



VENDOR VIEWS

LA WIC's Authorized Vendor Newsletter



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LEAST EXPENSIVE BRAND ITEMS REMINDER

In February 2020, LA WIC notified Vendors of updates to the designated Least Expensive Brand (LEB) WIC Approved Food Items. As a reminder, LEB applies only to homogenized milk, cheese, and eggs, which are also noted in the WIC Approved Food List (WIC-23). These are the **only** items for which WIC Participants must purchase the Least Expensive Brand. Additionally, cashiers must continue to enforce the LEB requirement at the time of check-out. If an LEB food item is

temporarily out of stock, the Vendor must allow the purchase of the next lowest cost LEB food item. For example, if Dairy Pure is the LEB milk, but it is out of stock, and Borden is the next lowest cost LEB milk, the Vendor must allow the purchase of the Borden milk.

ROUTINE MONITORING UPDATES

Routine Monitoring is an overt, on-site monitoring during which LA WIC representatives identify themselves to Vendor personnel. LA WIC conducts Routine Monitoring visits on 5% - 8% of Vendors each federal fiscal year in order to survey and assess Vendor compliance with state and federal WIC Program rules and regulations. LA WIC is currently conducting follow-up Routine Monitoring visits for reviews initiated in Federal Fiscal Years 2017 and 2020. LA WIC will begin Routine Monitoring reviews for Federal Fiscal Year 2021 by the end of March 2021. Below is a chart listing the most common violations cited during initial 2020 Routine Monitoring visits and the actions Vendors must take to prevent and correct them:

Percentage of Violations Found in FFY 2020 Initial Monitoring Visits

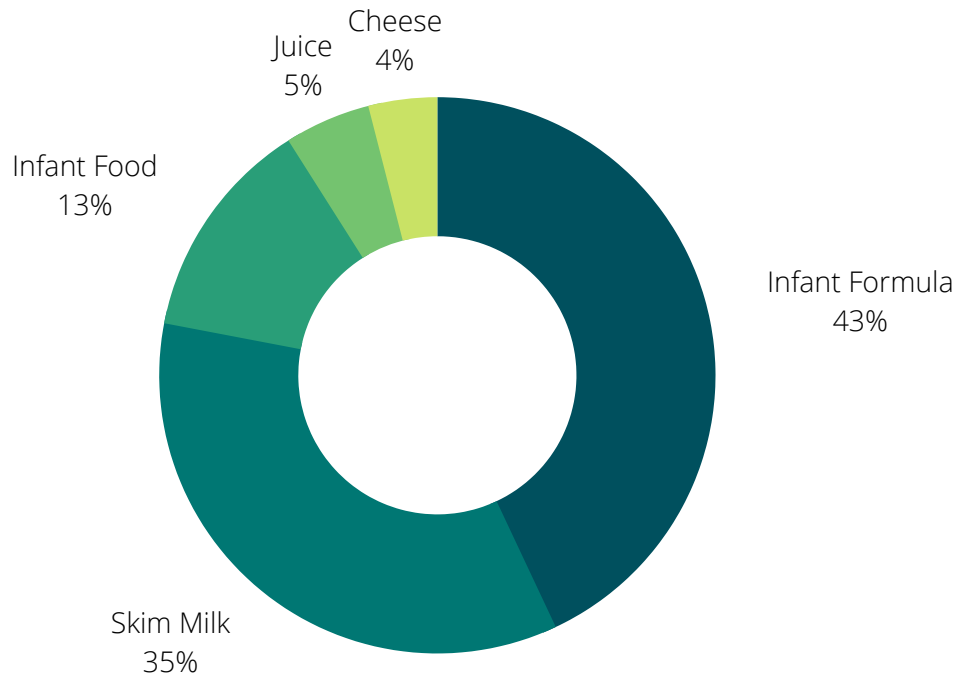
Violation	%	Preventative Action
Failure to Meet Minimum Stock Requirements (MSR)*	33%	Maintain Minimum Stock Requirements found on the <u>WIC-23</u> at all times
*See the Minimum Stock Requirement Violations by Food Item graph below for additional information		
EBT Transaction Procedures (WIC-33) Missing From Register	23%	Keep a copy of the most recent <u>WIC-33</u> at each register
EBT Transaction Procedures Training Log (WIC-33L) Not Available for Review	20%	Keep the <u>WIC-33L</u> on file in the store and up to date
Approved Food List (WIC-23) Missing From Register	13%	Keep a copy of the most recent <u>WIC-23</u> at each register
Missing or Inaccurate Shelf Prices	9%	Ensure correct prices for WIC Approved Food Items are displayed on the foods or on the shelves/display area in immediate proximity to the foods
Other	3%	Continue to comply with all LA WIC policies and regulations, including, but not limited to, those found in the <u>LA WIC Vendor Guide</u>

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Minimum Stock Requirement Violations by Food Item

This graph represents the most common WIC Approved Food Items that were found insufficient in meeting Minimum Stock Requirements during initial 2020 Routine Monitoring visits. Minimum Stock Requirements can always be found on the [WIC-23](#).



