

## *The Issue*

*Listeria* is traced to sweet potatoes at a senior center in North Carolina; residents have died and several others, including a celebrity, have been hospitalized. FDA has sampled from a random retail sample of a sweet potato testing positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*

### **Assess the Situation**

As you move towards communication actions, specifically gathering information to support your key messages, use these questions to guide you to finding answers:

1. What is the problem? What is its cause?

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2. Do you have concerns over the incident for industry, environment, or customers?

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3. Has anyone been hospitalized, showing illness symptoms, or other adverse health effects?

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4. What is the date and time of problem (if applicable)?

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5. How widespread is the issue?

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6. What is your response to the problem?

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7. Is there involvement of regulatory agencies?

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8. What are the possible actions that can be taken to address the issue? How will the industry make things right?

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9. Will the industry change or stop what has led to the crisis? If not, why?

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10. What are the steps that will be put in place to prevent future occurrences?

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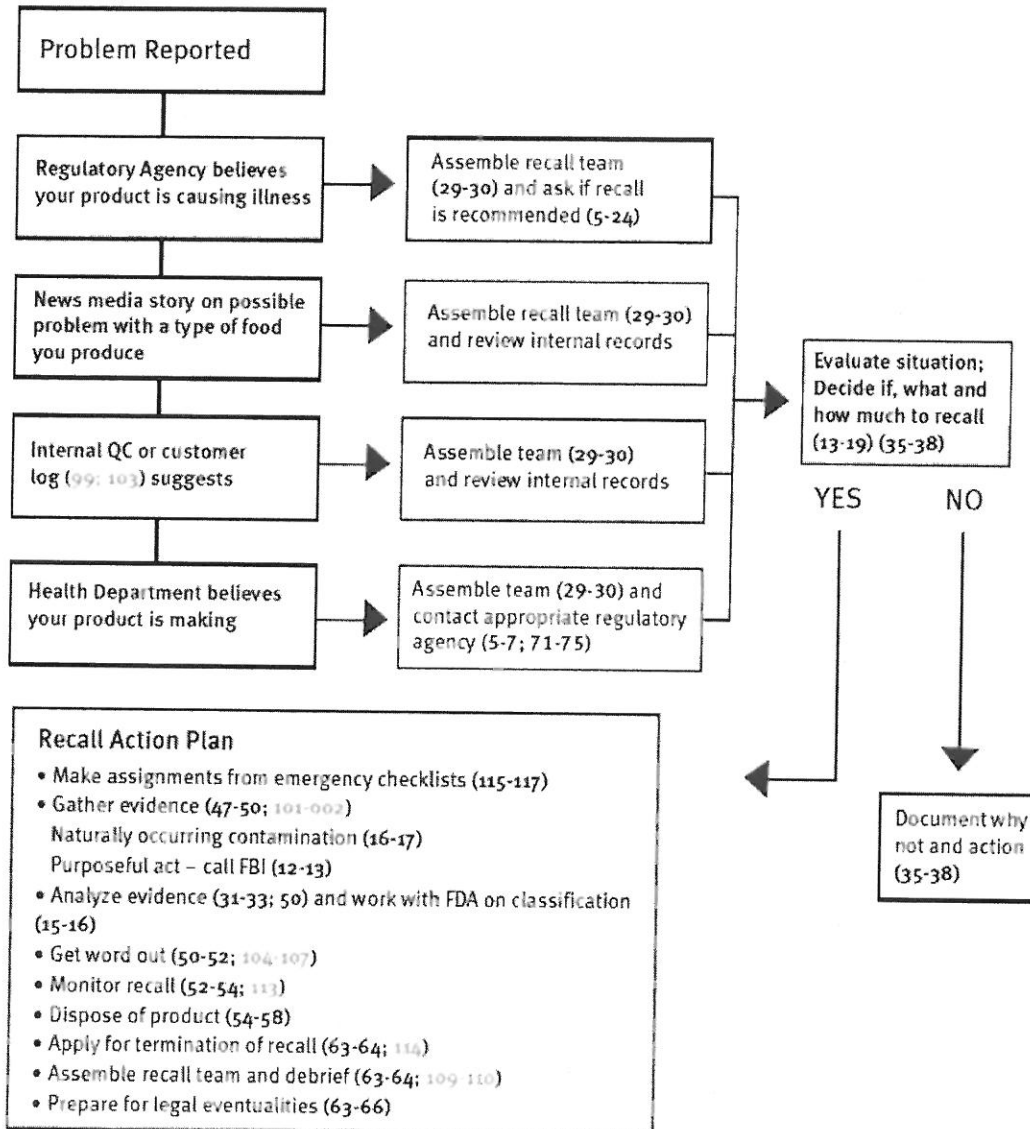
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## Recall flowchart from The Food Recall Manual (FSHN-04-10)

