



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Elliptical Road, Diliman
1100 Quezon City

ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR

No. 01

Series of 2021

SUBJECT : MANDATORY ACCREDITATION OF COLD STORAGE WAREHOUSES (CSWs) FOR AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

WHEREAS, under Article 5 [Declaration of Policy] of the Consumer Act [RA 7394], it shall be the duty of the State: (a) to develop and provide safety and quality standards for consumer products, including performance or use-oriented standards, codes of practice and methods of tests; (b) to assist the consumer in evaluating the quality, including safety performance and comparative utility of consumer products; (c) to protect the public against unreasonable risks of injury associated with consumer products; and (d) to undertake research on quality improvement of products and investigation into causes and prevention of products related deaths, illnesses and injuries;

WHEREAS, under Article 6 of the same law, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is tasked to enforce the provisions of the law and its implementing rules and regulations with respect to products related to agriculture;

WHEREAS, Article 7 of the Consumer Act mandates the DA to establish consumer product quality and safety standards such as, but not limited to precautions in storage, transporting and packaging;

WHEREAS, Administrative Order No. 9 Series of 1993 re: Rules and Regulations Implementing RA No. 7394 – The Consumer Act of the Philippines Section 3: Functions of the Implementing Agencies, provides that the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) shall accredit and classify meat source such as cold storage according to their facilities and handling practices;

WHEREAS, Section 8.3 of Republic Act (RA) No. 9296 otherwise known as “The Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines” provides that the NMIS shall evaluate and classify meat establishments as to compliance to hygiene and sanitation standards;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has an existing procedure for the certification of cold storage warehouse/facilities used for the storage of fish and fishery/aquatic products based on its compliance to basic sanitation and hygiene requirements in support to the implementation of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. However, if the cold storage warehouse used is part of the processing facility engaged in the freezing of fish and fishery products, the Certificate of Approval issued by BFAR to the fishery establishment engaged in freezing is extended to its cold storage facility;

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WHEREAS, the cold storage industry is continuing to grow rapidly in the Philippines. However, only the accreditation for handling and maintenance of frozen meat and meat products throughout the cold chain had been established. Further, these cold storages are likewise used for the handling, maintenance and preservation of fruits, vegetables, other plant products; and eggs and milk and other milk products;

WHEREAS, a centralized and harmonized system for the accreditation of cold storage facilities for meat and meat products; fishery products; fruits, vegetables, other plant products; and eggs and milk and other milk products must be established;

WHEREAS, the accreditation of cold storage facilities will enable the Department to determine post-harvest problems and regulate the operation of cold storage facilities to effectively maintain the quality and safety of agricultural and fishery products;

WHEREAS, the DA requires that all frozen agriculture and fishery products need to be stored in accredited and compliant CSW;

WHEREAS, in order to ensure the quality and safety of all agricultural and fishery products requiring cold storage, the accreditation of CSWs wherein these goods will be stored, shall be made a mandatory requirement for the issuance of Sanitary/Phytosanitary Clearance by concerned bureaus, attached agencies or offices of the Department;

WHEREAS, the Department shall work hand in hand with the Cold Chain Association of the Philippines, Inc., a multi-sectoral group of companies and other professional organizations in the Philippines with the primary mission to organize the different industry sectors participating in the supply chain of both chilled and/or frozen food products and other groups operating temperature controlled product storage or distribution, for the efficient consultation, drafting and implementation of this Administrative Circular, in accordance with Article 7 of the Consumer Act;

WHEREAS, Administrative Order No. 31, Series of 2012 directs and authorizes all Heads of Department, Bureaus, Commissions, Agencies, Offices and Instrumentalities of the National Government, including Government-Owned and/or Controlled Corporations, to rationalize the rates of their fees and charges, increase their existing rates and impose new fees and charges subject to the observance of due process and such other requirements set forth by existing laws and regulations;

WHEREAS, to ensure full implementation of the above AO, a Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) with DILG requiring all Local Government Units (LGUs) to include DA-CSW Accreditation in their mandatory requirements for the application of business permits and licenses of establishments with and/or requiring cold storage facilities, refrigerated container vans storing agricultural and fishery products, starting 2014, which, if already accomplished by the particular LGU, shall automatically nullify the documentary requirements emanating from LGUs under this AO, without the necessity of amending this Administrative Circular (AC);

NOW THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM D. DAR, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, by virtue of the power vested in me by law, do hereby issue this Administrative Circular for Mandatory Accreditation of Cold Storage Warehouse for Agricultural and Fishery Products.

