**How to Apply for an Export Certificate  
for Food of Non Animal Origin**

**Information for Food Business Operators in Ireland**

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**Scope**

This procedure will address the application for, and issue of export certificates by the HSE for certain foods of non-animal origin (FONAO), if requested by a third country. In this event the HSE will issue an export certificate subject to verification of product compliance with EU legal requirements.

Export certificates will not be routinely provided unless they are required by the third country for imports of the specific product.

**Foods requiring veterinary certification:**

Veterinary certificates may be required by importing countries for different reasons, e.g. for food safety reasons or for disease free status reasons.

Requests for veterinary certificates for food of animal origin should contact the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM) or, for fishery products and live bivalve molluscs specifically, the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA).

**When do I need an export certificate?**

An export certificate may be required when exporting food of non-animal origin to countries **outside** of the European Union (EU). The export certificate will be requested by the authorities of the importing country. It provides evidence that products comply with food law and facilitates trade. Export certificates are not required when products are distributed within the EU.

**Where can I get an export certificate?**

The Environmental Health Service (EHS) of the Health Service Executive (HSE) will issue an export certificate for food of non-animal origin once it is satisfied that the product(s) for which the cert is required is (are) manufactured according to relevant EU food law, which require them to be safe (fit for human consumption), and may be placed on the market in Ireland.

An application for an export certificate must be made by a food business operator online at:

<https://ehonline.hse.ie/>

* All Food Business Operators (FBOs) seeking certification of a particular food product for the first time must make their application **at least 15 working days** before exporting their product, in case any issue should arise with their application e.g. labelling issues etc.
* New applications via the online portal will require authorisation by the local environmental health office. Re-authorisation by a local office may be required in the event new food products are being exported or an existing food product is reformulated/changed or relabelled.
* Applications will be assessed and processed during normal business hours i.e. Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 17:00. Applications received outside of normal business hours will not be processed until the next working day.
* Where an application is received for both food of non animal origin (FNAO) and food of animal origin (FAO) then the applicant will be informed that the HSE will not be issuing a certificate for the FAO products and they should apply separately to DAFM/SFPA.

* On receipt of an application, the Export Certificates National Office confirms that appropriate information has been provided, verifies that the necessary documentation, if applicable (for first applications, or where a product has been reformulated/changed or relabelled), accompanies the application.
* The Export Certificates National Office will notify the applicant within 2 working days of an application being deemed invalid outlining reasons for same.
* For new online portal applications: Where the application is valid, certificates will be issued within 15 working days from the date of receipt.
* For existing portal account holders with no change to the food product list: Where the application is valid certificates will be issued within 5 working days from the date of receipt.
* For existing portal account holders with changes to the food product list: Re-authorisation of the new product list may be necessary. Where the application is valid certificates will be issued within 10 working days from the date of receipt.
* Where an application is to be refused, the Export Certificates National Office will write to the applicant within 10 working days of receipt of the application, outlining reasons for same.

**Note:** A company manufacturing **food contact materials** and requiring an export certificate should contact the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) directly to apply for a certificate – Telephone 1890 33 66 77.

**What will I need for an export certificate?**

1. *Notification of your food business*

Your food business must be notified to the Health Service Executive. If you have not notified your food business to the HSE you should visit <https://ehonline.hse.ie> to arrange this, as applications cannot be processed unless your business is on the HSE Register.

1. *Compliance of your product and its labels*

HSE cannot issue an export certificate for food products manufactured in another EU country or in a third country and being distributed outside of the EU by a company or a brand owner in Ireland, if the food is not being exported from (i.e. did not come into) Ireland.

Your product(s) and its label(s) must be in compliance with EU food law unless you can provide documentation from the ***competent authority*** of the importing country stating that the product and/or label complies with its requirements. (Article 12(1) Reg (EC) No 178/2002). A bilateral agreement may also exist between Ireland/EU and the importing country and, in this case, the product must comply with the provisions of this agreement. (Article 12(2) Reg (EC) No 178/2002). If you wish to avail of this facility you must select the required attestation on the online portal.

