BAGONG PILIPINAS
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DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR
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SUBJECT: RULES AND REGULATIONS ON THE IMPORTATION OF SALT

WHEREAS, Section 22 of Republic Act No. 11985 known as the "Philippine Salt Industry Development Act" provides that no person shall import salt without first securing a permit from the Department of Agriculture - Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) and the Department of Health-Food Drug Administration (DOH-FDA) for food grade- salt and DA-BFAR for non-food grade salt;

WHEREAS, to ensure regulatory continuity in the importation of food-grade salt, and pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the Department of Health–Food and Drug Administration (DOH-FDA), the BFAR shall, on an interim basis, issue the corresponding Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance (SPSIC) for food-grade salt, pending the promulgation by the DOH-FDA of the necessary implementing guidelines and the establishment of its operational capacity for the issuance thereof;

WHEREAS, there is a necessity to balance domestic need for salt as raw material of industries as well as increasing the income and welfare of salt farmers through regulating the importation of salt while establishing a comprehensive salt importation data;

WHEREAS, Section 15 (a) and 16 (d) of Republic Act No. 10611 (RA No. 10611), or the "Food Safety Act of 2013" provides that the Department of Agriculture (DA) shall be responsible for food safety in the primary production and post-harvest stages of food supply chain for foods locally produced or imported;

WHEREAS, Republic Act 10611 requires compliance to Philippine food safety standards;

WHEREAS, Section 12 (a) of RA No. 10611 provides that food to be imported into the country must come from countries with an equivalent food safety regulatory system and shall comply with international agreements to which the Philippines is a party;

WHEREAS, Section 27 of RA No. 10611 provides that traceability shall be established for foods at relevant stages of production, post-harvest handling, processing or distribution, when needed to ensure compliance with food safety requirements;

WHEREAS, Section 67 of Republic Act No. 8550 as amended by Republic Act No. 10654 provides for the the Fisheries Inspection and Quarantine Services of the BFAR to monitor and regulate the importation and exportation of fish and fishery/aquatic resources;

WHEREAS, Section 128 of Republic Act 8550 as amended by Republic Act 10654 provides for the issuance of fishery administrative orders or regulations for other violations pertaining to conservation, preservation, management, and sustainable development of fisheries and aquatic resources;

WHEREAS, Section 6 of Republic Act No. 12022, otherwise known as the "Anti-Agricultural Sabotage Act" provides for the requirement of all persons engaged in a business involving agricultural and fishery products to maintain records of their business, which shall be safely stored for five (5) years from the date of transactions;

WHEREAS, the World Trade Organization (WTO) reaffirms the right of every member country to institute appropriate official control measures as it deems necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business Act of 2018 directed all national government agencies to streamline existing policies and procedures to expedite transactions in government without compromising the required technical requirements;

WHEREFORE, taking into consideration public welfare and safety in accordance with the pertinent provisions of RA No. 11985, RA No. 12022, RA No. 10611 and RA No. 8550, as amended, the following rules on the importation of salt are hereby promulgated:

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Definition of Terms and Phrases.

a) ***Agricultural-grade salt fertilizer***- refers to a naturally occurring salt specially formulated for agricultural use. It is free of additives like iodine and contains at least 50% chloride, an essential nutrient for plant growth and development.

b) ***Application Form to Import*** **(AFI)** – a document required by BFAR to be filled out by the Licensed Importer, through the electronic platform, indicating the details of the importation, such as, but not limited to, purpose of the importation, type of salt, volume to be imported, and country of origin.

c) **Bureau/BFAR** – refers to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

d) ***Food-grade salt*** - refers to salt for human consumption.

e) ***Non-food grade salt*** - for purposes of this Circular, refers to salt not intended for human consumption such as but not limited to industrial, agricultural-grade salt fertilizer, and salt for animal consumption.

f) ***Industrial salt*** - refers to non-food grade salt used in the treatment, processing, and/or manufacture of non-food commercial products.

g) ***International Health Certificate*** – refers to a written guarantee issued by an authorized or competent regulatory agency from the country of origin, certifying that the salt has been handled, processed, and packed in hygienic manner and does not contain hazards that may pose risks to human, animal, and plant health.

h) ***Licensed Importer (LI)*** – for purposes of this Circular, Licensed Importer refers to an individual or entity authorized by the BFAR to import non-food grade salt or by the FDA to import food-grade salt.

i) ***License to Operate as Importer (LTOI)***– refers to the document granting permission to a natural or juridical person to engage in importation of salt after compliance with the requirements under this Circular.

j) ***Pharmaceutical grade salt*** – for purposes of this Circular and in accordance with Section 1 d and e, refers to salt used for pharmaceutical manufacturing and medicinal applications.

k) ***Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance*** **(SPSIC)**– document issued by BFAR prior to importation to ensure that the salt being imported meets SPS measures to protect human, animal or plant life or health. Such document also prescribes the pre-entry conditions to be complied by the exporting country and the post-entry conditions for the maintenance of quality and suitability of the product for the intended purposes.