Section 1 SCOPE

This Circular covers the guidelines on mandatory accreditation of CSW for agricultural and fishery products nationwide. CSW shall include, but not limited to the following:

1.1 Cold Storage Warehouse

- 1.1.1 Meat and meat products
- 1.1.2 Fish and aquatic products
- 1.1.3 Fruits, vegetables and other plant products
- 1.1.4 Milk and derivatives of milk and eggs
- 1.1.5 Animal feeds

1.2 Stationary Refrigerated Container Vans

Section 2 OBJECTIVES


The objectives of this Order are hereby enumerated as follows:

1. To support the adoption of food safety risk analysis program of the DA, which is an essential tool of an effective food safety management.
2. To have a functioning traceability system that will provide adequate information on product condition and ensure fast tracking and recovery of affected lot found not in conformity with the established food safety standards.
3. To increase confidence among the regulators, industry and consumers that the measure for the cold storage of agricultural and fishery products for local market and export are appropriate, in place, and effective in controlling food safety hazards.

Section 3 DEFINITION OF TERMS


For the purpose of these guidelines, the following terms and phrases shall mean:

- 3.1 **Accreditation** - the procedure by which the DA-RO Cold Storage Warehouse Accreditation Committee gives recommendation for the issuance of a certificate of accreditation to a cold storage that complied with the accreditation requirements set by the DA, its Bureaus and Attached Agencies.


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- 3.2 **Accreditation Committee Technical Working Group (AC-TWG) of the Regulatory Office** - The Accreditation Committee Technical Working Group of each of the Regulatory Offices shall be composed of three (3) Members; 1 Chairman and 2 Members.
- 3.3 **Accreditation Officer** - The Bureau Director/Executive Director having jurisdiction over the type of CSW subject for accreditation shall be the officer authorized to issue the Certificate of Accreditation.
- 3.4 **Accreditation Requirements** - standards or measures established by the concerned government agency for the issuance of a Certificate of Accreditation for CSW.
- 3.5 **Agricultural and Fishery Products** - commodities, raw or processed, that are marketed for human consumption (excluding water, salt and additives) or animal feeds.
- 3.6 **Cold Chain** - refers to the various points of the production chain wherein the perishable commodity is kept at the required ideal temperature throughout the post-harvest handling stage to maintain its quality and safety.
- 3.7 **Cold Storage Warehouse (CSW)** - an establishment used for the storage of local and/or imported agricultural and fishery products intended for commercial purposes.
- 3.8 **Commercial Purposes** - the use by any corporation, association, society organization, society, organization or individual for any fare, fee, charge or other consideration, directly or indirectly with any business or other undertaking intended for profit, regardless of its quantity.
- 3.9 **Food** - Fruits and vegetables, eggs, butter, fresh animal flesh and products therefrom, and fresh fish and fishery products and fowl flesh, which are stored in CSW.
- 3.10 **Food Borne Hazard** - Any biological, chemical or physical agent in, or condition of food, with the potential to cause an adverse effect on human health.
- 3.11 **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)** - A preventive food safety management system which identifies, evaluates and controls the hazards which are significant to food safety. A HACCP Plan is a company's written document delineating the procedures to be followed to demonstrate the application of the seven principles of HACCP to ensure food safety.
- 3.12 **Provisional Certificate of Accreditation** - Temporary accreditation shall be granted to a CSW for a minimum period of six (6) months subject to compliance of all conditions and requirements for accreditation.