### Recall Action Flow Diagram

The Diagram below is a quick-use reference tool to help user find pertinent sections in the Recall Binder that describes a given aspect of the recall action. A comprehensive Table of Contents appears on the next page.

Numbers in **Black** type refer to pages on specific topics relevant to the task required.  
Numbers in **Grey** type refer to forms that can be used for the task required.



## FDA Recall Coordinator

<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/IndustryGuidance/ucm129334.htm#SoutheastRegionTennesseeLouisianaMississippiAlabamaNorthCarolinaSouthCarolinaGeorgiaFloridaandSanJuan>

### **Southeast Region Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and San Juan**

<b>Atlanta District:</b> GA, NC, and SC <b>Arnold Best Recall Coordinator</b> 60 Eighth Street, NE Atlanta, GA 30309 Phone: 404-253-1293 Fax: 404-253-1201 <a href="mailto:arnold.best@fda.hhs.gov">arnold.best@fda.hhs.gov</a>	<b>Florida District:</b> FL <b>Wanda Lenger Recall Coordinator</b> 555 Winderley Place, Suite 200 Maitland, FL 32751 Phone: 407-475-4717 Fax: 407-475-4768 <a href="mailto:wanda.lenger@fda.hhs.gov">wanda.lenger@fda.hhs.gov</a>
<b>New Orleans District:</b> AL, LA, MS, TN <b>Marie Fink Recall Coordinator</b> US FDA Metairie Center 2424 Edenborn Avenue, Suite 410 Metairie, LA 70001 Phone: 504-832-1290 ext 1109 Fax: 504-219-8813 <a href="mailto:marie.fink@fda.hhs.gov">marie.fink@fda.hhs.gov</a>	<b>San Juan District:</b> Puerto Rico <b>Rebecca Parrilla Recall Coordinator</b> 466 Fernandez Juncos Avenue San Juan, PR 00901-3223 Phone: 787-474-9519 Fax: 787-729-6658 <a href="mailto:rebecca.parrilla@fda.hhs.gov">rebecca.parrilla@fda.hhs.gov</a>

Table 4.1

	PLANNING <i>Pre-Crisis</i>	CRISIS <i>Initial</i>	CRISIS <i>Monitoring</i>	RECOVERY <i>Resolution</i>	RECOVERY <i>Evaluation</i>
<i>typical questions</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened?</li> <li>• Where and when?</li> <li>• Who's responsible?</li> <li>• Who's to blame?</li> <li>• Are we safe?</li> <li>• What's the danger to my family and me?</li> <li>• What's being done to protect or help people?</li> <li>• Is anyone hurt? Sick? Dead?</li> <li>• Who are they?</li> <li>• What are you going to do about it?</li> <li>• Who's in charge?</li> <li>• What's going to happen next?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's the risk to me?</li> <li>• What can I do to minimize my risk?</li> <li>• What should/can I do to help?</li> <li>• Why are you doing what you're doing?</li> <li>• Why aren't you doing more/differently?</li> <li>• Who should I listen to? Who's right?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why didn't the response go better/differently?</li> <li>• Who's responsible for getting us back to normal?</li> <li>• Why is it taking so long to _____?</li> <li>• I'm not seeing this on the news anymore. Should I still care?</li> </ul>	
<i>Informational goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify audiences.</li> <li>• Develop generic messages and materials.</li> <li>• Identify channels of communication.</li> <li>• Exercise the plan to make sure it works.</li> <li>• Get buy-in and approvals from legal, management.</li> <li>• Build relationships with audiences and media now.</li> <li>• Identify and train spokespersons.</li> <li>• Make sure employees know what to do if they're approached by the media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the crisis with empathy.</li> <li>• Explain and inform in simple terms about the risk.</li> <li>• Establish your credibility.</li> <li>• Provide appropriate courses of action (including where and how to get more information).</li> <li>• Commit to continued communication for stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help appropriate people understand more accurately the impact of the situation and their risk.</li> <li>• Provide background and encompassing information to those who need to know.</li> <li>• Gain understanding of and support for response.</li> <li>• Monitor what's being said by whom and correct any misinformation.</li> <li>• Explain emergency recommendations (if any).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve future response by providing education about this response.</li> <li>• Honestly examine problems and mishaps.</li> <li>• Reinforce what worked.</li> <li>• Persuade/build support for policy and resource allocation changes.</li> <li>• Promote the activities and capabilities of your industry/agency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debrief and evaluate how the plan worked.</li> <li>• Document the response as part of an after-action report.</li> <li>• Take the opportunity to grow by developing an improvement plan to address training and exercise needs.</li> <li>• Revise the plan to incorporate changes based on lessons learned.</li> </ul>

