

Food Clearance Conditions and Requirements

Vision and Mission

Vision:

To be a leading international science-based regulator to protect and promote public health.

Mission:

Protecting the community through regulations and effective controls to ensure the safety of food, drugs, medical devices, cosmetics, pesticides, and feed.

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Introduction:

Based on Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) system issued by a decision of Council of Ministers No. (31) on 24/1/1428 ratified by Royal Decree No. (M/6) on 25/1/1428, permitting clearance to imported food, Pharmaceuticals, medical devices, insecticides, and all other products under the authority's supervision after performing the needed examinations and analyses within their executive functions.

This guideline has been prepared to help food exporters understand clearance requirements and conditions in order to facilitate and expedite transactions and avoid rejections, delays or losses due to lack of knowledge of these requirements and conditions.

Range:

All imported food for commercial and industrial purposes and consumption.

Objective:

Clarification of the conditions and requirements of food clearance through custom ports.

Definitions:

Authority:

Saudi Food & Drug Authority (SFDA)

Food:

Any nutritious substance fit for human consumption eatable or drinkable whether it is fresh, processed, semi-processed, or raw including gum or any substance used in processing, preparation, or treatment of food.

Clearance:

The decision to allow or refuse food consignments entry through custom ports.

Health certificate:

An official document (paper or electronic) issued by the competent authority in the country of origin or country of export. The certificate indicates the safety and appropriateness of imported food products according to its national technical regulations. It may include the registration number of the institution or other equivalent alternative measures.

Halal slaughter certificate

A certificate containing information about meat and poultry consignments, such as slaughter and expiration dates.

Halal Certificate

Certificate confirms that the product, the service or the regulations specified meets Halal requirements in the Islamic Sharea such as Halal Tazkeya certificates, facilities and farms certificates, slaughterhouses certificates, facilities classified as Halal, primary products components, additives containing meat/poultry and their derivatives, rennet, gelatin, animal fats and oils and their derivatives.

Technical Regulations:

A document that lays down product characteristics or their related processes and production methods, including the applicable administrative provisions, with which compliance is mandatory. It may also include or deal exclusively with terminology, symbols, and packaging, marking or labelling requirements as they apply to a product, process or production method.

Certificate of Conformity

A certificate issued by an authorized third-party for products, operations, systems, etc., which states that the product meets the required standards or specification.

Port of entry

All ports of entry for imported products to any GCC member state, by either air, sea or land that connected to the outside world, and must have a competent food checkpoint.

Without prejudice to the general import requirements of the Saudi customs system, the following provisions shall apply to imports of food products:

General requirements of food clearance:

Before importing food products, the importer must check:

1. Registration of the importing establishment at the Food Import Registration System (FIRS). [\(Click here\)](#)
2. Registration of imported products and materials at (FIRS) system. [\(Click here\)](#)
3. A licensed warehouse has to adhere with the requirements of the SFDA (Excluding domestic factories that import raw materials for processing their products, as well as importers who have maximum number of (5) consignments a year and a total of 2000 kg), Provided that the importer shall sign the related pledge form and submit it at lmrd.food@sfd.gov.sa

General required documents for food clearance to be presented to the authority at the port of entry:

N	Document (Paper/Electronic)	Notes
1	Customs Declaration (Bill of Entry)	apply to FASAH platform (click here)
2	Copy of Certificate of Origin	document issued by the country of export or manufacture
3	Copy of Commercial Invoice	document issued by the exporting company
4	Copy of Packing Declaration & Packing List	document issued by the exporting company
5	Copy of The Bill of Lading	document issued by the carrier
6	Copy of Health Certificate	Food import conditions and requirements
7	Copy of Export Validity Certificate For Gulf Food Materials And Products	products of Gulf origin
8	Certificate of Conformity (COC)	- Optional for all countries - Mandatory for some countries (check here)
9	A Copy of Import Permit For Poultry And Poultry Products, Fish And Aquatic Products of Animal Origin And Table Egg And Its Products.	Check the link follows to request an import permit (click here)

