



جهاز أبوظبي للرقابة الغذائية  
ABU DHABI FOOD CONTROL AUTHORITY

# FOOD IMPORTERS GUIDE

## CONTENTS

<b>Introduction:</b>	4
<b>Chapter One:</b> Risk Based System	5
<b>Chapter Two:</b> Documents & Certificates required for imported foods	7
<b>Chapter Three:</b> Health Clearance Procedures	9
<b>Chapter Four:</b> Food Transportation & Temperature Control.	11
<b>Chapter Five:</b> Food Sampling"	14
<b>Chapter Six:</b> Food Labeling	15
<b>Chapter Seven:</b> Food Expiration periods	17
<b>Chapter Eight:</b> Compliant vs. Non Compliant Consignment	18
<b>Chapter Nine:</b> Detention of imported food consignments	19

## Introduction

With the establishment of Abu Dhabi food Control Authority in 2005 and issuance of the Food law no. (02) for the year 2008, followed by the issuance of various regulations<sup>1</sup> pertinent to the control of imported foods, which are considered as complementary to the Federal legislation; Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority was keen to provide necessary guidance to the food importation requirements within the risk management framework in a transparent and user friendly approach for all food importers via all borders of Abu Dhabi emirate.

This Guide provides an explanation in a simplified manner of the requirements associated with imported food and Clearance of designated consignments through the borders of Abu Dhabi Emirate.



1- This guide is not to be considered as a legal reference, where the food importer is required to refer to the full text within the issued regulations.

## Chapter One Risk Based System <sup>2</sup>

Risk based system implementation is based on classifying food products based on the risk(s) associated with human health, where they are classified based on the purpose of use and hence allows for effective resources allocation and formulate building block in enhancing consumer confidence and attain the appropriate health protection on a national level.

The system aims at focusing on foods associated with high risk on human health based on science-based known risks.

**Food products are categorized in three groups based on their risk(s) on human health:**

**a- High risk food products:**

This include Meat, Chicken and Seafood, Milk, Yogurt and Cheeses, Ice-cream, Eggs and butter, Frozen pastries and Bakery products containing milk & eggs, baby & Infant foods, foods for special dietary use, flaked and dried Nuts, Coconut, sesame, tahineh and peanut butter, Pre-cut packaged Raw vegetables, retorted low acid foods.

**b- Medium risk food products:**

This includes bottled water, carbonated beverages, juices & its concentrates, fresh & packaged fruits, frozen vegetables & fruits, cocoa and chocolates, biscuits and sugar candies, spices and dried soups, yeast and bacterial cultures, coffee whiteners, whips and creams, jams and jellies, rice, flour and starch, chips and breakfast cereals, acidic foods.

2- In accordance with regulation 2 for the year 2008 pertaining to the risk-based approach for the control of imported foods via borders of Abu Dhabi.

**c- Low risk food products:**

This includes coffee and tea, sugar, syrups and honey, carbonated beverages concentrates, food Additives and flavor extracts, oils, fats, margarine, dried fruits and packaged vegetables, grains and beans, pasta, spaghetti and couscous, dried herbs, salt and vinegar, alcoholic drinks and distilled liquors

**Risk based system encompasses Channeling concept where each channel represents set of health related procedures in the following manner:**

- a- **Green Channel:** Health Documentation Review
- b- **Yellow Channel:** Health Documentation Review and Cargo Examination
- c- **Red Channel:** Health Documentation Review, Cargo Examination, Samples collection and laboratory analysis

**The Matrix below demonstrates the level and frequency of food consignment inspection<sup>3</sup> according to the food categories channeling procedures:**

Selectivity Criteria	Red Channel	Yellow Channel	Green Channel
High Risk foods	80-100%	0-10%	0-10%
Medium Risk foods	15-25%	15-25%	50-70%
Low Risk foods	5-10%	0-5%	85-90%

3- In addition to 10% of random monitoring on all imported food consignments where it is subject to sampling and lab analysis.

