

Revision of general specifications for equipment, containers/packages and their materials, and revision of manufacturing standards for equipment and containers/packages

1. Outline

The specifications for food equipment and containers/packages that are intended for sale or commercial use, the specifications for their materials, and the standards for manufacturing methods thereof are specified in the announcement¹ based on the Food Sanitation Law.² Any article that does not meet the specifications and standards is prohibited from being produced or sold in Japan or imported into Japan.³

This time the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) has reviewed the existing specifications for equipment, containers/packages and their materials, and started the necessary procedures to revise the general specifications for the content of lead to ensure food safety. By this revision, the MHLW intends to lower the limit value for the content of lead in i) tin for plating, ii) metal for manufacture or repair and iii) solder used for manufacture or repair of the equipment or containers/packages. In addition, the MHLW intends to modify the scope of copper or copper-alloy equipment and containers/packages which are exempted from metal-plating, such as tin-plating, required for them by the standards for manufacturing, because the plating is unnecessary or should be avoided.

Notes: 1. The Ministry of Health and Welfare Announcement No.370 (1959)

2. Food Sanitation Law Article 18 Paragraph 1

3. Food Sanitation Law Article 18 Paragraph 2

2. Details

(1) General specifications for food equipment and containers/packages and their materials

Items 2 through 4 of the existing general specifications are intended to be revised as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Proposed modification	Existing specification
2. Tin for plating <u>used for surface that is expected to come into direct contact with food</u> shall not contain lead <u>exceeding 0.1%</u> .	2. Tin for plating shall not contain <u>5% or more lead</u> .

<p>3. Any metal containing lead <u>exceeding 0.1%</u>, or 5% or more antimony shall not be used to manufacture or repair <u>the surface of</u> an equipment or container/package <u>that is expected to come into direct contact with food</u>.</p> <p>4. Solder used to manufacture or repair <u>the surface of</u> any equipment or container/package <u>that is expected to come into direct contact with food</u> shall not contain lead <u>exceeding 0.2%</u>.</p>	<p>3. Any metal containing <u>10% or more lead</u> or 5% or more antimony shall not be used to manufacture or repair an equipment or container/package.</p> <p>4. Solder used to manufacture or repair any equipment or container/package shall not contain <u>20% or more lead</u>. However, solder used outside of a food can may contain up to 98% lead for <i>sanitary cans</i>* or up to 60% lead for other types of cans.</p> <p>*: cans sealed by tightly rolling up the metal plates and the packing material between them. They are not sealed with solder.</p>
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(2) Manufacturing standards for copper or copper-alloy equipment and containers/packages

Item 1 of the existing standards is intended to be revised as shown in Table 2 for the following reasons: i) the metal plate for plating on equipments such as copper or copper-alloy cooking mold for the use at high heat may peel off and may come into the food, ii) stained copper or copper-alloy cannot be used as materials for food equipment.

Table 2

Proposed modification	Existing standard
<p>1. For copper or copper-alloy equipment and containers/packages, the surfaces that are expected to come into direct contact with food shall be tin-plated or silver-plated, or otherwise treated in a way that is unlikely to cause damage to health. <u>However, this provision is not applied to those having a characteristic luster or those whose plating metal may peel off when used at high heat.</u></p>	<p>1. For copper or copper-alloy equipment and containers/packages, the surfaces that are expected to come into direct contact with food shall be tin-plated or silver-plated, or otherwise treated in a way that is unlikely to cause damage to health. <u>However, this provision is not applied to those that have a characteristic luster and that are not rusted.</u></p>

Note:

- In the Paragraph 4 of the Article 4 of the Food Sanitation Law, “equipment” is defined as foodware, drinkingware, cooking utensils or, machine, equipment or other articles which come into direct contact with foods and food additives, and which are used for collection, manufacturing, processing, cooking, storage, transportation, display, give and take or ingestion of foods and food additives. However, machines, equipments and other articles which are used for collection of foods in agriculture or fishery are excluded.
- In the Paragraph 5 of the Article 4 of the Food Sanitation Law, “container” and “package” are defined as articles which contain or package foods or food additives, and are handled as they are when foods or food additives are given or received.