SECTION 2. Scope - This Circular shall establish food safety controls and inspection for the importation of food-grade salt and non-food-grade salt under Section 22 of the Republic Act No. 11985.

SECTION 3. Application for License to Operate as Importer_– All importers of salt shall secure a License to Operate as Importer from the following agencies:

a. Food-grade, including pharmaceutical grade – DOH-FDA
b. Non-food grade:
    i. BFAR - industrial use
    ii. Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority – agricultural-grade salt fertilizer
    iii. Bureau of Animal Industry - animal feed
    iv. Other concerned agencies

The list of documentary requirements for LTOI to be issued by BFAR is attached as Annex I.

SECTION 4. Who may apply for LTOI - Individuals, corporations, partnerships, or cooperatives that are engaged in direct use, distribution, and trading of non-food grade salt are qualified to apply for licensing as importer of salt for non-food grade purposes. Provided that all importations intended for industrial or agricultural use shall not be utilized or converted into food-grade salt.

SECTION 5. Application for LTOI for non-food grade salt under the BFAR- The importer of non-food grade salt shall submit to the concerned BFAR Regional Office a duly accomplished application form together with the complete documentary requirements listed in Annex I.

SECTION 6. Validity of the LTOI issued by the BFAR – The initial LTOI issued by the BFAR shall be valid for a period of two (2) years, while renewal shall be valid for five (5) years subject to annual inspection and verification of consistent compliance to the requirements listed in Annex I.

SECTION 7. Suspension or revocation of LTOI- The LTOI may be suspended based on any of the enumerated prohibitions cited under Section 16, Chapter IV of this Circular depending on the gravity of the offense.

The submission of any falsified document for Licensing as Importer of salt or for the issuance of a SPSIC shall be a ground for revocation of a LTOI and shall be disqualified to reapply.

CHAPTER II
SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY IMPORT CLEARANCE

SECTION 8. Issuance of SPSIC - No food grade or non-food grade salt shall be imported without a Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance (SPSIC) issued covering such importation. The SPSIC shall be issued by the BFAR National Director or his duly authorized representative, provided that all regulatory and documentary requirements have been complied with.

Subsequent issuances shall be based on the volume requirement that can be substantiated after disposition and inventory.

SECTION 9. Application for the Issuance of SPSIC- Applications for the issuance of SPSIC shall be filed through the DA Trade System.

A licensed importer intending to import salt shall file the duly accomplished ***Application Form to Import (AFI)*** at least five (5) working days for the issuance of SPSIC prior to departure of the shipment from the country of origin. No shipment shall depart from the country of origin without a SPSIC. The AFI shall be accompanied by proof of payment of the non-refundable application fee as prescribed by the BFAR together with the following documents:

a) Proforma or Commercial Invoice
b) Certificate of Origin
c) Safety Data Sheet from supplier
d) Certificate of Analysis (from country of source) issued by a laboratory recognized by the competent authority.

Applications for SPSIC will be rejected for those importers with violations.

SECTION 10. Validity of SPSIC - The SPSIC shall indicate the period for which the actual product/consignment should have left the country of origin. All SPSICs shall be valid for a period of sixty (60) days reckoned from the date of issuance and the product or consignment shall be shipped-out within the said period.

An unused SPSIC shall be considered as automatically expired/cancelled after its "must ship-out date". All SPSICs shall be non-transferrable, non-reusable, and non-extendible.

CHAPTER III
FOOD SAFETY CONTROLS AND INSPECTION

SECTION 11. Approval of Foreign Country Establishments and Pre-Border Control Measures - For this purpose, establishments intending to export salt to the Philippines shall be accredited by the Competent Authority of the country of origin (CO) and shall be subsequently endorsed for the approval of the Philippine government prior to the importation of salt. Competent authorities from foreign countries intending to export salt to the Philippines must answer the technical questionnaire for the importation of salt and must submit the same to the BFAR, including their list of accredited salt establishments. Such a list shall be used as reference by the BFAR in the approval of the foreign salt establishments.

