FOOD AND DRUGS AUTHORITY

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Guideline on Processing of Export Permit and Clearance of Frozen Meat, Fish, Shellfish and Other Invertebrates

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26/06/2025	01	Initial Issue Of Guideline Developed from FDA/IEC/GL-POP/2019/08

Guideline on Processing Of Export Permit And Clearance Of Cosmetics, Medical Devices and Household Chemical Substances

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Executive summary

The purpose of this guideline is to provide importers of prepackaged foods with the requirements of the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) and also provide a comprehensive procedure for bringing their activities into compliance with Part 7, section 99 of the Public Health Act 2012, Act 851. The guideline gives information, guidance and adherence to the processing of import permit products.

Detailed in this guideline are the processes and procedures involved in the application for and issuance of electronic permits as well as the inspection and release of imported frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates.

1.0 Introduction (Background)

Effective regulation of the importation and exportation of internationally traded products is key in ensuring the protection of the health and safety of consumers around the world. Processing of import permit for products, as carried out by the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), typically involves permit issuance and inspection, both of which are mandated by the Public Health Act, Act 851 of 2012.

This guideline outlines the processes and procedures involved in the application for and issuance of electronic permits as well as the inspection and release of imported products.

This guideline is hereby promulgated for information, guidance and strict adherence by all concerned.

1.1 Legal Basis

This guideline is issued pursuant to the provisions of the Public Health Act, 2012 (Act 851), specifically under Part Seven.

The legal basis for this guideline includes but is not limited to the following sections of the Public Health Act, 2012 (Act 851): Section 99 and Section 129.

This guideline should be read in conjunction with the Public Health Act, Act 851, relevant Ghana Standards, and the applicable Fees and Charges Instrument (LI 2481, 2023) that governs regulatory service charges by the FDA.

1.2 Scope

In the exercise of the powers conferred on the Food and Drugs Authority by Part 7, section 99 of the Public Health Act, Act 851 of 2012, and in order to ensure the safety and quality of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates as required by the Code of Hygienic Practice for meat (CAC/RCP 58-2005) and the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (CAC/RCP 52-2003); these guidelines apply to all consignments of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates earmarked for export for distribution or offer for sale for human or animal consumption.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide exporters of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates guidance in meeting the legal and regulatory requirements of the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) in order to avoid or reduce rejection (re-export) and/or food safety risks associated with the consumption of exported frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates.

2.0 Definitions and Abbreviations

FDA	Food and Drugs Authority
eMDA	Electronic Ministries Departments and Agencies
HS Code	Harmonised System Code>

"***label***" means any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter, written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or attached to, a container of food;

"non-compliant/non-conforming product" means any or all of these; product is unregistered, unwholesome, banned, has too short a shelf life or does not conform to labelling rules;

"frozen" means the product has been subjected to a freezing process sufficient to reduce the temperature of the whole product to a level low enough to preserve its inherent quality;

"meat" means all parts of domestic ungulates, domestic solipeds, domestic birds, lagomorphs, farmed game, farmed game birds (including ratites) and wild game, that are intended for, or have been judged as safe and suitable for human consumption.

"***fish***" means any of the cold-blooded (ectothermic) aquatic vertebrates, including whole round fish (i.e. fish as captured, ungutted) and fillets – amphibians and aquatic reptiles are not included;

"shellfish" means species of aquatic molluscs and crustaceans that are commonly used for food;

"aquatic invertebrates" means aquatic animals, excluding mammalian species, reptiles and amphibians, not defined as shellfish, but intended for human consumption;

"hazard' means a biological, chemical or physical agent in food or the condition of food with the potential to cause an adverse health effect;

"***rejected food product***" means the product was deemed unfit to be distributed, sold or used in the country for reasons which may include the physical, chemical and/or microbiological hazard it poses, or the product is banned; and

"requirements" means the criteria relating to trade in food, covering the protection of public health, the protection of consumers and conditions of fair trade.

"unwholesome products" means products that are unfit for human consumption and include expired products or products whose parts are broken or containers are leaky etc.

3.0 Requirements

3.1 General Requirements

3.1.1 Only businesses duly registered by the Registrar-General's Department shall be permitted to export frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates.

