



شعبة الترجمة الرسمية
Official Translation Department

Food Law

Royal Decree No. M/1
October 30, 2014

Translation of Saudi Laws



NOTE:

The translation of Saudi laws takes the following into consideration:

- Words used in the singular form include the plural and vice versa.
- Words used in the masculine form include the feminine.
- Words used in the present tense include the present as well as the future.
- The word “person” or “persons” and their related pronouns (he, his, him, they, their, them) refer to a natural and legal person.



National Center for Archives & Records



Food Law

Chapter 1: General Provisions

Article 1

In this Law, the following terms shall have the meanings assigned thereto, unless the context requires otherwise:

1. **Law:** Food Law.
2. **SFDA:** Saudi Food and Drug Authority.
3. **Board:** SFDA Board of Directors.
4. **Chairman:** SFDA Chief Executive Officer.
5. **Regulations:** Implementing Regulations of this Law.
6. **Food:** Any product intended for human consumption, whether raw, fresh, processed, or semi-processed. Food shall also include any substance that is used for manufacturing, preparing, or processing food.
7. **Additive:** Any substance that is intentionally added to food, but is not an ingredient thereof, in order to preserve or enhance food characteristics, and is added for technical or nutritional purposes, whether during manufacturing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport, or storage. The additive or its byproducts may directly or indirectly become a component of the food.
8. **Food Safety:** The assurance that food is safe and free from any hazardous or harmful elements during the stages of the food production chain until it reaches the consumer.
9. **Safe Food Practices:** Requirements and measures necessary for risk control to ensure the suitability of food for human consumption during all stages of the food production chain, taking into consideration the expected use of the food.
10. **Food Quality:** Food excellence or the properties necessary to meet consumer needs or to make the food appealing or acceptable to consumers, or the properties which meet the standard specifications or technical rules of quality approved by SFDA.
11. **Consumer:** Any person who acquires food for personal consumption, but not for commercial purposes.
12. **Food Production Chain:** The stages through which food passes from initial production until delivery to consumers, including import, export, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, storage, transport, possession, distribution, display for sale, sale, and free distribution.
13. **Food Handling:** Processes through which food passes during the food production chain.
14. **Licensee:** Any natural or corporate person licensed to engage in a food-related activity at any stage of the food production chain.
15. **Food Establishment:** Any legal entity engaging in a food-handling business during the stages of the food production chain, excluding household kitchens.



16. **Food Facility:** A permanent or temporary, fixed or mobile, premise or building, or a transportation means used by the food establishment.
17. **Food Label:** Any statement, symbol, trademark, or illustrative or descriptive item, whether written, printed, drawn, marked, posted, imprinted, or pressed on any food container, cover, package, or receptacle, or accompanying the same.
18. **Explanatory Information:** Any written, printed, drawn, or illustrated information on the food label accompanying the food, or displayed next to it, including promotion for its sale or disposal.
19. **Technical Regulations:** Mandatory documents describing food characteristics, production and manufacturing methods, and related regulatory instructions, including terms, codes, packaging, explanatory information, product labels, or production methods.
20. **Food Standards:** A non-mandatory document approved by SFDA that provides rules and guidelines for food characteristics and products, or relevant production processes or methods, and may include terms, codes, packaging, food labelling requirements, product explanatory information, or production methods.
21. **International Food Standards:** Food standards issued by internationally recognized bodies and organizations.
22. **Environmental and Health Requirements:** Environmental and health-related mandatory instructions, controls, or guidelines to be taken into consideration in food handling according to conditions and procedures specified by the technical regulations.
23. **Advertisement:** Any statement intended for the direct or indirect promotion of food, the purpose of which is to sell or dispose of the same or any substance presented as such, whether said statement is written, read, audiovisual, or otherwise.
24. **Receptacle:** Any container or material in which food is placed, packed, or packaged, such as a box, bottle, can, tin, barrel, sack, bag, or any other container.
25. **Primary Production:** The production and breeding of farm animals prior to slaughter and the cultivation of primary products including milking and harvesting. This includes hunting, fishing, fish farming, shellfish production, as well as harvesting and collecting wild products.
26. **Contaminants:** Any substance that accidentally comes into contact with food during the stages of food production chain and adversely affects its safety and suitability for consumption.
27. **Risks:** The likelihood of a negative impact on human health and the severity of this impact as a result of exposure to risk sources in food.
28. **Risk Source:** A biological, chemical, or physical agent found in food, or a condition that renders food harmful or in a state that adversely affects human health.
29. **Risk Analysis:** A scientific approach that aims to evaluate the seriousness of food risks, and the manner to control such risks through three interrelated processes: risk evaluation, risk management, and risk reporting.
30. **Food Tracking:** Measures and procedures for tracing food, its sources, or any substances added to it at any stage of the food production chain.
31. **Food Withdrawal:** Measures or procedures for withdrawing food that is



