
Performance Guidelines: Signage and Shelf Labels

Effective Date: April 1, 2018

Supersedes: January 1, 2017

These guidelines define specific requirements associated with using signage and shelf labels. All authorized retailers must use window decals and some retailers are also required to use checkout lane signage. Authorized retailers must correctly and consistently use State WIC Office issued or approved custom shelf labels. Refer to the chart in this section for labeling requirements.

I. Signage

- A. Authorized retailers are required to post an State WIC Office (SWO) issued window decal in a highly visible location (such as a store's main entrance window or door).
- B. Authorized retailers having registers that do not accept WIC are required either to use checkout lane signage to identify which registers accept eWIC food benefits, or to indicate what methods of payment are accepted on registers that do not accept eWIC food benefits.
- C. Authorized retailers may obtain checkout lane signage by submitting a Retailer Supply Request Form.

II. Shelf Label Use

- A. Authorized retailers must use State WIC Office-issued "Wholesome Informed Choices" shelf labels or State WIC Office-approved custom shelf labels to identify WIC approved foods.
- B. Authorized retailers who do not have an approved custom label may obtain State WIC Office-issued shelf labels from the State WIC Office. Authorized retailers should use their corporate procedures for ordering additional custom shelf labels. State WIC Office issued shelf labels are not made available to authorized retailers with an approved custom shelf label.
- C. Authorized retailers may use shelf labels for WIC approved foods in a food category without a label requirement (e.g., infant food, brown rice, etc.); however if shelf labels are used on any item in a food category without a label requirement, shelf labels must be used on all items in that food category.
- D. Authorized retailers must consistently use the same type of shelf label (either State WIC Office-issued or custom, but not both) across all WIC approved foods.
- E. Authorized retailers must ensure that shelf labels are clearly visible and posted near WIC approved foods.

Performance Guidelines: Signage and Shelf Labels (Continued)

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III. Custom Shelf Labels

- A. Authorized retailers are permitted to use approved custom shelf labels that contain a service mark (such as the WIC acronym or WIC logo) to identify WIC approved foods.
- B. Authorized retailers using custom shelf labels must confirm the procedures for ordering additional WIC shelf labels with their corporate offices.
- C. Requests for the review and approval of a custom shelf label must be submitted to the State WIC Office prior to use.
- D. Authorized retailers must submit, at minimum, one print-ready image of the proposed shelf label. The image of the shelf label must state the proposed total size, font name and size, dimensions, color, and any other distinguishing features. The retailer must disclose all variations of the proposed shelf label, (e.g., promotional). The WIC Program recommends a font size of at least 18 point. Requests must be submitted at least 30 calendar days prior to the intended first date of use.
- E. The proposed shelf label image and request may be submitted to the Vendor Compliance Manager by email.
- F. Custom shelf labels submitted for review must include, at minimum, the following terminology:
 - “WIC” or “W.I.C.”
- G. The Vendor Compliance Manager will notify the requestor of the proposed shelf label within 30 calendar days after the submission is received of the decision to approve or disapprove.
- H. Authorized retailers that use multiple custom shelf labels are encouraged to implement point-of-sale solutions that help eWIC cardholders and store personnel identify the specific types of custom shelf labels in use.
- I. Authorized retailers may use alternative materials such as posters, flyers, and inserts in addition to custom shelf labels. Retailers must not use any such materials as a substitute for custom shelf labels when identifying WIC approved foods. Requests for the review and approval of alternative materials must be submitted to the State WIC Office prior to use.

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IV. Shelf Label Monitoring

- A. Authorized retailers must not use shelf labels or other markings provided by a product supplier that display the WIC acronym or logo unless approved in writing by the Vendor Compliance Manager.
- B. Store personnel must routinely monitor all posted shelf labels to ensure they are accurately and consistently used under specific WIC approved foods.
- C. During on-site visits, an agency representative will document any non-compliance related to an authorized retailer's use of WIC approved shelf labels.

References:

- State WIC Regulation 12VAC5-195-530. Use of acronym and logo.
- VA WIC Food List
- Infant Formula Flyer
- Retailer Supply Request Form
- Approved Product List

Performance Guidelines: Shelf Label Comparison Chart¹

Effective Date: April 1, 2018

Supersedes: December 1, 2016

Shelf Label Required	Shelf Label Optional ²
<p>Breakfast Cereal</p> <p>Cheese (sliced and blocked)</p> <p>Juice (frozen and liquid)</p> <p>1% Milk, Fat Free Milk</p> <p>Yogurt</p> <p>Peanut Butter</p>	<p>Eggs</p> <p>Infant Cereal</p> <p>Infant Food³</p> <p>Infant Formula</p> <p>Beans, Peas, and Lentils (canned and dried)</p> <p>Canned Fish</p> <p>Fruits and Vegetables³</p> <p>Lactose Free Milk</p> <p>Soy Milk</p> <p>2% Milk</p> <p>Whole Grains (bread, pasta, tortillas, and rice)</p>

¹ Refer to the VA WIC Food List, Formula Flyer and Approved Product List for more information about specific varieties, sizes, types, flavors, and manufacturers.

² Retailers must be consistent in labeling all eligible products within a food category when using shelf labels on WIC approved foods for which there is no label requirement.

³ The WIC Program recommends not labeling these items, unless the label is automatically generated from the Approved Product List.