You must supply a copy of the product label (or commercial documentation accompanying the consignment) clearly identifying each product being exported. This can be uploaded to the online portal during your application. If you have non-English labels an English translation of the label must also be uploaded to your product library on the online portal.

**Note:** You will find information on food legislation on the FSAI website, along with some useful publications and guidance documents on topics such as general labeling, food supplements, nutrition and health claims, food imports and general information for food businesses :

<https://www.fsai.ie/>  
<https://www.fsai.ie/legislation/food_legislation.html>  
<https://www.fsai.ie/legislation/food_legislation/food_information_fic/food_information-fic.html>  
<https://www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/brexit/imports.html>

**How do I apply for an export certificate?**

* An application for an export certificate may be made by a food business operator online at <https://ehonline.hse.ie>. If you are a first time / new applicant you will have to notify prior to your first application. You will need your food business premises reference number which is/was provided by HSE (Premises Ref :-) when you notify/notified your food business. This is quoted on all correspondence from HSE in relation to your business.
* By submitting applications online you will be able to save product details (i.e. product name, product description, manufacturer etc.) for future applications and track progress and history of your applications.
* Please note that details provided on the online portal are confidential and HSE will only be able to see details relevant to individual applications once submitted.
* While the HSE will endeavor to process your application as quickly as possible , please allow **fifteen** working days for your application to be processed (once you have provided all required documentation) particularly **if you are applying for a certificate for the first time**
* Your application will be assessed and if all requirements are fulfilled, a certificate will be issued by the Export Certificates National Office which can be contacted at [*exportcertificates@hse.ie*](mailto:exportcertificates@hse.ie)
* If your application is refused, you will be informed in writing with reasons given.
* Where an export certificate(s) is issued in hard copy it will be posted to your registered food business address. Alternatively, you may arrange for collection of certificates at your own cost.
* There is currently no charge for issuing export certificates.

**What information does an Export Certificate contain?**

* The certificate issued will be titled “Export Certificate‟.
* The certificate will be printed on HSE headed paper.
* The certificate will include:
* The date of issue, a unique certificate number, product/consignment information
* A statement that the product complies with food law, the name and signature of the certifying officer
* The official embossed mark of the HSE and any other additional valid information requested
* Product/consignment information includes: Product name, Product description, Consignment specific detail (e.g. batch, lot or order number), Manufacturer (or country of manufacturer), Exporter and Country of Destination.

**Specific information on certificates via Food Business Operator’s Self Declaration**

If specific information in relation to the product is required to be included on a certificate, then you must produce evidence to confirm this e.g. if a GMO or radiation free statement is required, then you must provide a declaration or evidence to say that the product is GMO free and this can then be noted on the certificate and reference made to the attached declaration or evidence. Your self-declaration must be uploaded to the product library of the online portal at the time of application.

Food Business Operator declarations will not be stamped by the HSE.

**Replacement/Amendment of Certificates**

* Certificates cannot be amended once applications are submitted.
* If you discover an administrative error on your export certificate, or if you lose or damage the original certificate, a replacement certificate may be issued. The replacement certificate cannot contain amendments regarding product identification, traceability or attestations.
* Where a replacement is issued the original will be cancelled and should not be presented at Third Country.
* If you provide incorrect or inaccurate details on your online application, or if information changes subsequent to your application, it will not be possible to amend details once your application has been submitted. In this instance, you must reapply for a new certificate inputting the correct details.

**Additional Information**

* Export certificates must not be altered in any way or information added to them, once they are issued.
* Where you are requested by the competent authority of the importing country to provide a sample export certificate for review/verification prior to product being exported, a sample certificate may be issued which is clearly marked “Sample Certificate‟.
* Where you are requested by the competent authority of the importing country to provide an export certificate for the purposes of registering a product in that country and prior to product being imported there, an export certificate may be issued**.** The certificate will include a statement confirming that it is for registration purposes.