



## SAFETY AND CLEANLINESS OF DOWN AND FEATHER PRODUCTS

Because of past episodes of avian flu, some companies are asking about safety and cleanliness of down and feather products, especially from Asia. IDFL offers the following information and guidelines.

### Can Down and Feather Products transmit avian flu?

**No.** Down and feather products have **always** been washed and sterilized in a high-pressure, high temperature washing and drying system. All organisms are destroyed in the process. There is no evidence whatsoever that points to down and feathers as a source for avian flu.

### How does the Washing and Sterilization Process work?

In the processing plant, down and feathers are washed to remove all impurities. During the drying process, down and feathers are sterilized at high pressure and high temperatures.

In order to sell down and feathers in the USA, the down processing plant must receive a sterilization permit. These permits are usually issued by the State of Pennsylvania. Each down and feather product contains a Sterilization Permit Number on the law tag indicating where the product was sterilized. IDFL is an authorized agent of the State of Pennsylvania to complete the necessary plant inspections.

### How can we ensure that Down Products meet cleanliness requirements?

Finished products and imported bulk washed down must meet minimum requirements for cleanliness. IDFL verifies the safety and cleanliness of products as follows:

1. **Oxygen Number:** This test determines the amount of foreign organic matter on the surface of the down and feathers. To qualify as “clean” the oxygen number must be less than 10.
2. **Turbidity:** This test determines the amount of dust in feather and down products. Clean products must have a turbidity of greater than 300 mm.

### What are the special requirements for claims of “Hypo-allergenic”, “Super-Clean”, etc

In the USA the generally accepted industry standards for such claims on packaging or advertising of down and feather products are as follows:

1. **Oxygen number must be 4.8 or less.**
2. **Turbidity must be 500 mm or greater.**

### How do we register with state government agencies in the USA?

All manufacturers and importers must register properly with government officials in 18 of the 50 USA states. The State of Pennsylvania handles the sterilization permits. The State of Utah handles registration for jackets and other outerwear. Please contact IDFL for information about this registration process.

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