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- 3.13 **Regulatory Office (RO)** - The official government agency (BFAR, BAI, BPI, NMIS) having jurisdiction over the commodity and has the legal mandate to enforce relevant laws and regulations on quality and safety assurance of agricultural and fishery products for local/export market intended for human consumption or animal feeds.
- 3.14 **Regulatory Office Inspectorate Team (RO-IT)** - Each concerned Regulatory Office (BFAR, BAI, BPI, NMIS) shall issue a Special Order designating at least three (3) staff to compose the Inspectorate Team who shall be responsible in the inspection and evaluation of CSW application for accreditation using the accreditation criteria for CSW to ensure compliance with all the requirements.
- 3.15 **Risk Analysis** - A systematic, disciplined approach for making food safety decisions, which includes three (3) major components: risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. It is a powerful tool for carrying out science-base analysis for reaching out sound consistent solutions to food safety problems.
- 3.16 **Sanitary/Phytosanitary Clearance** - Issued by the respective CA, to protect against risks linked to food safety, animal health and plant protection or to prevent or oimit damage within a territory from the entry, establishment and spread of pests.
- 3.17 **Stationary Refrigerated Container Van** - Fixed refrigerated van used for holding or storing chilled or frozen agricultural and fishery products.
- 3.18 **Traceability** - The ability to follow the movement of food through specified stage(s) of production, processing, storage and distribution.

Section 4 REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION AND RENEWAL

4.1 Application for Accreditation

- 4.1.1 The applicant for CSW are required to comply and submit the following to the concerned Regulatory Office:
- 4.1.1.1 Duly accomplished and notarized Application Form
 - 4.1.1.2 Floor Plan/Layout showing all storage rooms and other facilities for specific products
 - 4.1.1.3 Recent photographs of the inner and outer portions of the CSW
 - 4.1.1.4 Documentary requirements
 - a. Business Permit (City/Municipal Government)
 - b. Environment Compliance Certificate/Certificate of Non-Coverage (DENR)

- c. Permit to Operate/Exemption Certificate (DENR)
- d. Photocopy of Business Registration – DTI/SEC
- e. Sanitary Permit
- f. Certificate of Potability

- 4.1.1.5 Reliable recording system for readily available information
- 4.1.1.6 Rated capacity
- 4.1.1.7 List of clientele (with specific products) for the last two (2) years, where applicable
- 4.1.1.8 Copy of the Official Receipt (OR) of accreditation fee paid to the concerned RO;

4.2 Renewal of Accreditation

4.2.1 CSW applying for renewal of accreditation is required to comply and submit the following to the Regulatory Office:

- 4.2.1.1 Duly accomplished and notarized Application Form
- 4.2.1.2 Updated documentary requirements, namely:
 - a. Business Permit
 - b. Permit to Operate/Exemption Certificate – DENR (waste disposal/treatment facilities)
 - c. Sanitary Permit
 - d. Certificate of Potability
- 4.2.1.3 Photographs of additional facilities/improvement, if any;
- 4.2.1.4 Rated capacity;
- 4.2.1.5 List of clientele (with specific products) for the last two (2) years, where applicable;
- 4.2.1.6 Copy of the Official Receipts of accreditation fee paid to the concerned CA.

Section 5 AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

5.1 The Conduct of Audit and Assessment

5.1.1 The audit and assessment of CSWs shall be conducted by the Accreditation Committee Technical Working Group.


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Section 6
PROCEDURES ON THE ACCREDITATION/RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

6.1 The following procedure shall be strictly observed in the accreditation/renewal of accreditation of CSW.

6.1.1 Application for Accreditation/Renewal of Accreditation

6.1.1.1 Submission of duly accomplished Application Form (in triplicate) to the concerned Regulatory Office.

6.1.2 Schedule of Fees

6.1.2.1 Payment of fees shall be imposed and collected by the respective Regulatory Offices, as follows:

Bureau	Particulars	Amount
NMIS	AAA Classification	P 5,000.00
	AA Classification	P 4,000.00
BAI		P 4,000.00
BPI		P 4,000.00
BFAR		P 4,000.00

6.1.3 Inspection and Evaluation of all CSWs by the concerned Regulatory Office

All CSWs applying for accreditation/renewal of accreditation shall undergo inspection and evaluation by the RO-IT using the accreditation criteria for CSW to ensure compliance with all the requirements.