**Chapter Two**

**Documents and Certificates required for imported foods**

**Below the main documents and certificates required for all imported food consignments:**

- a. Health Certificate<sup>4</sup> from the official authority of the country of origin or country of export (or its delegated authority) in addition to the Phytosanitary certificate for foods from plant origin.
- b. Temperature records throughout transportation of containers for cold and frozen consignment.
- c. HALAL slaughtering certificate according to the Islamic law, for meat, poultry and its products, as well as processed food from animal origin including milk, issued from approved Islamic association.
- d. Packing list that includes information on date of loading the container, various types and quantities of food items along their description, production and expiry date(s) for each type/ batch.
- e. Certificate of Origin (either original or authorized stamped copy by the concerned authority).
- f. Importing permission or commercial license that indicates foods imports or general trading activity.
- g. Bill of entry/Custom declaration or Delivery order or Bill of Lading.
- h. Any additional documents or certificates that may be requested based on international updates and notifications related to food safety.
- i. Where nutrition and/or health claims are stated on the food label, the importer shall provide the supporting documentation proving the truthfulness of such allegation.

4 Electronic Health Certificates are accepted in case the consignment originates from countries where electronic certification is issued. In such case, only the certificate reference number is required.

Below the most important information to be indicated on the Health Certificate:

## Chapter Three Health Clearance Procedures

Logo		Health Certificate Template		نموذج الشهادة الصحية					
Consigner (Exporter) Name		المرسل (المصدر) الاسم		Certificate Reference No. الرقم المرجعي للشهادة الصحية					
I.1	Address	العنوان		I.2 Place of Issue مكان الاصدار					
				Date of Issue تاريخ الاصدار					
Consignee (Importer): Name		المرسل اليه (المستورد) الاسم		Competent/Certifying Authority الجهة الرقابية المختصة					
I.4	Address	العنوان		I.3 Name الاسم					
				Address العنوان					
		Country of origin بلد المنشأ		ISO code رمز الأيزو					
		Country of destination بلد المقصد		ISO code رمز الأيزو					
Producer/ Slaughterhouse Est. Name		الشركة الصانعة/المسلخ الاسم		Packing Est.(if applicable) الشركة المعهدة (إن وجد)					
I.7	Address	العنوان		I.8 Name الاسم					
				Address العنوان					
Border of Entry/Country of Destination الحدود/بلد الدخول		الدولة		Border of Loading /Country of Dispatch I.10 المقادير/موقع التحميل					
Means of transport/Conveyance By Air By Sea By Road Other		وسيلة النقل <input type="checkbox"/> جوي <input type="checkbox"/> بحري <input type="checkbox"/> بري <input type="checkbox"/> أخرى		Vehicle Identification No. I.12 الرقم التعريفي / هوية وسيلة النقل					
I.11				Temperature of Food product درجة حرارة منتج الغذاء					
				Ambient درجة حرارة الغرفة					
				Chilled مجمدة					
				Frozen مجمدة					
Identification of the Food products توصيف وتصنيف الأغذية									
I.14	Name & Description of Food	HS-Code	Species (in case of meat carcass/cuts)	Brand Name	Production Date	Expiry Date	No packages	Batch No.	Total weight
	اسم ووصف المادة الغذائية	كود التورنكس التجارية	نوع القطعة في حال ذبح اللحم والطيور	العلامة التجارية	تاريخ الانتاج	تاريخ الانتهاء	عدد الطرود	رقم الشحنة	الوزن الكلي
Health Attestation I.15 TO BE FILLED WITH THE PERTINENT ATTESTATIONS يتم تعبئة الأقسام الصحية									
Responsible body for signature الجهة الرسمية المختصة المسؤولة بالتوقيع									
Name		الاسم		Official Stamp		الختم الرسمي			
Position		الوظيفة		Date		التاريخ			
Signature		التوقيع		Date		التاريخ			