General Notes:

1. Imported food products shall comply with the SFDA technical regulations and requirements.
2. Compliance with all updated circulars published at the SFDA official website.
3. Follow food transport to the Kingdom guidelines. ([Click here](#))
4. Providing temperature monitor devices during transport. Read the and cold and frozen food guidelines.
5. Original Halal certificate: For food products containing a component from an animal origin, and for any food product has the term 'Halal' on its label.
6. Certificate of Halal Slaughter
7. Copy of Phytosanitary Certificate for cereals, agricultural crops and fresh vegetables and fruits.
8. According to the technical regulation GSO 9 "Labeling of Prepackaged Food Stuffs", when use any logo a special for quality or organic product...etc, must provide a proof of the validity of this claims.
9. On the basis of the Food System and its Implementing Regulation issued by Resolution No. 98 of the Council of Saudi Food & Drug Authority dated 4.9.1439. And on the basis of the statement in Article 27 of the Regulation, "SFDA is authorized to take samples of food products free of charge to verify their compliance with the rules and regulations of the system, and if necessary, to test them in the SFDA laboratory or in other approved laboratories". Article 43 states that "SFDA shall be entitled to cooperate with other government agencies or the private sector to perform the functions assigned to it under this system and its regulations". However, the importer has to bear the cost of analysis and testing of the samples.
10. Compliance with Circular No. 41072/a dated 21.5.1440 on the rules and requirements for import of meat, poultry, crustaceans and aquatic animals.

Technical Regulations and Standards

- These regulations are frequently updated and must be observed before importing food

General Regulations	
Name of the Standard	Standard No.
Labeling of Prepackaged Food Stuffs	SFDA.FD/GSO 9
Expiration Dates for Food Products -Part 1 : Mandatory Expiration Dates	SFDA.FD/GSO 150-1
Additives Permitted for Use In Food Stuffs	SFDA.FD/GSO 2500
Requirements of Nutritional Labeling	SFDA.FD/GSO 2233
Requirements for Nutrition and Health Claim In The Food	SFDA.FD/GSO 2333
Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs	SFDA.FD/GSO 1016
Maximum Limits of Pesticide Residues In Agricultural and Food Products	SFDA.FD/GSO 382
Halal Food - Part 1 : General Requirements	SFDA.FD/GSO 2055-1
Maximum Residues Limits (Mrls) of Veterinary Drugs in Food	SFDA.FD/GSO 2481
Extraction Solvents and Its Residue Limits in The Production Foodstuffs and Food Ingredients	SFDA.FD/GSO 2359
Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed	SFDA.FD CAC 193
General Requirements for Handling of Foods for Special Medical Purposes	SFDA.FD/GSO 1366

Examples of technical regulations and general standards applied in clearance process based on food circulars