*\*This worksheet is adapted from materials created by the Centers for Disease Control for its Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication Training.*

**FAX/Letter Template (Distributors/Wholesalers/Retailers/Restaurants)**

(PUT ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD)

**URGENT!**

**FOOD RECALL NOTIFICATION**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Our firm is voluntarily recalling \_\_\_\_\_ (product name) \_\_\_\_\_ due to \_\_\_\_\_ (reason for recall) \_\_\_\_\_. It may not meet company quality standards, and/or may represent a small/moderate/serious (CHOOSE one word) health or safety threat to people who use it.

**PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL RECALL:**

- Immediately discontinue selling or distributing your existing stock of \_\_\_\_\_ (brand, name, code of product, package size, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_.
- Inform us of the quantity of product you have on hand by completing the bottom portion of this form. Sign the form and return it by FAX to \_\_\_\_\_ (FAX number) \_\_\_\_\_ as soon as possible.
- DO NOT dispose of this product! Instead: (Choose one of the two options)  
(Wait for further instructions from \_\_\_\_\_ (their sales rep) \_\_\_\_\_) OR  
(Return the recalled product to \_\_\_\_\_ (name of firm's contact person) \_\_\_\_\_ as soon as possible).

**IF YOU HAVE DISTRIBUTED ANY OF THE RECALLED PRODUCTS, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY:**

- Contact your consignees by telephone and in writing to advise them about the recall.
- Instruct them to return their unused, undestroyed stock to (recalling firm or supplier).
- Instruct them to also notify any of their consignees, which may have received the recalled product.

Thank you for your cooperation! If you have any questions regarding this recall, please feel free to contact \_\_\_\_\_ (firm's contact person) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone) \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

(Recalling Firm Representative)

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CUSTOMER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

QUANTITY ON HAND: \_\_\_\_\_ **Cases / Cans / Packages (Circle One)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
OWNER'S NAME – PLEASE PRINT

\_\_\_\_\_  
OWNER'S SIGNATURE

## Appendix 1: Records of Telephone Calls

Call sheets for incoming complaints or threats

### FOR PERSONS CLAIMING AN ILLNESS OR INJURY

(This is a rather lengthy questionnaire, but it covers EVERYTHING. If the person on the phone is frustrated that it's "taking too long," assure them that, "We want to confirm ALL the facts so we can make the best decision about what to do next. I'm sorry that it's going slowly; thank you so much for your patience.")

