

## Food Safety Certification & Licensing Overview for Food Businesses in Nigeria

### 1. Introduction

Operating a food business in Nigeria requires compliance with various regulatory frameworks to ensure food safety, quality, and consumer protection. Certification and licensing are mandatory for local manufacturers, importers, and exporters. This guide provides an overview of key certifications and licenses required for food businesses in Nigeria.

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### 2. Key Regulatory Bodies in Nigeria

Food businesses must comply with standards set by regulatory agencies, including:

- National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC)
  - Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON)
  - Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC)
  - Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) (for exporters)
  - Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH)
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### 3. Required Certifications & Licenses

#### 3.1 NAFDAC Certification (Mandatory for Food Products)

Purpose:

- Ensures food products meet safety and quality standards before they are sold in Nigeria.

Who Needs It?

- All food manufacturers, importers, and distributors.

Requirements for NAFDAC Certification:

- ✓ Application form submission with company details.
- ✓ Facility inspection by NAFDAC officials.
- ✓ Laboratory analysis of food products.
- ✓ Proper labeling and packaging compliance.
- ✓ Payment of applicable fees.

Processing Time: 6–8 weeks (varies based on product category).

Renewal: Every 5 years.

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### **3.2 SONCAP Certification (For Imported Food Products)**

Purpose:

- Ensures that imported food products meet Nigerian Industrial Standards (NIS).

Who Needs It?

- Importers of processed and packaged food products.

Requirements:

- ✓ Product testing in an accredited laboratory.
  - ✓ Certification through the SONCAP process.
  - ✓ Import permit from the Federal Ministry of Health (for certain categories).
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### **3.3 HACCP Certification (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points)**

Purpose:

- Ensures food safety by identifying and controlling potential hazards in food production.
- Internationally recognized and necessary for exports.

Who Needs It?

- Food manufacturers and processors.
- Exporters targeting international markets.

Requirements:

- ✓ Implementation of HACCP principles in food production.
- ✓ Training of employees on HACCP standards.
- ✓ Regular audits and documentation of food safety measures.

Renewal: Annual review and recertification.

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### **3.4 ISO 22000: Food Safety Management System Certification**

Purpose:

- Ensures global food safety compliance and enhances market access.

Who Needs It?

- Large-scale food manufacturers and exporters.

Requirements:

- ✓ Implementation of a structured food safety management system.
  - ✓ Compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).
  - ✓ Regular audits and inspections.
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### **3.5 BRCGS (British Retail Consortium Global Standards) Certification**

Purpose:

- Required for export to the UK and Europe.
- Focuses on food safety, quality, and legal compliance.

Who Needs It?

- Food businesses aiming to supply European retailers.

Requirements:

- ✓ Compliance with BRCGS Global Food Safety Standards.
  - ✓ Implementation of HACCP and GMP principles.
  - ✓ Facility audits by certified inspectors.
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### **3.6 Organic & Sustainability Certifications**

Purpose:

- Ensures compliance with organic farming and sustainable food production.

Types of Certifications:

- USDA Organic (for export to the US).
- EU Organic (for export to Europe).

- JAS Organic (for Japan).
- Rainforest Alliance, UTZ, and Fair Trade (for sustainability-focused food businesses).

Who Needs It?

- Farmers, food processors, and exporters of organic or sustainable products.

Requirements:

- ✓ Organic farming or sustainable sourcing practices.
  - ✓ Periodic third-party inspections.
  - ✓ Documentation of supply chain traceability.
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### **3.7 Halal & Kosher Certifications**

Purpose:

- Certifies compliance with Islamic (Halal) and Jewish (Kosher) dietary laws.

Who Needs It?

- Food businesses catering to Muslim and Jewish markets.

Requirements:

- ✓ Certification from a recognized Halal or Kosher certification body.
  - ✓ Compliance with religious dietary guidelines.
  - ✓ Inspections and audits by religious authorities.
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### **3.8 Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) Registration**

Purpose:

- Facilitates export of food products from Nigeria.

Who Needs It?

- Exporters of Nigerian food products.

Requirements:

- ✓ Business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).
- ✓ NEPC application and payment of processing fees.

- ✓ Compliance with food safety and packaging requirements.
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#### **4. Best Practices for Compliance**

- ✓ Stay Updated on Regulations – Regularly check updates from NAFDAC, SON, and other regulatory bodies.
  - ✓ Maintain Proper Documentation – Keep records of licenses, test reports, and audits.
  - ✓ Train Employees on Food Safety – Regular training ensures compliance with evolving standards.
  - ✓ Conduct Regular Internal Audits – Identify and address non-compliance issues early.
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#### **5. Conclusion**

Certification and licensing are critical for food businesses to operate legally in Nigeria and access international markets. Obtaining the right certifications enhances credibility, ensures compliance with regulatory requirements, and supports business growth.