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Cereals & grains products	Grains & whole grains, flours, wheat, rice, maize, barley, corn, sorghum	GSO 2329:2013 GSO 2383:2014 GSO 2384:2014 GSO 677:2008 GSO ISO 6575:2008 GSO 1864:2008 GSO 838:2015 GSO 1925:2009	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - A Gluten-free certificate in accordance with Saudi Arabian Gulf Technical Regulation No. OSG 1201 for gluten-free foods, if the product label states "Gluten-free".	
	Cereal products (breads, pasta, noodles, tortillas, etc.)	GSO 2513:2016 GSO 259:2015 GSO 2205:2012 /GSO 1879:2008		
	Biscuits, cakes, doughs, pastries	GSO 843:2008 /GSO 1917:2009 GSO 2384:2014 /GSO 1357:2002		
	Breakfast cereals	GSO 1357:2002-Cor 1:2015 GSO 1417:2013 /GSO 844:1997 GSO 1354:2008 /GSO 342:2016		
	Starch	GSO 342:1994-Amd 1:2012 GSO 852:1997 /GSO 1370:2013 GSO 989:2016 /GSO 2052:2010	- Certification of organic production if the product is organic.	
	Roots, tubers, pluses, Legumes, beans & its products	GSO 2534:2016 /GSO2272:2012		
Vegetables & vegetable products	Fresh Vegetables (cucumbers, tomato, etc.)		- Pesticide-free report if required	
	Processed Vegetable (frozen /dried / processed / canned) like: Tomato paste	(GSO 1927) / (GSO 2457) / (GSO 1878) / (GSO 1134)/ (GSO6664) (GSO 1039) / (GSO 1038) / (GSO1031) (GSO 1029) / (GSO 1815)/ (GSO 1991) (GSO 1989)/ (GSO 2433) / (GSO2432) (GSO 873)/ (GSO1036)/ (GSO 1868) (GSO 1987) / (GSO 1972)/ (GSO 2430)/ (GSO 2137) (GSO 1975)/ (GSO 2131)/ / (GSO 1037) / (GSO 874) (GSO 123)/ / (GSO 124) (GSO 125) / (GSO 6661) / (GSO 2045) / (GSO 1032) / (GSO 1033) (GSO 2436) / (GSO 2044) / (GSO 38) / (GSO 2040) / (GSO 2464)	- Certification of organic production if the product is organic.	
	Vegetable Juices		- Importing from some countries requires a certificate of conformity (COC)	
	Mushrooms, fungi			
	Leafy Vegetables, grape leaves, edible flowers		- Import only from approved establishments. (some countries)	
	Potato, Sweet Potato & its products			

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Fruits & fruit products	Fresh Fruits (berries, citrus fruit, etc.)	(GSO 2402) - (GSO 2401) (GSO 2400) - (GSO 2399) (GSO 464) - (GSO 640) (GSO 2038) (GSO 1862) (GSO 466) (GSO 185) (GSO 204) (GSO 225)	- Pesticide-free report if required	
	Processed fruits (frozen / dried / processed / canned)		- Certification of organic production if the product is organic.	
	Jams, jellies & marmalades		- Importing from some countries requires a certificate of conformity (COC)	
	Juices (fresh, nectar & fruit drinks)		- Import only from approved establishments. (some countries)	
Nuts & seeds	Nuts (Hazelnut, almond, pistachio, cashew, walnut, etc..) & its products (almond drink, etc...)	(GSO 2318) - (GSO 1073) (GSO 643) - (GSO 2377) (GSO 2306) - (GSO 274) (GSO 1358) - (GSO7911) (GSO 6756) - (GSO 2188)	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label.	
	Seeds & its products		- Certification of organic production if the product is organic. - A Gluten-free certificate in accordance with Saudi Arabian Gulf Technical Regulation No. OSG 1201 for gluten-free foods, if the product label states "Gluten-free".	

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Oils & fats	Plant fats & oils (oilseeds, Seed oils, margarines)	(GSO 2229) (GSO 1754-1:2015) (GSO1754-1:2015/Cor 1:2015) - (GSO 1754-2:2013) (GSO 1754-3:2014) (GSO 1754-4:1997) (GSO 1754-5:1998) (GSO 2389:2014) (GSO 1018:1998) (GSO 2325:2013) (GSO 1019:2015) (GSO 670:2015) (GSO 2483:2015) (GSO ISO 5507:2015)	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic. - Certificate proves the product is free from partially hydrogenated fats.	
	Animal fats & oils (ghee, butter, marine oils)			
Fish & seafood products	Fish	(GSO514) - (GSO1922) - (SFDA. FD 1753) - (GSO1398) - (GSO1920) - (GSO1973) - (GSO524) - (GSO1979) - (SFDA.FD 582) - (SFDA. FD 1361) - (GSO1388) - (GSO2043) - (GSO1999) - (GSO836) - (GSO1998) - (SFDA.FD 380) - (GSO270) - (GSO2207) - (GSO1817) - (GSO1331) - (GSO2317) - (GSO1750) - (GSO2427) - (SFDA. FD 1410) - (GSO1360) - (GSO 2297) - (GSO 1387)	- Copy of health certificate of source of raw materials. - In the case of Halal or quality claims, proofs must be provided. - Import permit - Import only from approved establishments.	
	Mollusca			
	Crustacea			
	Shellfish			
	Processed marine animals (dried, salted, smoked, canned)			
	Seaweed & algae			