6.1.3.1 If documentary requirements are complete, the RO-IT shall forward the application to the Accreditation Committee Technical Working Group.

6.1.3.2 Inspection Report indicating the name of the CSW applicant, CSW office address, place of inspection (specify complete address of warehouse/cold storage, geo-tagging of warehouse/cold storage, and pictures), date of inspection and findings shall also be forwarded to the Accreditation Committee-Technical Working Group (ACTWG).

6.1.3.3 The Certificate of Recognition/Accreditation issued previously by the concerned Regulatory Office for the following establishments shall be recognized by the Regulatory Office for the purpose of evaluating the CSW applying for DA-RO CSW Accreditation:

- 6.1.3.3.1 EU and Non EU recognized processing plants.
- 6.1.3.3.2 GOP/GMP/SSOP/HACCP Certified processing plants.
- 6.1.3.3.3 In-house CSWs which are integral parts of processing plants/slaughterhouses/meat cutting plants/poultry dressing plants for exclusive use of the plant.

6.1.4 Issuance of a Certificate of Accreditation or Letter of Disapproval

- 6.1.4.1 A Certificate of Accreditation shall be issued by the Accreditation Officer to the CSW that meets the requirements as indorsed by the Accreditation Committee.
- 6.1.4.2 The Certificate shall indicate the types of products approved to be stored/kept in the CSW.
- 6.1.4.3 The validity period of the Certificate of Accreditation shall be for two (2) years unless revoked earlier.
- 6.1.4.4 The CSWs which intend to add other products, other than those indicated in the Certificate of Accreditation, may seek its accreditation through the regular process, for which an Addendum shall be issued by Accreditation Officer, provided that the same will follow the expiration date indicated in the initially issued Certificate of Accreditation.
- 6.1.4.5 A CSW may be granted a Provisional Certificate of Accreditation (PCA) for a minimum period of six (6) months subject to compliance of all conditions and requirements for accreditation.
- 6.1.4.6 In case a CSW is granted a provisional Certificate of Accreditation, the CSW is required to submit a corrective action plan within seven (7) days from receipt thereof.
- 6.1.4.7 Said provisional accreditation may be revoked, cancelled or suspended for violation of this A.C. and other pertinent laws. The accreditation is not transferable and shall not be used in any place other than the one stated in the certificate, whether provisional or in the Certificate of Accreditation.

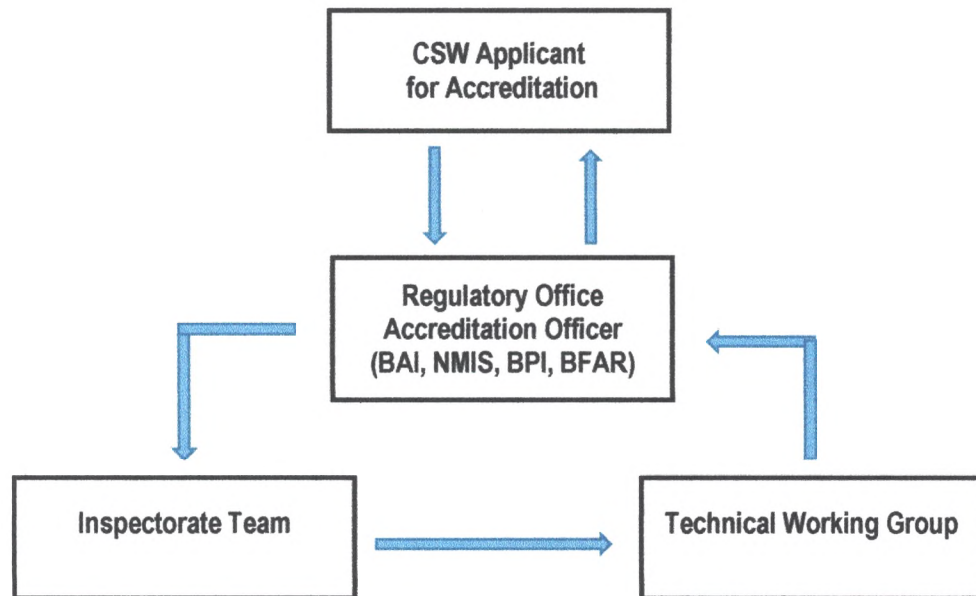


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**PROCESS FLOW OF COLD STORAGE WAREHOUSE (CSW)
APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION**