unsafe for consumption or is in violation of this Law, or for preventing its display or distribution.

32. **Inspection:** Testing and monitoring food throughout the stages of the food production chain to ensure compliance with the law.

33. **Inspector:** A person qualified to assume food monitoring tasks.

34. **Food Safety Measures:** Measures for protecting human life and health from risks resulting from food additives, contaminants, toxins, or pathogens, or for protecting people from diseases transmitted by plants, or animal or plant products. Such measures include any regulations, requirements, policies, decisions, or procedures directly related to food safety.

Article 2

This Law aims to:

1. ensure food safety and improve its quality;
2. protect the general health of consumers by reducing food-related risks and raising food awareness;
3. protect consumers from food that is harmful, adulterated, carries misleading information, or is unfit for human consumption; and
4. avoid hindering food trade.

Article 3

Provisions of this Law shall apply to all stages of the food production chain.

Chapter 2: Food Regulations and Standards

Article 4

SFDA shall issue technical regulations and standards related to food, food facilities, and workers in such facilities.

Article 5

When issuing or updating food technical regulations and standards, SFDA shall observe international food standards.

Article 6

SFDA shall apply risk analysis when approving or updating food technical regulations and standards.

Article 7

Food imported into the Kingdom may not be cleared except upon obtaining SFDA's approval, in accordance with the conditions, requirements, and procedures set by the Regulation. SFDA shall issue regulations for clearance of imported food.



Chapter 3: Registration

Article 8

Food establishments, including primary production facilities, shall register with SFDA. The Regulations shall determine registration conditions and procedures.

Article 9

Food establishments shall register their food products with SFDA. The Regulations shall determine registration conditions, procedures, and items to be excluded from registration.

Article 10

Laboratories handling food shall register with SFDA. The Regulations shall determine registration conditions and procedures.

Chapter 4: Licenses

Article 11

Food may not be advertised except with the approval of SFDA, in accordance with the conditions and requirements specified by the Regulations.

Article 12

A laboratory may not handle food prior to obtaining a license from SFDA, in accordance with the conditions and requirements specified by the Regulations.

Article 13

A food establishment may not handle food prior to obtaining a license from SFDA, in accordance with the conditions, requirements, and procedures specified by the Regulations.

Article 14

Food may not be exported except by SFDA-licensed establishments.

Article 15

A person may not engage in food handling without a license. The Regulations shall determine license conditions and requirements.



Chapter 5: Food Handling

Article 16

Food handling shall be prohibited if the food:

1. violates Sharia provisions;
2. is harmful to health or unfit for consumption;
3. violates food technical regulations or standards;
4. is adulterated, advertised using deceptive methods or means, or handled in a way misleading to consumers;
5. is not packaged according to technical regulations, except for exempted items;
6. is not accompanied with the food label and explanatory information, except for items exempted in the Regulations; or
7. is not registered with SFDA.