Who received this call? \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of incoming call: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person calling: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s) where they can be contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

What product did you call to discuss? \_\_\_\_\_

Specific packaging info (size, any product codes on it) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe exactly what you think may be the problem: (Odor, color, taste, allergic reaction, object in the food, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Where (and when) was this product purchased? \_\_\_\_\_

How was it stored before use? \_\_\_\_\_

How was it used or prepared? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person who is ill or injured: \_\_\_\_\_

Address and phone # of this person, or (if a minor) their parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Age of person who is ill or injured: \_\_\_\_\_

Does this person have any other known illnesses or allergies? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the person's symptoms? \_\_\_\_\_

In what order did the symptoms appear? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know how much of the product this person consumed? \_\_\_\_\_

Did anyone else consume the product at the same time? \_\_\_\_\_

Are they having the same symptoms? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the person seen a doctor for this problem? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Was there a diagnosis? \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's name and phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Have you reported the illness/injury to anyone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you still have any of the products? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have the original container? \_\_\_\_\_

(If so, tell them to KEEP these; DO NOT throw them away!) \_\_\_\_\_

Can we send someone out to pick it up for testing? (get address) \_\_\_\_\_

Is there something specific you are asking \_\_\_\_\_ (company) \_\_\_\_\_ to do or consider doing? \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person who took  
this report

FOLLOW-UP ACTION TAKEN

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF FOLLOW-UP ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT WAS DONE? \_\_\_\_\_



**News Release Template – Potential Salmonella Contamination**  
(PUT ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact Person's Name (for media inquiries)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

**XYZ RECALLS "SNACKIES" BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE HEALTH RISK**

XYZ Inc. of Anywhere, MS, is recalling its 5-ounce packages of "Snackies" food treats because they have the potential to be contaminated with *Salmonella*, an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons infected with *Salmonella* often experience fever, diarrhea (which may be bloody), nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare circumstances, infection with *Salmonella* can result in the organism getting into the bloodstream and producing more severe illnesses such as arterial infections (i.e. infected aneurysms), endocarditis and arthritis.

The recalled "Snackies" were distributed nationwide in retail stores and through mail orders. The product comes in a 5-ounce, clear plastic package marked with lot #666666 on the top and with an expiration date of 12/12/04 stamped on the side.

No illnesses have been reported to date in connection with this problem.

The potential for contamination was noted when routine testing by the company revealed the presence of *Salmonella* in some 5-ounce packages of "Snackies." Production has been suspended while the company continues its investigation into the source of the problem.

Consumers who have purchased 5-ounce packages of "Snackies" are urged to return them to the place of purchase for a full refund. Consumers with questions may contact the company at 1-800-555-5555.

Representatives of the news media may obtain more information about XYZ, Inc., as well as any updates on this recall notification, on our website:

[www.xyzcompanyinc.com](http://www.xyzcompanyinc.com), or by contacting \_\_\_\_ (contact person's name) \_\_\_\_ at the numbers listed above.

## ***Sample #2: Product Recall***

### **Austinuts of Dallas, Inc. Announces Voluntary Recall of Honey Mustard Pretzels**

**Contact:**

Blair Bernier  
214-739-6887

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** - Dallas, Texas - March 17, 2010 - Austinuts of Dallas, Inc. has issued a voluntary recall for Honey Mustard Pretzels, Lot number 61150/0280, because the product may be contaminated with Salmonella.

Salmonella is an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons infected with Salmonella often experience fever, diarrhea (which may be bloody), nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare circumstances, infection with Salmonella can result in the organism getting into the bloodstream and producing more severe illnesses such as arterial infections (i.e., infected aneurysms), endocarditis and arthritis. For more information on Salmonella, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

The Austinuts Honey Mustard Pretzels were only distributed at Austinuts' building in Dallas, Texas in **16 ounce clear zipper bags**. Consumers having any of these products are urged to destroy them.

**NO OTHER AUSTINUTS' PRODUCTS ARE PART OF THIS RECALL.** No illnesses have been reported to date in connection with the above product. The pretzels were manufactured by National Pretzel Company of Lancaster, PA and were coated with a seasoning mix that included hydrolyzed vegetable protein recalled by Basic Food Flavors, Las Vegas, NV, because it may be contaminated with Salmonella.

Consumers with recall questions may contact Austinuts of Dallas, Inc. at 214-739-6887 during normal business hours, Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Standard Time (CDT). Consumers with questions or concerns about their health should contact their doctor immediately.

For information on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) ongoing investigation, visit FDA's Web site at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).

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