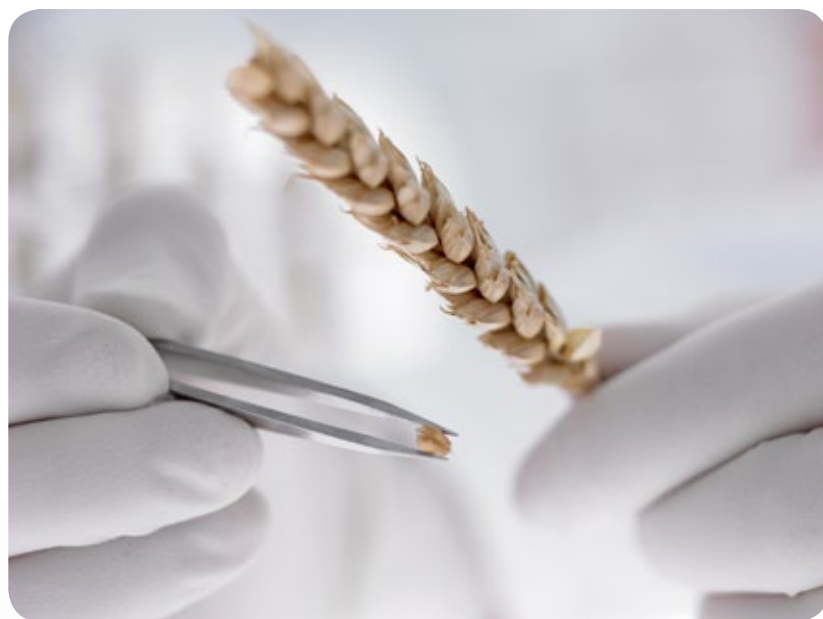
- The importer/ clearing agent fills out the required information electronically using the automated Customs information system (DHABI), documenting all the details of the consignment separately for each food item according to the respective HS code.
- The customs officer (reception office) validates the submitted information and associated documentation, including the HS code, upon arrival of the clearing agent / importer to the Customs counter.
- Upon the initial acceptance of Customs Declaration by the customs officer, it is electronically directed through the system (DHABI) to the designated automated system for control of imported food to access and finalize the health clearance procedures.
- The clearing agent or/and importer shall submit the health certificates and relevant documents relevant to the imported food consignment to the responsible food inspector from Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority.
- The food Inspector validates the information of the food consignment and the data, where the consignment then will be assigned to the appropriate channel from each of the listed food item(s) (i.e. red, yellow or green) based on its risk category and the predefined parameters.

The detailed flow chart illustration can be found at the end of this document



- f- The following inspection activities shall be undertaken based on the designated channel, where:

<b>Green Channel</b>	The consignment shall be subject to document review and if accepted, will proceed for final health clearance.
<b>Yellow Channel</b>	In addition to document review, the consignment shall be subject to cargo examination at the designated inspection centers and if accepted, will proceed for final health clearance
<b>Red Channel</b>	In addition to both document review and cargo examination, the consignment shall be subject to representative sampling for the food item(s) for laboratory analysis and accepted, will proceed for final health clearance.



## Chapter Four Food Transportation & Temperature Control <sup>5</sup>

The provisions of Regulation No (6) of 2010 pertaining to Food hygiene throughout the food chain, including the articles related to temperature control and food transportation, shall apply, taking into account the following main requirements:

- a- Transport of food shall be carried out in such a way to prevent any contamination of the food, to maintain its integrity and at the appropriate temperatures, The interior of food transport vehicle shall be adequately insulated with a lined interior that provides a smooth, continuous, easily cleanable waterproof surface.
- b- Food items shall be physically separated from non-food items during transport, Bulk food shall be transported in food transport vehicles reserved for such purpose.
- c- Foods shall maintain the following temperatures:
  - 1- Refrigerated food; below (5)<sup>o</sup> C.
  - 2- Frozen food; at or below (-18)<sup>o</sup> C.
  - 3- All other foods, including shelf stable; at suitable temperature that prevent risk to human health, as appropriate for the particular food.
- d- Food transport vehicles shall be capable of maintaining proper food temperatures, and allow those temperatures to be monitored and recorded throughout the period of transport and records maintained for one year.
- e- Food transport vehicles intended for transporting frozen food should be appropriate for such purpose, where return air temperature shall be in accordance with the provisions applicable to temperature control.
- f- Examination of the thermograph recordings of the food transport

<sup>5</sup> In accordance with Regulation No (6) of 2010 pertaining to Food hygiene throughout the Food Chain

vehicles shall be starting the last day of which the food was loaded at country of export border until the date where it is examined at border of entry.

g- For chilled food transport vehicles:

- 1- Electrical failure is permitted for a maximum period of (2) hours, provided that the return air temperature prior to and following the immediate failure is below (5)°C.
- 2- If the temperature of chilled foods is not maintained, the following action shall be taken:
  - i- If the temperature of the chilled food at any time is at or above (5)° C and below (8)°C, the food shall be immediately chilled to below (5)° C.
  - ii- If the temperature of the chilled food at any time is above (8)°C, the food shall be disposed of immediately unless substantial science-based food safety evidence is submitted to the Authority.