Article 17

The food establishment shall ensure compliance with the provisions of this Law and its regulations within its respective food activity.

Chapter 6: Food Establishment Responsibilities

Article 18

A food establishment must be able to identify the source of food under its supervision and the suppliers thereof, and it must provide SFDA with requested information, when necessary.

Article 19

SFDA may examine food before, during, and after marketing, when necessary, and it may, in light of the results, take the measures specified by the Regulations.

Article 20

If the food establishment becomes aware or suspects that food does not comply with SFDA's conditions and requirements, it shall notify SFDA of the same and take necessary measures to withdraw the food as specified by the Regulations.



Chapter 7: Food Control

Article 21

SFDA shall set up and manage a prompt warning system for reporting any direct or indirect risk to human health attributed to food, and it shall raise consumer awareness by means it deems appropriate, in accordance with the procedures specified by the Regulations.

Article 22

SFDA is the agency in charge of inspecting food establishments and facilities concerning the implementation of the provisions of this Law and its regulations, and it may seek the assistance of law-enforcement agencies, when necessary.

Article 23

Inspectors, designated pursuant to a decision by the Chairman, shall be in charge of control, inspection, detection, and recording of violations. Such inspectors shall have the powers and authorities of preliminary criminal investigation officers.

Article 24

An inspector, upon presenting his credentials, may access food establishments and facilities for inspection purposes, review any documents and records, and obtain copies thereof, if necessary. He may also take samples of food for analysis. The food establishment or facility shall provide access to the inspector and may not hinder him from performing his duties.

Article 25

If the inspector finds any food to be in violation of the provisions of this Law or its regulations, he may seize such food and take necessary measures in accordance with the procedures specified by the Regulations. Seizure shall be mandatory if food is unsafe.

Article 26

The inspector shall:

1. not disclose any information he becomes privy to by virtue of his job, unless so requested by SFDA or the competent court;
2. comply with the provisions and procedures set in this Law and its regulations; and
3. draft a report of any violation of the provisions of this Law and its regulations, and provide the violator with a copy thereof.



Chapter 8: Sampling and Analysis

Article 27

SFDA may take food samples free of charge to ensure their compliance with the provisions of this Law and its regulations. They shall be analyzed at SFDA laboratories, if necessary, or at laboratories registered with SFDA.

Article 28

If the results of the sample analysis indicate a violation of the provisions of this Law and its regulations, SFDA shall issue a report to this effect and it may take necessary measures in light of the report, including notifying the food establishment.

Chapter 9: Preventive and Precautionary Measures

Article 29

SFDA may adopt an appropriate preventive approach to ensure food safety throughout the food production chain. For this purpose, SFDA may require the adoption of any appropriate systems that ensure the implementation of such approach.

Article 30

If SFDA has reason to believe that the food may cause harm to consumer health or public health, but has no conclusive scientific evidence to support such belief, SFDA may take necessary precautionary measures to control such risks, taking into consideration the extent of the potential harm, and it shall avoid unnecessary restrictions. Such measures shall be reviewed within a reasonable period in light of the risk assessment results.

Article 31

In case of any potential risk to consumer health or public health at any food establishment, its facilities, contents, or products, SFDA may issue an order to shut down such establishment or any of its facilities in accordance with the procedures specified by the Regulations.

Article 32

If SFDA finds that the food poses risks to consumer health or public health which cannot be avoided by available measures, SFDA may order the withdrawal of such food or take appropriate measures as the case may require.



Chapter 10: Withdrawal of the Food Product

Article 33

If SFDA has evidence that a certain food product may cause harm to consumer health or public health, SFDA may order the withdrawal or recall of the product and ban its circulation in accordance with the procedures specified by the Regulations.

Article 34

SFDA may issue an administrative decision to destroy any food product that violates the provisions of this Law and its regulations, if its circulation causes harm to consumer health or public health. The Regulations shall specify the destruction procedures.