The technical questionnaire involves inquiry on the competence of the staff performing inspection of salt establishments and production, official controls carried out for salt production, as well as the relevant sanitary legislations and regulations being implemented by the competent authority of the exporting country. In case of a satisfactory result of the analysis of the technical questionnaire, a prior visit to evaluate the foreign salt establishments intending to export salt to the Philippines may be waived. However, the exporting country would still be subject to verification through an onsite inspection mission based on the risk assessment by the BFAR.

The list of countries as well as their establishments authorized to export food grade and non-food grade salt to the Philippines will be published and updated in the BFAR website.

Approval of foreign country establishments intending to export salt to the Philippines shall be subject to the BFAR regulations issued or to be issued relating to the implementation of Pre-Border Control Measures.

SECTION 12. Border and Post-border Control - Importation of salt products under this Circular shall comply with the following border control requirements and standards to be conducted by the BFAR:

a. ***International Health Certificate*** - food-grade salt and non-food grade salt intended for feeds, fertilizer, and for the processing of food contact materials, as well as those to be used for water treatment/purification exported to the Philippines shall be accompanied by an International Health Certificate issued by the competent authority of the exporting country. The international health

certificate issued by the competent authority shall comply with the applicable requirements as per the model health certificate provided by the BFAR. The BFAR may also require other laboratory tests in the Health Certificate as deemed necessary.

b. ***Random or risk-based sampling*** – imported salt shall be subject to random or risk-based sampling for the required physicochemical analysis.

c. ***Physical examination*** - adequate samples of imported salt for laboratory examination shall be collected randomly by the technical personnel of the Bureau for physical evaluation. The BFAR shall conduct a profiling of imported salt within
the jurisdiction of the bureau to determine the frequency of subjecting the imported salt to examination at the time of landing.

d. **Packaging and labelling Requirements**

I. Food-grade salt

Packaging materials shall be food grade, hygienic, not reused nor recycled, withstand normal storage and transport conditions, and not a source of contamination.

Labels of food-grade salt shall conform with the FDA labeling regulations or administrative orders No. 2014-0030 and its amendments. The label shall be printed legibly with such conspicuousness in such terms as to render it likely to be understood under customary conditions of purchase and use.

II. Non-food grade salt

A. Packaging
Packaging materials for non-food grade salt shall withstand normal storage, transport conditions and should not be a source of contamination. Subject to existing standards and requirements by concerned agencies.

B. Labelling

All information contained in the label must be written legibly in English. The following information must be printed in a font size that would be legible from a normal distance without the aid of the magnifying glass:

i. name of importer;
ii. the country of origin;
iii. name and complete address of the foreign supplier;

iv. net weight;
v. intended use (e.g. feeds, fertilizer, industrial, cosmetic, pharmaceutical).

e. Transport and Storage

For food grade salt, the provisions for Warehousing and Distribution as prescribed in the current Good Manufacturing Practices or food hygiene guidelines of the FDA shall be followed.

For non-food grade salt, storage and transportation should follow the good warehousing practices requirements to ensure that the product and container are protected against any type of contamination as well as against deterioration.

SECTION 13. Border and Post-border Inspection

A. Upon arrival at the designated port of entry, the imported food grade and nonfood grade salt products shall be subjected to border inspection by the BFAR through the following border and post-border procedures:

1. Documentation and inspection/verification of imported food grade and nonfood grade salt and the following accompanying documents:

a) Airway bill or bill of lading;
b) Commercial invoice;
c) Certificate of Product Registration (CPR) issued by FDA for iodized salt if not to be used directly for its own processing (if applicable);
d) FDA LTO as Salt Manufacturer/ Importer for food-grade salt (i.e. raw material for iodization)
e) Original copy of the International Health Certificate;
f) Packing List; and
g) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance issued by the BFAR.

2. Frequency of post arrival food safety inspection shall be done by the Post border inspectors on a risk-based manner with verification of the following accompanying documents:

a) Commercial invoice;
b) Copy of the International Health Certificate;
c) Packing List; and
d) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance issued by the BFAR; and
e.) Receiving, withdrawal, and other pertinent inventory and storage records.

SECTION 14. Reportorial and Monitoring System – The BFAR shall implement an electronic inventory system for verification and monitoring.

Importers shall maintain and regularly update the list of clients, disposition reports with sales invoice in case of subsequent application, and other relevant permits for their operation. The aforementioned documents will be verified during monitoring inspection.