The most common missing or inaccurate shelf price issue relates to Infant Formula. As a reminder, a Vendor with infant formula theft concerns may keep infant formula in a secure area (behind the customer service counter, for example) to meet the minimum stock requirement. If this is the case, however, a notice of the location and prices of infant formula must be posted in the area where WIC Participants would expect to find infant formula (on the baby food aisle, for example).

The results of Routine Monitoring reviews for Federal Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 will be emailed to Vendors [via Highbond](#). Please be sure to check your junk mail and/or spam filter to ensure you receive these notifications.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to your [LA WIC Program Monitor](#) or contact us at LAWICVendor@la.gov or (504) 568-8229.

FRESH PRODUCE MAPPING REQUIREMENTS

As a reminder, LA WIC Approved Food Items are listed on the LA WIC Authorized Product List (LA WIC APL). All fresh fruit and vegetables must be identified by a PLU (Price Look-Up Code). Only fresh fruit and vegetable PLUs listed on the APL are eligible for WIC redemption. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are identified by their UPC and must not be mapped. LA WIC will not map fresh fruit and vegetables for Vendors and will not process UPC Request Forms for fresh fruit and vegetables. Please [click here](#) or visit the [LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#) for more information.



UPCOMING DATES:

Feb. 16 - State Offices Closed

Please keep in mind that LA WIC Vendor Operations staff continue to work remotely during the pandemic. As such, email remains our most reliable form of communication.



SIMILAC INFANT FORMULA TRANSITION ISSUES

LA WIC previously notified Vendors on 12/1/2020 that Abbott Laboratories is transitioning Similac Sensitive, Similac Total Comfort, and Similac For Spit-Up formulas from 19 calories per ounce to 20 calories per ounce. Your store should begin to phase out the 19 calorie infant formula(s) as the new 20 calorie infant formula(s) are available. Your store should not expect to see redemption issues as a result of this change as the UPC codes for these infant formulas will remain the same. **Additionally, WIC Participants prescribed these infant formulas must be allowed to purchase any available size of the formula.** For example, Participants prescribed Similac Sensitive 12.0 oz must be allowed to purchase either the 12.0 oz can or the new 12.5 oz can of Similac Sensitive formula (even if their WIC Balance Receipt only lists the 12.0 oz can).



LA WIC has received multiple reports from Participants that some Vendors are not allowing the purchase of the new sizes of these formulas and that some Vendors are refusing the purchase of these formulas *prior to scanning the item at the register*. Please ensure that cashiers are trained on the WIC EBT Transaction Procedures and remind them that all items in a transaction must be scanned at the register. If an item is not WIC eligible or the Participant does not have the appropriate WIC Benefit to purchase an item, the item will not be identified as WIC eligible. The Participant should be asked if they would like to purchase the non-eligible item using another form of tender (cash, debit/credit card, etc.).

VENDOR GUIDE UPDATES

LA WIC recently made updates to its Vendor Policies and Procedures including but not limited to, updates to Routine Monitoring, Compliance Buys, and Inventory Audits. LA WIC is in the process of updating the Vendor Guide to reflect these changes. Vendors will soon be sent the revised Vendor Guide and a Memo highlighting the recent changes. Please be on the lookout for this correspondence within the next week or two.

OUR MAILING ADDRESS HAS CHANGED

Please make note the LA WIC Vendor Operations Unit mailing address has changed to:

LDH/OPH/Bureau of Nutrition Services
Vendor Operations Unit
628 North 4th St., Bin #4
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

All of our contact information can always be found on the [LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#).

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

This newsletter will automatically be sent to the official corporate email address your store has on file with LA WIC, but you can [click here](#) to register additional email addresses to receive this newsletter directly.

CONTACT US

Phone: (504) 568-8229

Fax: (225) 376-4674

Email: LAWICvendor@la.gov

LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub:

<https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/990>

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

What did you like about this newsletter? What didn't you like? What topics would you like to see covered in future issues? Please [click here](#) to let us know how we're doing by filling out a short survey.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.