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## Getting to Know Food Safety Standards in Macao



**Safe food for safe consumption**

Combined efforts of government, food industry and public are required

## Getting to Know Food Safety Standards in Macao

In 2013, the government of the Macao Special Administrative Region passed “Food Safety Law” to safeguard food safety in Macao. According to Article 7 of Chapter II of “Food Safety Law”, the production and operation of food, as well as the use of food additives and food-related products, shall comply with the food safety standards. Therefore, the establishment of food safety standards provides important safety regulations which the industry must comply with.

Aside from the supervision of food safety by the Macao government, the mutual cooperation between the food production and operation and the consumer is necessary. Their compliance with “Food Safety Law” helps to give confidence to Macao residents and tourists in enjoying delicious food and gradually forms the image of Macao as a world centre of tourism and leisure and a healthy city.



## Establishment and Renewal of Standards

The primary principle of the food safety standards enacted in Macao is to safeguard the food safety of the Macao residents while ensuring the stability of local food supply is not affected after the standards are launched, so that both food safety and food supply are safeguarded. As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Macao has to comply with the “Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures”, so as to enable the international society to get to know the standards in Macao and for the Macao standards to connect to the international standards.

### Referential Basis for Drafting of Food Safety Standards:

1. The core is based on the related standards established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), with internationally recognised scientific evidence as foundation;
2. International trends are analysed and standards of different regions, particularly those in the regions of major suppliers' and the neighbouring regions, are compared and studied;
3. Actual situations in Macao, including market surveillance results and the risk assessments of dietary exposure to chemicals based on the intake of food by local residents, are fully considered so as to ensure that the standards can help safeguard the food safety in Macao.

1.  Seeking advice from experts and executive departments.
2.  Drafting the laws and regulations by the legal departments.
3.  Discussion and analysis by the Executive Council, then officially promulgated by the Chief Executive by means of Administrative Regulation to become legally binding.
4.  Notification of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its members.

From the drafting to the promulgation, the food safety standards in Macao have undergone rigorous scientific proof and review procedures. The food safety standards are legally binding, and all food producers and operators must comply with the related rules and regulations. In order to protect public health and safety, hygiene, disease prevention, and consumer rights, etc., the authorities will, on the basis of the actual situation, closely follow up on the development of international trends and participate in the conferences of Codex Alimentarius Commission regularly to evaluate the standards with the latest information to ensure the scientific validity and practicality of the standards.

## Consequences of Failure to Comply with Food Safety Standards

After the promulgation of the “Food Safety Law”, a series of food safety standards have been established and implemented. In order to keep in line with scientific research and development of the food industry, the Department of Food Safety of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) will draft and continuously update the food safety standards in Macao to ensure public health.

The food safety standards are enacted by means of Administrative Regulation and are legally binding. Food production and operation which fails to comply with the food safety standards, even though it does not cause any harm to the physical integrity of others, is considered an administrative infraction and is punishable by a fine from MOP 50,000 to MOP 600,000. Circumstances that constitute the “crime of production and operation of noxious food” are punishable by imprisonment up to 5 years.

Food producers and retailers should have a clear understanding of their obligations and responsibilities, comply with the food safety standards of Macao and the health and hygiene guidelines issued by the authorities, maintain contact with the Department of Food Safety and obtain the latest food safety information.

*Those who fail to comply with the food safety standards are punishable by a fine from MOP 50,000 to MOP 600,000 or imprisonment.*



## Food safety standards in force

Number	Food Safety Standards
Administrative Regulation no. 13/2013	Maximum residue limits of veterinary drugs in foodstuffs
Administrative Regulation no. 6/2014 (Amended by Administrative Regulation No. 3/2016)	List of prohibited substances for use in food
Administrative Regulation no. 16/2014	Maximum limits of radionuclides in foodstuffs
Administrative Regulation no. 16/2015	Limits of pathogenic microorganisms in powdered infant formulae
Administrative Regulation no. 2/2016	Limits of pathogenic microorganisms in milk products
Administrative Regulation no. 13/2016	Maximum limits of mycotoxins in food
Administrative Regulation no. 28/2016	Nutritional requirements for infant formula
Administrative Regulation no. 30/2017	Standard for uses of food coloring in foodstuffs
Administrative Regulation no. 12/2018	Standard for uses of sweeteners in foodstuffs
Administrative Regulation no. 23/2018	Maximum limits of heavy metal contaminants in food
Administrative Regulation no. 7/2019	Standard for uses of preservatives and antioxidants in foodstuffs
Administrative Regulation no. 11/2020 (Amended by Administrative Regulation No. 2/2023)	Maximum residue limits of pesticides in foodstuffs



For more details and the latest information, please visit the [Food Safety Information website](http://www.foodsafety.gov.mo) [www.foodsafety.gov.mo](http://www.foodsafety.gov.mo) or refer to the public announcements of the government.



**Excessive level  
of substance**



**Immediate  
threat**

## Scientific Knowledge: “Excessive level of substance” ≠ immediate threat

Food safety standards are a set of measures that safeguard public health. Under this principle, the measures are used to control food safety risks acting as the administrative management rules to determine whether the industry has complied with good manufacturing practices, and facilitates the implementation of “Food Safety Law” by the authorities. The food safety standards should not be viewed as the direct equivalent of the limits that endanger the physical integrity of human beings.

Simply said, when excessive level of a substance in a food sample has been found in food testing, this result only indicates a violation of the relevant provisions. The regulatory authorities should take timely actions to control the spread of risks while the concerned food producer or operator must bear the responsibilities. However, risk assessment is necessary to determine if it causes immediate threat to human health. Certain considerations have to be taken into account. For example, how much is the exceeding amount? How much of the food product do we consume? How often do we consume that certain food product? How toxic is the excessive chemical substance? The current scientific evidence can help systemically evaluate and analyse the possibility and severity of negative impact of the chemical substance on the health of human beings.

Therefore, do not panic when you read online articles or news about excessive level of substances in food. You should analyse rationally and ask yourself the following questions: “Do I consume it daily?”, “What is the intake amount?”, “What is the severity of the impact of the substance identified on human health?”. Last but not least, pay attention to information and advice of experts, and learn about food safety objectively, rationally and scientifically.



How much is the exceeding amount?



How much is the intake amount?



How high is the toxicity?



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Linha aberta sobre Segurança Alimentar / Food Safety Hotline  
**2833 8181**