

The guideline of food control in Hong Kong with the labelling requirements at paragraph 5 to 11:

2. In Hong Kong, food safety is regulated by provisions laid down in Part V of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap. 132 and its subsidiary legislation. The basic requirement is that all food intended for sale must be fit for human consumption. Food manufacturers/ importers must ensure that the food intended for sale for human consumption is safe and complying with all Hong Kong laws. All labelling information should not falsely describe the food or is calculated to mislead as to its nature, substance or quality. Some regulations regarding on food safety control, food additives/ contaminants are listed below for your reference –

- Colouring Matter in Food Regulations (Cap. 132H)
- Sweeteners in Food Regulations (Cap. 132U)
- Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap. 132V)
- Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W)
- Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF)
- Mineral Oil in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AR)
- Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD)
- Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM)

For details, please browse the website

at [www.elegislation.gov.hk]www.elegislation.gov.hk.

Any contravention of the aforesaid Regulations or Ordinance will constitute an offence.

3. At present, there are specific legal requirements for the import control of food items such as game, meat, poultry and eggs, milk and milk beverages and frozen confections due to their perishable or high-risk nature. Other than the above (for instance, processed or fully-cooked meat), import permission or licence from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is not required. To help ensure food safety, importers are encouraged to obtain health certificates issued by the health authorities of the countries of origin for their imports certifying that the food products concerned are fit for human consumption. You may wish to browse the website at: [http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/import/import\\_ifc.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/import/import_ifc.html) for details.

4. According to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations, Cap. 132AK:

“Meat” means the fresh or frozen carcass, flesh or other edible part including edible viscera and offal of an animal, being an animal kept in captivity before slaughter from which beef, mutton, pork, veal or lamb is derived.

“Fresh” in relation to game, meat or poultry means game, meat or poultry which –

- (a) has not been subjected to a process of preservation; or
- (b) has been preserved by chilling.

5. Prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong shall be legibly marked and labelled in accordance with requirements laid down in the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations, Cap. 132W (the Regulations). Unless there is exemption in the Regulations or otherwise stated, the name or designation, list of ingredients,

indication of durability in the prescribed format, special conditions for storage or instructions for use, count, weight or volume, name and address of manufacturer or packer and nutrition label shall be marked or labelled in either the English or the Chinese language (simplified or traditional) or in both languages on the label of prepackaged food. If both the English and Chinese languages are used in the labelling or marking of prepackaged food, the name of the food, the list of ingredients and the list of nutrients shall appear in both languages. Nutrition label must include the information on energy value of the food and seven core nutrients, namely, protein, carbohydrates, total fat, saturated fatty acids, trans fatty acids, sodium and sugars. The nutrition label must list the amounts of any claimed nutrients. In case where there is a nutrition claim in relation to any type of fat, the amount of cholesterol needs to be declared as well.

6. Under the Regulations, “labelling”, in relation to a food, includes any words, particulars, trade mark, brand name, pictorial matter or symbol relating to the food and appearing on the packaging of the food or on any document, notice, label, ring or collar accompanying the food.

Items exempted from labelling under the Regulations are listed in Schedule 4 and Schedule 6 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, “prepackaged food” means any food packaged, whether completely or partially, in such a way that – (a) the contents cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging; and (b) the food is ready for presentation to the ultimate consumer or a catering establishment as a single food item.

7. According to paragraph 4 of Schedule 3 of the Regulations, prepackaged food shall be labelled with the appropriate durability indication by marking either a “best before” (此日期前最佳) date up to and including which the food can reasonably be expected to retain its specific properties if properly stored; or a “use by” (此日期或之前食用) date up to and including which the food, if properly stored, is recommended for use. From the microbiological point of view, if the food item is highly perishable and is therefore likely after a short period to constitute an immediate danger to human health, a “use by” (此日期或之前食用) date shall be used.

8. According to paragraph 4(2) of Schedule 3 of the Regulation, the "best before" (此日期前最佳) date shall be indicated by the words "best before" in English lettering and "此日期前最佳" in Chinese characters followed by the date up to and including which the food can reasonably be expected to retain its specific properties if properly stored; and a statement of any storage conditions which need to be observed if the food is to retain its specific properties until that date.

9. Currently, there is no definitive list of which foods should carry a particular type of date mark. However, please note that it is food traders' responsibility to determine the “best before” or “use by” date of their products as they have to ensure their food

for sale is fit for human consumption before launching their food products to the market. Traders are required to provide correct information about the durability and storage condition of the food products for consumers' choice.

10. For more information about the difference between "Use By" and "Best Before", you may click the following link in CFS's website: [http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/multimedia/multimedia\\_pub/multimedia\\_pub\\_fsf\\_101\\_02.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/multimedia/multimedia_pub/multimedia_pub_fsf_101_02.html)

For details, please browse the following webpage:  
[https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/faq/faq\\_03.html](https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/faq/faq_03.html)  
[https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/faq/faq\\_14.html](https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/faq/faq_14.html)  
[http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/multimedia/multimedia\\_pub/files/Read the Food Labels\\_e.pdf](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/multimedia/multimedia_pub/files/Read_the_Food_Labels_e.pdf)

11. Please note that prior approval on food labels and nutrition labels of prepackaged food is not required by the FEHD. It is the food manufacturer's own discretion to provide additional information on the food label to enhance consumers' knowledge and right to make an informed choice among various food products. However, Section 61 of Cap. 132 requires all labelling information provided on the prepackaged food must be factual and not misleading. For enquiries on food labelling issues, please contact the Food Labelling Unit at (852) 3962 2047.

12. With regard to cargo clearance, please contact Customs and Excise Department through email: [customsenquiry@customs.gov.hk](mailto:customsenquiry@customs.gov.hk), and [[www.customs.gov.hk/en/contact\\_us/cargo\\_clearance/index.html](http://www.customs.gov.hk/en/contact_us/cargo_clearance/index.html)][www.customs.gov.hk/en/contact\\_us/cargo\\_clearance/index.html](http://www.customs.gov.hk/en/contact_us/cargo_clearance/index.html).