h- For frozen food transport vehicles:

- 1- For frozen food transport vehicles complying with the relevant international standards, electrical failure is permitted for a maximum period of (24) hours, provided that the return air temperature prior to and following the immediate failure is (-18°C) or lower, excluding defrost periods.
- 2- For frozen food transport vehicles not in compliance with the relevant international standards, electrical failure is permitted for a maximum period of (7) hours, provided that the return air temperature prior to and following the immediate failure is (-18°C) or lower, excluding defrost periods.

3- If the temperature of frozen foods is not maintained, the following action shall be taken:

- i- If the temperature at any time is (-15)° C to (-18)° C, food shall be brought back to minimum of (-18)° C as rapidly as possible.
- ii- If the temperature at any time is higher than (-15)° C but lower than (-10)°C, food shall be subjected to comprehensive field examination and laboratory testing.
- iii- If temperature at any time rises above (-10)° C or showed signs of thawing, food shall be disposed of; unless substantial science-based food safety evidence is submitted to the Authority.



## Chapter Five Food Sampling <sup>6</sup>

The provisions of regulation (5) for the year 2010 pertaining to sampling of food for the purposes of official control shall apply, taking into account the following main requirements:

- a- Samples classified within red channel intended for official control of the safety shall be taken by authorized inspectors at the borders. Samples thus obtained shall be considered as representative of the lots of food.
- b- Sampling shall be undertaken for a single food item, regardless of the size, where it has been produced under the same conditions, (of the same batch no. or production date), where applicable
- c- The size of the sample shall allow for repeat analysis if required and shall conform to the sample size plans issued by the Authority (ADFCA)
- d- The samples should be transported via the Authority (ADFCA) designated samples transportation vehicles
- e- The food business operator has the right to request for retesting based on scientific justifications where the Authority shall examine the request.



<sup>6</sup> In accordance with the provisions of Regulation No. 5 of 2010 regarding the sampling of food for the purposes of official control.

## Chapter Six Food Labeling <sup>7</sup>

The issued requirements by the concerned federal agencies shall apply, taking into account the following main requirements:

- a- Name of the food: The name shall identify the true nature of the food and in the absence of commonly existing name; an appropriate descriptive name which is not misleading or confusing to the consumer shall be used.
- b- List of all ingredients: shall be in a descending order of ingoing weight proportions including a list of food additives to the product or their numerical codes, with declaration of the foodstuffs and ingredients which are known to cause hypersensitivity.
- c- Nutritional Information: In the case of foods catered for special dietary use the declaration of this information on the label is mandatory



<sup>7</sup> In accordance with the requirements of the technical rule No. 9 on food labeling, issued by the GCC Standardization Organization and the Emirates Standardization and Metrology Authority.



## Chapter Seven Food Expiration periods <sup>8</sup>

- d- The net contents shall be declared by volume as for liquid foods, by weight for solid foods and either by weight or volume for semi-solid or viscous foods. Also The drained weight of a packed food shall be declared.
- e- Name and address: The name and address of the following manufacturer, or packer, or distributor, or importer, or exporter or vendor shall be declared.
- f- Country of origin: The country of origin of the food shall be declared on the Label. If food undergoes processing in a second country which may probably change its fundamental nature, the country where the processing has taken place shall be considered as the country of origin for labeling purposes.
- g- lot or Batch identification.
- h- Date: The date shall appear as (i.e. Day -Month -Year) for food products with a minimum durability of less than three months, whereas date shall appear as (i.e. Month -Year) for food products with a minimum durability of more than three months. The expiration date shall be preceded by such phrases: 'Best before' accompanied by the date; and 'Best before end...' in other cases.
- i- Instructions for storage and use: any specific requirements pertaining to the storage conditions of the food shall be laid down on the label, should the minimum durability be dependent thereupon instructions for use including reconstitution directives, where applicable, shall be indicated on the label, if necessary for ensuring a correct and sound utilization of the foodstuff.
- j- Irradiated foods: the labeling of a food which has been treated with ionizing radiation shall include a written statement indicating such a treatment in close proximity to the food name. in the case where an irradiated product is used as an ingredient, so, this shall be set out in the list of ingredients.
- k- Additional labeling: additional statements may be added provided that they are hard to be removed under normal conditions of food handling and shall neither conceal any information on the food label nor contains any alien information to that in the original label.

