

Hygiene Guidelines on Imported Food

Objective:

These guidelines are intended to remind “food importers” about the issues they should pay attention during import of food.

Scope of applicability:

Those engaged in food import business.

Definition:

Food: any processed or unprocessed substances that are intended for human consumption, including drinks and chewing gum products, as well as any ingredients used in the production, preparation and processing of food.

Laws and regulations:

All imported food products must satisfy:

1. Law no. 5/2013 "Food Safety Law" and relevant requirements stipulated in food safety laws and regulations that are in force;
2. Law no. 7/2003 “Foreign Trade Law” amended by Law no. 3/2016;
3. The Chief Executive Writ of Instruction no. 209/2021 - The export table and import table referred to in Clause 4 of Article 9 of Law no. 7/2003 amended by Law no. 3/2016;
4. Administrative Regulation no. 40/2004 – Regulations on sanitary and phytosanitary measures on goods.

**Detailed provisions of the relevant laws and regulations are available on Food Safety Information website (www.foodsafety.gov.mo) or Government Printing Bureau’s website (www.io.gov.mo).*

Food importers should pay attention to the following issues during import of food:

1. Purchase from reputable suppliers to ensure that the food provided is hygienic and suitable for human consumption;
2. Declare imported food in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations of Macao;

3. Check whether the imported food is subject to mandatory sanitary inspection and quarantine. According to the Chief Executive Writ of Instruction no. 209/2021, advance booking for sanitary inspection is required to be made with the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) if the imported food is subject to mandatory sanitary inspection and quarantine;
4. Keep close contact with the suppliers of the exporting countries. If necessary, request the suppliers to provide relevant documents, such as information about the suppliers, export certificates issued by the government authorities of the exporting countries, health certificates, certificates of origins and laboratory test reports of the food products;
5. Retain relevant import records and invoices for source tracing and management by the competent government authorities whenever necessary¹;
6. Pay attention to the storage and delivery conditions of imported food to ensure food hygiene and safety;
 - Before import of refrigerated or frozen food, importers should ensure that the transportation equipment used (such as containers, transportation trucks) meets the following conditions for storing refrigerated or frozen food:
 - Transportation equipment should be equipped with temperature control function and has good thermal insulation performance. In general ², refrigerated temperature should be kept below 5°C whereas freezing temperature should be kept at -18°C or below;
 - Thermometers should be installed in the container and goods compartment of the vehicle to monitor the temperature during transportation;
 - Data logger should be installed in the container and goods compartment of the vehicle, which constantly records the temperature on a running graph during transportation. Such temperature records should be kept for management and checking purposes.
7. Be aware of food safety information. Do not import or sell any food products found or suspected of having potential food safety risk;

¹ Reference: “Guidelines on Keeping Records Relating to Food”

² Different foods have different optimal storage temperatures. Importers can set appropriate storage temperature according to the characteristics of the food (for example, some fresh vegetables have an optimal storage temperature of below 10°C) or the instructions on the food packaging.



8. Contact the corresponding government authorities if there is any doubt about the hygiene and safety of any imported food.

Enquiry:

Should you have any enquiries about the documents required and application procedures for food import, please feel free to contact Integrated Services Centre of IAM at 2852 6943 or visit the following webpage of IAM:

“Procedures for Processing Import License / Declaration and Advance Booking for Sanitary Inspection”

<https://www.iam.gov.mo/e/food/adminDefault/22>

Updated in January 2022