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Meat & meat products	All red meat species	(GSO 322) (GSO 1870) (GSO1328:2002) (GSO1389:2002) (GSO986:1998) (GSO1390:2002)	- Copy of health certificate of source of raw materials. -Health certificate	
	Poultry	(GSO2300:2013) (GSO2203:2012) (GSO2206:2012) (GSO2204:2012) (GSO2036:2010) (GSO1924:2009) (GSO1921:2009) (GSO1329:2002) (GSO1816:2007) (GSO996:1998) (GSO997:1998)	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic.	
	Offal (Brain, Heart, Kidney, Liver, Lung, etc.)	(SFDA.FD 948) (GSO814:1997) (GSO834:1997)	- Importing from some countries requires a certificate of conformity (COC)	
	Processed meat products	(GSO1293:2002) (GSO504:1994) (GSO993:2015) (GSOAC/RCP 58:2007) (GSO1399:2002) (GSO 1060:2002) (GSO1860:2008) (GSO323:1994) (GSO714:1997) (GSO1330:2002) (GSO1327:2002)	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Import only from approved establishments.	
Coffee, tea & herbal infusions	Coffee and its products	GSO 2197/GSO 978 GSO 2096/GSO 2326		
	Tea and its products	GSO 2516/GSO 1391 GSO 2138/GSO 783 GSO 2388		
	Herbal infusion and its products	GSO 442"		

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Honey & bee products	Honey	(GSO 147) - (GSO 2290) - (GSO 2097)	- Health certificate - A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic. - Certificate proves that the Tutin limit complies with New Zealand regulations. - Import only from approved establishments.	
	Bee Pollen, Royal jelly, Propolis, Beeswax			
Egg & egg products	Fresh eggs	(GSO 1002:2006) (GSO 2351:2014)	- Health certificate - A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic. - Import permit	
	Processed eggs (Frozen / dried / liquid eggs)			

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Milk & dairy products	Milk and its products	"GSO 2381:2014/GSO 2379:2014 GSO 785:1997/Cor 1:2013 GSO 984:1998/Cor 1:2015 GSO 174:2006/GSO 985:1998/GSO 2296:2013 GSO 1874:2008/GSO 984:1998/GSO 10:2015 GSO 223:2013/GSO 2211:2012 GSO 1970:2009/GSO 1995:2009/Amd 1:2016 GSO 1995:2009/GSO 1407:2002/GSO 1983:2009 GSO 1347:2002/GSO 1980:2009/GSO 833:2009 GSO 1377:2002/GSO 2098:2010/GSO 845:1997 GSO 336:2010/GSO 832:2010/Cor 1:2014 GSO 2479:2015/GSO 2287:2013 GSO 2289:2013/GSO 1339:2002/GSO 2094:2010 GSO 2095:2010/GSO 832:2010 GSO 160:2006/Amd 1:2016 GSO CODEX STAN 284:2009 GSO 2000:2015/GSO 1408:2002/Amd 1:2013 GSO 1408:2002/GSO 182:1994/GSO 992:2016 GSO 474:2010/GSO 1326:2010/GSO 816:2010 GSO 1338:2010	- Health certificate - A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic. - Importing from some countries requires a certificate of conformity (COC). - Import only from approved establishments. (some countries)	
	Yogurt and its products			
	Cheese and its products			
	Cream and its products			
Sugars & syrups	Sugar (cane sugar, white / brown sugars)			
	Syrups (glucose syrup, maple syrup, high fructose syrup)			
	Desserts	GSO148:2008 GSO1057:2013 GSO2288:2013 GSO 1820:2015 GSO2054:2010"	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic. - Halal Certificate	
	Artificial sweeteners			
	Chewing gum (all types).			