CHAPTER IV
PROHIBITIONS AND PENALTIES

SECTION 15. Prohibitions – In addition to other prohibitions mentioned in any other laws, rules, and regulations, the following are strictly prohibited:

A. Importing of salt without SPSIC or beyond its validity and other violations pertaining to the issuance of SPSIC.

B. Analogous to acts of smuggling, such as but not limited to:

1. Recycling, tampering, modifying, and altering of SPSIC;
2. Forging the signatures in the SPSICs;
3. Selling, transferring, and conveying of SPSIC;
4. Using SPSIC of persons, natural or juridical, other than those specifically named in the SPSIC;
5. Using fake, fictitious or fraudulent import permits or shipping documents;
6. Misdeclaration (*e.g.* salt usage and volume of the consignment during border inspection or use of SPSIC for salt in importing other commodities);
7. Submission of any falsified document for Licensing as Importer of salt or for the issuance of a SPSIC;
8. Providing false information in the application form or in any of the accompanying documents to the application or submission of forged documents; and
9. Unloading, transporting, storing, and trading imported salt products without the necessary permits and documents as required under this Circular;

C. Acts which jeopardize biosecurity and food safety, such as but not limited to:

1. violating relevant SPS and biosafety rules and regulations or any conditions imposed in the SPSIC; and
2. failure to comply with biosecurity and food safety controls and inspections provided in this Circular.

D. Illegal trade of imported salt, such as but not limited to the following:

1. selling or diverting non-food grade imported salt for purposes other than what is stated in the SPSIC (*e. g.* non-food grade to food-grade salt);
2. selling, utilizing, or distributing imported salt not fit for human consumption;
3. selling, utilizing, or distributing of imported salt by unregistered reseller;

E. Failure to comply with the other requirements imposed on imported salt, such as but not limited to:

1. unauthorized removal, breaking, or tampering of the BFAR seal in the containers and/or refrigerated vans;
2. non-compliance of the packaging and labelling requirements provided in this Circular;
3. failure of the storage or warehouse to provide data of deposited imported salt therein as required by the BFAR;
4. using unlicensed warehouse or storage facility;
5. unloading of imported salt at the storage or warehouses without the presence of the BFAR personnel;
6. diversion of the imported salt to another warehouse or storage facility aside from the final destination indicated in the SPSIC without prior authority from the BFAR; and
7. no records and documents in support of the disposition report.

F. Other acts similar or analogous to the foregoing.

SECTION 16. Penalties – Without prejudice to existing laws and regulations relating to anti-smuggling, any act or omission in violation of any provisions of this Order shall subject the offender to a fine of One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) to Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00), depending on the socioeconomic impact and seriousness of the violation.

For violations regarding LTOI found in other the rules and regulations, the BFAR will refer the matter with its own findings to the concerned agency with jurisdiction over the imported salt. The latter shall decide whether the importer's license will be revoked or suspended.

CHAPTER V
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 17. Annexes - The Annexes of this Circular may be amended by virtue of a BFAR Fisheries Office Order in case there is a need to update the same.

SECTION 18. Repealing Clause- Any provisions in previous orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Circular as they apply to import from the exporting country is hereby repealed and superseded accordingly.

SECTION 19. Separability Clause - If any portion or provision of this Circular is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other portion or portions thereof, which are not affected thereby, shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 20. Transitory Provision - Prior to the effectivity of this Circular, all matters pending resolution shall be decided in accordance with the existing procedure.

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SECTION 21. Effectivity - This Circular shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette and/or two (2) newspapers of general circulation and upon registration with the National Administrative Register (ONAR).

Done this 6th day of MARCH 2026.

FRANCISCO P. TIU LAUREL JR.
Secretary

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ANNEX I
DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION OF LTOI

1. Duly accomplished application form
2. Certified True Copy of valid registration certificates from DTI (for sole proprietorship), SEC with duly certified GIS (for corporations), CDA (for cooperatives), or DOLE (for associations and organizations
3. Certified True Copy of valid Mayor's/ Business Permit
4. Certified True Copy of valid Sanitary Permit
5. Company Profile, including officers, office and establishment location map with geotagged photos
6. Certified True Copy of valid BIR Registration as importer of salt
7. Tax Identification Number (TIN)
8. Certified True Copy of valid Government-issued License to Operate Storage Warehouse, as applicable
9. Lease Contract with a Storage Warehouse with a valid License to Operate, as applicable
10. Certified True Copy of valid BOC-Accreditation Certificate
11. Certified True Copy of valid BOC Certificate of Registration