3.1.2 Frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates to be exported, distributed or sold for consumption must first be registered with the Food and Drugs Authority under Part 7, section 97 of the Public Health Act, Act 851 of 2012.

3.1.3 Furthermore, the storage facility for the supply of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates must be licenced by the authority in accordance with Part 7, sections 103 and 131 (a) of the of the Public Health Act, Act 851 of 2012.

3.1.4 Exporters shall be required to secure an electronic permit (eMDA) for all consignments of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates prior to exportation. The following information must be submitted at the "item details" column on the eMDA portal;

- Full name of the product
- Name and contact number of Authorized Person

The following information should also be provided or selected at the appropriate column:

- Appropriate HS Code for the product
- Unit of the quantity (ml, L, kg etc)
- Full Address of Exporter (including location address)
- Phone #, Fax # and E-mail addresses of both Importer and Exporter
- Type of Permit: Frozen Fish and Meat

3.2 Applying for Export/Clearance Permit

3.2.1 The exporter, for clearance of frozen meat, fish, shellfish or other aquatic invertebrates shall submit the following:

a. An application letter in writing addressing to:

The Chief Executive
Food and Drugs Authority
P.O. Box CT 2783
Cantonments- Accra.

b. Batch numbers, quantities per batch, pack sizes and total quantity.

3.2.2 Supplier address including country of supply, net weight and product batch must be indicated on each packaging of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates.

3.2.3 In addition, the shelf-life, storage temperature, handling instructions should be included in the label of all consignments of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates. The shelf-life should be at least 60% valid during the time of inspection at the port of exit.

3.2.4 International Health Regulation requirements demonstrated by a valid ship sanitation certificate issued by a competent authority and crew vaccination records must be available for verification during physical inspections of bulk cargoes of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates.

3.2.5 Instances of claims pertaining to animals slaughtered and processed in agreement with Islamic rites must be substantiated with a valid Halaal Certificate issued by a competent national authority, during physical inspection of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates.

3.2.6 Throughout the voyage of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates, temperature should be maintained at -18 °C ± 3 °C or below.

3.2.7 For independent temperature records throughout the voyage, a self-contained single-point temperature recorder must be available in containerized cargoes for check during physical inspection. Preferably, it should be fitted at the second package down at the door end near the center of the stow.

3.2.8 Means of taking temperature records must be made available during physical inspection as readiness to ensuring sustained adequate temperature throughout the voyage of bulk consignments of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates.

3.2.9 The authority in the execution of its legal mandate as entrenched in Part 7, section 135 of the Public Health Act 2012, Act 851, may detain and subject consignments of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates to laboratory testing for monitoring and surveillance of foodborne and zoonotic diseases. The exporter is therefore expected to wait and cooperate with FDA to be satisfied with the laboratory results before the consignment may be issued certificate of free sale.

3.2.10 On account where a test is positive (e.g. *Listeria monocytogenes* tested positive) by mini lab analysis and confirmed by the Laboratory Services Directorate of FDA, the whole consignment shall be disposed of at the cost of the exporter following the approved fee schedule (LI 2481, 2023).

3.3 Response/Feedback

The applicant must monitor the status of the application on-line. Applicants are expected to go beyond the track status to approval history by opening the document.

3.3.1 Only approved electronic permits (eMDA) shall be used for clearance of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates at the port of exit.

3.3.2 Permits issued for exportation of a particular consignment of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates shall be presented to customs only once.

3.3.3 All consignments of frozen meat, fish, shellfish and other aquatic invertebrates shall be physically inspected, at the port of exit;

3.3.4 Consignments in compliance with the Law shall be issued certificate of free sale;

3.3.5 Non-conforming consignments shall be detained under modalities determined by FDA if they can be reasonably brought into conformance with the Law at the exporter's expense or destroyed under FDA supervision, at the expense of the exporter.

3.3.6 Inspection of the consignment at the port of exit or exporter premises shall attract inspection fee as per FDA approved fee schedule (LI 2386, 2019).

4.0 Sanctions And Penalties

The Food and Drugs Authority may impose a fine for the breach of these guidelines in accordance with Section 129 of the Public Health Act 851 of 2012.