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Beverages	Soft/carbonated drinks	GSO 2523:2016		
	Flavored artificial drink powders			
	Energy drinks			
	Beer & malt beverages			
Salts, herbs, spices & sauces	All types of salt	"GSO 2392:2014/GSO 1367:2002 GSO 2297:2013/GSO 2132/GSO 2139:2011 GSO 489:1994/GSO 1073:2002 GSO 2130:2011/GSO ISO 1003:2002 GSO 2135:2011/GSO 1819:2007 GSO 2524:2016/GSO 1344:2010"	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic.	
	Herbs			
	Spices			
	Sauces			
	Condiments			
	Fermentation			
Bottled drinking water	Bottled drinking water, mineral water	(GSO 149) - (GSO 1025) - (GOS 2232) - (GSO 987)	- According to Technical Regulation No. 789, a license certificate is required from the country of origin. - A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - A certificate proves the mineral water is natural and not bottled.	
	Sparkling water			
	Flavored water			
	Ice			

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Composite & prepared/ processed meals	Ready-to-eat meals, frozen or chilled meals that need to be heated (e.g. pizzas, stuffed pies & sandwiches ...etc.)	"GSO 1909/ GSO 2466/ GSO 2142	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic. - A Gluten-free certificate in accordance with Saudi Arabian Gulf Technical Regulation No. OSG 1201 for gluten-free foods, if the product label states "Gluten-free".	
Infant / baby foods	Infant formulas	(GSO 355) - (GSO 677) – (GSO 2106) - (GSO 223)	- Health certificate - A Gluten-free certificate in accordance with Saudi Arabian Gulf Technical Regulation No. OSG 1201 for gluten-free foods, if the product label states "Gluten-free".	
	Prepared infant foods			
	Infant cereals			

Food Group	Sub-group	GSO/SFDA	Additional Mandatory Certificates	Circular Number
Special dietary foods & drinks	Reduced energy foods, diabetic foods, low-sodium food, sport drinks (water added vitamins/minerals) & food (high protein)	(GSO 1926) - (GSO 1366) - (GSO 2522) - (GSO 2393) - (GSO 654) - (GSO 2395) - (GSO 2396) - (GSO 2397) - (GSO 2398) - (GSO 2392) - (GSO 1367) - (GSO 1021) - (GSO 2101) - (GSO 2391) - (GSO 2209) - (GSO 1058)	- A Gluten-free certificate in accordance with Saudi Arabian Gulf Technical Regulation No. OSG 1201 for gluten-free foods, if the product label states "Gluten-free". - Marketing certificate issued by the country of origin explains the purpose of marketing as a special dietary food.	
	Parenteral & enteral feed, therapeutic meal replacements			
	Dietary supplements			
Cocoa & sweet confectionary	Raw Cocoa	(GSO 567) - (GSO 1304) - (GSO 1355) - (GSO 2518) -	- A proof of quality if there is a claim on the product label. - Certification of organic production if the product is organic.	
	Chocolate products (bars/powder/liquid)			
	Chocolate based confectionary & candies			

References:

1. Food System
2. Country List
3. Import Permit Guideline
4. Accreditation Procedures of Official Regulatory Bodies and Establishments of the Country Wishing To Export to Saudi Arabia
5. Ban and Ban Lifting Decisions
6. List of Conformity and Laboratory Bodies Assigned By the SFDA
7. Halal Center
8. Regulations and Requirements of Meat Imports
9. Conditions and Requirements for Food Products Import into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
10. Guideline of Breast Milk Substitutes, Milk-Containing Foods, and Infant Formulas for Special Medical Purposes.
11. Guideline for Transportation of Chilled and Frozen Foods
12. Circulars on Document Storage
13. Procedure of Production and Import of Ready-To-Eat Foods
14. Food Supplements and Energy Drinks Registration Guideline

Helpful Links:

- Product Classification System(PCS)
- Technical Regulations and Standards
- SFDA Standards Store
- Organic Food Products Clearance Conditions and requirements