Article 35

No food product may be circulated if SFDA has ordered the withdrawal or recall of such product or has banned its circulation.

Chapter 11: Penalties

Article 36

First:

- a) Without prejudice to any penalty provided for in any other law, a violator of the provisions of this Law or its regulations shall be punished by one or more of the following penalties:
 1. A fine of not more than one million riyals.
 2. Barring the violator from engaging in any food-related business for not more than 180 days.
 3. Suspending the license for not more than one year.
 4. Revoking the license.
- b) The penalty may be doubled in case the violation is repeated.
- c) If the violation involves intentional circulation of a harmful, adulterated, or prohibited food item, the penalty shall be imprisonment for not more than 10 years or a fine of not more than ten million riyals, or both penalties, in addition to penalties stipulated in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of Clause (First)(a) of this Article.

Second:

SFDA shall impose the penalties stipulated in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Clause (First)(a) of this Article in accordance with the classification of violations and determination of penalties approved by the Board. Penalties shall not be effective unless approved by the Chairman or his designee. The Regulations of this Law shall specify relevant controls and procedures. This shall not prejudice

SFDA's power to take any precautionary measures it deems necessary.

Third:

If the violation mandates imprisonment, it shall be referred to the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution for investigation. The Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution may refer the case to the competent court, if it deems fit.

Fourth:

Any final decision or ruling shall be published at the expense of the violator in three local newspapers in the area where the food establishment is located and the area where the violation has occurred.

Fifth:

A person against whom a punishment decision is issued by SFDA may appeal the decision before the Committee referred to in Clause (Sixth) of this Article within 30 days from the date of notifying him of the decision.

Sixth:

The Board shall form one or more committees, comprising at least three members, one of whom shall be a legal advisor. The committee(s) shall consider the following:

1. Violations and imposition of penalties stipulated in paragraph (First)(C) of this Article, except for the penalty of imprisonment and issuance of the proper decision thereon. Such decision may be challenged before the Administrative Court within 60 days from the date of notification thereof.
2. An appeal raised by a concerned party against SFDA's penalty decision. The committee shall decide on the appeal within a period not exceeding 60 days. If such period lapses without deciding on the appeal or if the violator does not accept the decision of the committee, the violator may appeal the penalty decision before the Administrative Court.

If the Administrative Court revokes the penalty decision issued by the committee or SFDA, it shall consider the violation and impose the proper penalty stipulated in this Article.

Article 37

A party aggrieved by any violation of the provisions of this Law may claim compensation before the competent court for any damage caused by such violation.

Chapter 12: Concluding Provisions

Article 38

SFDA may conclude reciprocal recognition agreements, memoranda of understanding, or any other methods or mechanisms for bilateral or multilateral



cooperation relating to food. SFDA is the authorized agency to conclude such agreements.

Article 39

The Board shall specify the fees for services provided by SFDA as well as for licenses, registration certificates, and approvals issued thereby.

Article 40

SFDA inspectors may be financially rewarded pursuant to a decision by the Chairman for any effort leading to the prevention of damage to consumer or public health.

Article 41

An incentive reward not exceeding 25 percent of the due fine may, pursuant to a decision by the Board, be awarded to any person assisting in uncovering any violation of this Law and its regulations, provided such person is not an inspector of SFDA or other assisting agencies.

Article 42

SFDA shall present draft technical regulations and food standards to the public in the manner it deems fit prior to the approval or adoption of such regulations or standards for the purpose of receiving feedback and suggestions.

Article 43

SFDA may seek the assistance of any other government agency or the private sector to carry out any task assigned thereto under this Law and its regulations.

Article 44

The Board shall issue the Regulations within 180 days following the date of publishing this Law in the Official Gazette. Such Regulations shall enter into force on the date this Law comes into effect.

Article 45

This Law shall enter into force 180 days following the date of its publication in the Official Gazette and shall repeal any conflicting provisions.