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SINGAPORE STANDARD

Guidelines for food e-commerce



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Foreword

This Singapore Standard was prepared by the Working Group on Food E-commerce set up by the Technical Committee on Food Processing, Distribution and Services under the purview of the Food Standards Committee.

The intent of these guidelines is to define industry best practices to ensure food safety of food sold through the internet/via e-commerce channels. The standard provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities related to food safety that are expected of food e-commerce chain players such as online food businesses/sellers, online platform providers and logistics service providers.

It is presupposed that in the course of their work, users will comply with all relevant regulatory and statutory requirements. Some examples of relevant regulations and acts are listed in the bibliography. The Singapore Standards Council and Enterprise Singapore shall not be responsible for identifying all of such legal obligations.

In preparing these guidelines, reference was made to the following publications:

1. SS 672:2020 Guidelines on delivery of ready-to-eat (RTE) food
2. TR 76:2020 Guidelines for electronic commerce transactions

Acknowledgement is made for the use of information from the above publications.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this Singapore Standard may be the subject of patent rights. Enterprise Singapore shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

NOTE

1. *Singapore Standards (SSs) and Technical References (TRs) are reviewed periodically to keep abreast of technical changes, technological developments and industry practices. The changes are documented through the issue of either amendments or revisions. Where SSs are deemed to be stable, i.e. no foreseeable changes in them, they will be classified as "mature standards". Mature standards will not be subject to further review unless there are requests to review such standards.*
2. *An SS or TR is voluntary in nature except when it is made mandatory by a regulatory authority. It can also be cited in contracts making its application a business necessity. Users are advised to assess and determine whether the SS or TR is suitable for their intended use or purpose. If required, they should refer to the relevant professionals or experts for advice on the use of the document. Enterprise Singapore and the Singapore Standards Council shall not be liable for any damages whether directly or indirectly suffered by anyone or any organisation as a result of the use of any SS or TR. Although care has been taken to draft this standard, users are also advised to ensure that they apply the information after due diligence.*
3. *Compliance with a SS or TR does not exempt users from any legal obligations.*

Guidelines for food e-commerce

0 Introduction

The growth of e-commerce is a global trend. In 2020, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, a spike in e-commerce, including food e-commerce, was observed. In Singapore, many food business operators (FBOs) have adopted e-commerce as a viable business model, and this transition to online sales is supported by the government. Concurrently, consumers have rapidly developed a preference and reliance towards purchasing food online. This increasing trend of food e-commerce is likely to remain in coming years.

Singapore's regulatory framework is supported by science-based risk assessment and management measures to ensure food safety along the farm-to-fork food supply chain. These guidelines aim to complement the current regulatory framework in Singapore. It provides guidance to FBOs to ensure food safety and appropriate product information for consumers, and on their roles and responsibilities in ensuring safety and integrity of food along the food e-commerce supply chain. These guidelines also provide the practical steps to be implemented at various points along the food e-commerce supply chain to achieve food safety for food e-commerce.

With regard to cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) model, this guide covers only guidance for CBEC by individuals for personal consumption. It is presupposed that import activities pertaining to commercial food imports are in compliance with prevailing regulations in Singapore. FBOs are to check if there are any prevailing rules or regulations for bringing foods for personal use by the competent authorities.

Based upon the various types of food e-commerce channels with different operating models including CBEC for personal consumption, the activities referred in these guidelines are focused on the key stages and activities that might be critical to food safety, as follows:

- (a) Food business/seller onboarding process;
- (b) At the point of e-commerce sale;
- (c) Last mile delivery;
- (d) At the point of delivery; and
- (e) Traceability and product recall.

FBOs can follow the food safety recommendations in these guidelines which are relevant to their operating models and activities. By implementing these guidelines, FBOs gain greater clarity in the following:

- The respective roles and responsibilities of different FBOs throughout different stages of the food e-commerce chain.
- The types of information to be displayed at the point of e-commerce sale and at the point of delivery.
- Traceability and product recall mechanism.

These guidelines refer to a representative sample of common food e-commerce operating models throughout. It is acknowledged that alternative operating models may appear in the future.

1 Scope

This standard aims to provide guidance to FBOs that are involved along the food e-commerce supply chain to understand their respective roles and responsibilities related to food safety and providing information to consumers. It also guides FBOs in relation to the traceability mechanism among different business players that are involved along the food e-commerce supply chain. In addition, these guidelines provide guidance on CBEC for personal consumption.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this standard.