

**INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
FOOD PROTECTION PROGRAM
POLICY TO RECOGNIZE A MUSHROOM IDENTIFICATION EXPERT**

BACKGROUND

Currently, there is great interest in the purchase and consumption of edible species of wild mushrooms by both individuals and within retail food establishments, as well as for temporary food events such as festivals and farmers markets. These species include morels and several other common wild edible mushrooms found seasonally within the State of Indiana. Per 410 IAC 7-24-164, "Sanitary Standards for the Operation of Retail Food Establishments," "mushroom species picked in the wild shall be obtained from sources where each mushroom is individually inspected and found to be safe by a mushroom identification expert."

Edible species of wild mushrooms are not considered to be potentially hazardous, but there is great concern that poisonous species may have similar appearances and characteristics that can easily be confused with edible species causing illness and potential death of consumers. Proper identification of wild mushroom species requires advanced studies in the field of mycology, in addition to considerable foraging and identification experience in the field.

Within Indiana, the responsibility for defining the requirements and qualifications of being a mushroom identification expert falls to the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) Food Protection Program (FPP). FPP strives to ensure there is an adequate number of identification experts available to meet the needs of the consuming public. As such, the following policy has been established to ensure wild edible mushrooms are properly identified prior to sale and consumption and that the health of consumers is protected.

POLICY STATEMENT- MOREL ONLY MUSHROOM IDENTIFIER

The following strategies may be pursued in order to be recognized as a morel mushroom identification expert by the ISDH FPP: Submit **one piece** of documentation from the list below.

1. Proof of attendance at a morel training course offered by the Hoosier Mushroom Society with letter of completion/recommendation and proof of passing an examination;
2. Proof that the applicant is someone who is a mycologist, or who has extensive study in the field of fungi identification, usually a PhD or masters level, may provide proof of education and experience to the ISDH FPP for review and consideration;
3. Proof that the applicant is an individual who has received a certification from a national mushroom organization, such as the North American Mycological Society.
4. Proof of attendance and successful completion of an equivalent wild mushroom identification course provided by another state regulatory program or accrediting body.

POLICY STATEMENT- OTHER WILD EDIBLE MUSHROOM IDENTIFIER

The following strategies may be pursued in order to be recognized as a wild mushroom identification expert by the ISDH FPP: Submit **two pieces** of documentation from the list below.

1. A letter for review and consideration, from another person experienced in wild mushroom identification or with education credentials, that describes the applicants long term practical or work experience; detailing knowledge and familiarity with wild mushrooms.
2. A written recommendation from someone who is a mycologist, or who has extensive study in the field of fungi identification, usually a PhD or masters level, or the applicant may provide similar proof of education and experience to the ISDH FPP for review and consideration;
3. A written recommendation from an individual who has received a certification from a national mushroom organization, such as the North American Mycological Society.
4. Proof of attendance at a mushroom training course offered by the Hoosier Mushroom Society with letter of completion and proof of passing an examination.
5. Proof of attendance and successful completion of an equivalent wild mushroom identification course provided by another state regulatory program or accrediting body.

Persons who provide adequate proof of qualification as a mushroom identification expert must register with ISDH FPP and be recognized by written correspondence listing his or her Indiana identification number. Individuals who desire to offer identification services to the public may be listed on the ISDH FPP website with selected contact information.