The national concerned Authorities requirements to be followed taking in consideration the food expiration periods of the following main food commodities:

Product	Expiration Period
Chilled meat packed under carbon dioxide atmosphere	90 days from slaughtering date
Poultry meat	7 days from slaughtering
Beef , buffalo meat and Camels	21 days from slaughtering
Mutton and goat meat	14 days from slaughtering
Meat packed under vacuum	10 weeks from slaughtering
Pasteurized cream	21 days
Sterilized liquid milk prepared for infants	9 months
Strained baby foods	12 months



<sup>8</sup> In accordance with the UAE.S.GSO technical rule No. 150/2007 pertaining to Expiration Periods of food products.

## Chapter Eight Compliant vs. Non Compliant Consignments <sup>9</sup>

### a- Incentives:

In case where five successive shipments for the same food item classified in either category and obtained from the same manufacturer/source have proven compliancy with health and safety requirements following inspection and laboratory analysis, then sample collection for laboratory analysis purposes will be carried out only on one consignment out of four consignments which have been inspected. Same food item obtained from same manufacturer/source shall be given such benefit as long as it complies with health & safety requirements

### b- Penalty:

In case where consignment classified in either category was found not in compliance with health and safety requirements, then benefits given shall be withdrawn until evidence of compliance is proved for the next successive five shipments.

### c- Prohibited food :

Food products that have been officially declared prohibited to enter borders will not be inspected and shall be re-exported to the country of origin

### d- Automatically Detained food:

Foods shall be automatically detained when entering the Emirate for the first time or rejected have been notified upon by other countries or related international organizations or rejected from other countries.

## Chapter Nine Detention of imported food consignments

### a- Cases under which food consignments shall be detained:

1. Foods that proved non compliance with the relevant requirements/ technical rules upon examination.
2. Foods imported into the Emirate for the first time.
3. Foods that have already been rejected by another country, in case where international alert has been issued.
4. Absence of the detailed packing list for multi food types container
5. Inconsistency of food items present in consignment versus stated within the health certificate.
6. Food consignments where samples have been taken, pending issuance of the laboratory analysis results.

### b- Cases under which food consignments shall be detained and rejected:

- 1- Food that proved to be unfit for human consumption.
- 2- If the health certificate issuance date was before the production date of the food or following the date of shipping the food consignment.
- 3- If the production date of the food was before the date of Halal slaughtering certificate issuance date.
- 4- Absence of Halal slaughtering certificate with imported meat or poultry consignments.

### c- Cases under which food consignments shall be detained and an undertaken and/or financial guarantee is required:

- 1- If the information on the food label is unclear.
- 2- Food consignments for personal/ non-commercial purposes.
- 3- If the importer trade license does not include "importation activity"; where in such case importation is only allowed for catering services

<sup>9</sup>- In accordance with Regulation Number 2 for the year 2008 pertaining to Risk-based approach for the control of Imported Foods via Borders of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

(provided that the imported food is within the scope of the company catering activity license).

- 4- If the importer trade license does not include “importation and Trade activity” (applicable for first consignment importation).
- 5- Unavailability of the original health certificate but only the copy.
- 6- Food consignments that are diverted from any border within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to the concerned food control authority in another emirate within the country.

**d- In case where a food consignment has proven to be non-compliant, it shall be detained with a detention order that state the reason of non compliance, where the importer, upon the approval of the Authority, may request any of the following options :**

1. Provision of additional information from the manufacturer / supplier or the competent authority in country of origin and/or country of export to support the conformity of the food.
2. Retesting Laboratory in accordance with the issued regulation in this regard.
3. Reconditioning in order to meet the pertinent health requirements and technical regulations.
4. Reconditioning for non human consumption purposes.
5. Re-exportation to the country of origin or other countries.
6. Destruction under the supervision of the Authority (ADFCA).
7. Donation to charitable organizations (provided that it is fit for human consumption).

The importer shall bear the entailed administrative and financial costs, in case of approving any of the options above mentioned.

