guidance under paragraph (1) shall include-

"(A) the recommended format to submit to the Food and Drug Administration existing data, including any applicable foreign data, for assessment prior to submission of a food additive petition for animal food under section 409(b) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act [21 U.S.C. 348(b)];

"(B) the manner and the number of days by which the Food and Drug Administration intends to review and respond to such existing data, including with respect to providing a scientific rationale for any additional data request;

"(C) circumstances under which the submission of study protocols is recommended prior to submission of a food additive petition under such section 409(b);

"(D) the manner in which the Secretary intends to inform the person submitting a study protocol for a food additive if the review of such study protocol will take longer than 50 days; and

"(E) best practices for communication between the Food and Drug Administration and industry on the development of pre-petition submissions of study protocols and existing data for food additives.

"(3) FINAL GUIDANCE.-The guidance under paragraph (1) shall be finalized, withdrawn, or reissued not later than 1 year after the close of the comment period on the draft guidance."

GLASS AND CERAMIC WARE

Pub. L. 105–115, title III, §308, Nov. 21, 1997, 111 Stat. 2353 , provided that:

"(a) IN GENERAL.-The Secretary may not implement any requirement which would ban, as an unapproved food additive, lead and cadmium based enamel in the lip and rim area of glass and ceramic ware before the expiration of one year after the date such requirement is published.

"(b) LEAD AND CADMIUM BASED ENAMEL.-Unless the Secretary determines, based on available data, that lead and cadmium based enamel on glass and ceramic ware-

"(1) which has less than 60 millimeters of decorating area below the external rim, and

"(2) which is not, by design, representation, or custom of usage intended for use by children, is unsafe, the Secretary shall not take any action before January 1, 2003, to ban lead and cadmium based enamel on such glass and ceramic ware. Any action taken after January 1, 2003, to ban such enamel on such glass and ceramic ware as an unapproved food additive shall be taken by regulation and such regulation shall provide that such products shall not be removed from the market before 1 year after publication of the final regulation."

MORATORIUM ON AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY WITH RESPECT TO SACCHARIN

Pub. L. 95–203, §3, Nov. 23, 1977, 91 Stat. 1452 , as amended by Pub. L. 96–88, title V, §509(b), Oct. 17, 1979, 93 Stat. 695 ; Pub. L. 96–273, June 17, 1980, 94 Stat. 536 ; Pub. L. 97–42, §2, Aug. 14, 1981, 95 Stat. 946 ; Pub. L. 98–22, §2, Apr. 22, 1983, 97 Stat. 173 ; Pub. L. 99–46, May 24, 1985, 99 Stat. 81 ; Pub. L. 100–71, title I, §101, July 11, 1987, 101 Stat. 431 ; Pub. L. 102–142, title VI, Oct. 28, 1991, 105 Stat. 910 ; Pub. L. 104–180, title VI, §602, Aug. 6, 1996, 110 Stat. 1594 , provided that: "During the period ending May 1, 2002, the Secretary-

"(1) may not amend or revoke the interim food additive regulation of the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services applicable to saccharin and published on March 15, 1977 (section 180.37 of part 180, subchapter B, chapter 1, title 21, Code of Federal Regulations (42 Fed. Reg. 14638)), or

"(2) may, except as provided in section 4 [enacting section 343a of this title, amending sections 321 and 343 of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under section 343 of this title] and the amendments made by such section, not take any other action under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act [this chapter] to prohibit or restrict the sale or distribution of saccharin, any food permitted by such interim food additive regulation to contain saccharin, or any drug or cosmetic containing saccharin,

solely on the basis of the carcinogenic or other toxic effect of saccharin as determined by any study made available to the Secretary before the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 23, 1977] which involved human studies or animal testing, or both."

[Definition of "saccharin" as used in section 3 of Pub. L. 95–203, set out above, to include calcium saccharin, sodium saccharin, and ammonium saccharin, see Pub. L. 95–203, §2(d), Nov. 23, 1977, 91 Stat. 1452 .]