Process Flow:

1. CSW applicants for accreditation shall submit the required documents to the concerned Regulatory Office (RO).
2. The concerned RO shall forward the document to its Inspectorate Team (RO-IT). **(3.14)**
3. The RO-IT after performing its assigned task shall forward the documents including its findings to the TWG. **(6.1.3)**
4. The RO-TWG after performing its role shall forward all the documents, its findings as well as its recommendations to the Regulatory Office Accreditation Officer. **(Sec. 10)**
5. The Accreditation Officer shall issue the Certificate of Accreditation to the CSW Applicant. **(Sec. 11)**

Section 7 RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

7.1 Renewal of Accreditation

- 7.1.1 The application for renewal of accreditation shall be submitted to the concerned RO sixty (60) days prior to the expiry date specified in the Certificate of Accreditation to be renewed and shall follow the procedure for accreditation in the preceding section.
- 7.1.2 The expiry date of the CSW with a renewed accreditation shall always follow the expiry date of the initial accreditation. An application submitted to the regional office a day after the expiry date and likewise those with incomplete requirements shall be considered filed out of time.
- 7.1.3 The CSW granted with provisional accreditation shall automatically expire on the specified date, unless granted an extension after compliance with the recommended improvements,.
- 7.1.4 A CSW that needs renovation and/or provision of appropriate equipment and facilities must be complied first before endorsement to the CSW Regulatory Office.
- 7.1.5 Failure to conform to the needed renovation and/or provision of equipment and facilities shall result to the downgrading of its classification or the pendency of the application for accreditation.
- 7.1.6 Failure to renew its Certificate of Accreditation on the specified date shall result in automatic revocation of its accreditation.
- 7.1.7 The CSW shall consistently follow the procedure for the issuance of a Certificate of Accreditation found in this Circular.

Section 8 IMPLEMENTATION

- 8.1 The following agencies shall be the Regulatory Offices in the implementation of this Circular:
 - 8.1.1 Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), for fish and aquatic products;
 - 8.1.2 National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS), for meat and meat products;
 - 8.1.3 Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), for fruits, vegetable and plant products;
 - 8.1.4 Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), for eggs, milk, other milk products, and animal feeds.

- 8.2 The concerned RO shall oversee the unloading of products for storage in the accredited CSWs.

Section 9
RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLD STORAGE OPERATORS

- 9.1 The cold storage operators and the accredited CSW shall comply with the terms and conditions of the DA's issuance of Certificate of Accreditation.

- 9.1.1 The Cold Storage Operators shall:

- 9.1.1.1 Fully cooperate with the RO in the implementation of this Circular.
- 9.1.1.2 Support the traceability system for food products advocated by the DA.
- 9.1.1.3 Allow duly authorized officers/inspectors of the RO to enter and inspect the CSW premises during reasonable hours and conditions.
- 9.1.1.4 Allow the verification and evaluation of relevant records or documents.
- 9.1.1.5 Provide assistance as may be needed to enable the ROs to conduct inspection and testing efficiently and effectively.
- 9.1.1.6 Communicate immediately with the concerned RO for any technical problems that may arise.
- 9.1.1.7 Disallow the unloading of imported products for storage in the absence of representative from the concerned Regulatory Office.
- 9.1.1.8 Disallow the release of commodities in which a Hold Order was issued by the concerned RO.

Section 10
FUNCTIONS OF THE COLD STORAGE WAREHOUSE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE- TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (ACTWG)

- 10.1 The Accreditation Committee Technical Working Group shall:
- 10.1.1 Conduct audit and assessment of the CSW.
 - 10.1.2 Review and revalidate all documents submitted by the Inspectorate Team and if necessary, may reinspect the CSW and make recommendations to the Accreditation Officer.


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- 10.1.3 Investigate and recommend to the DA Secretary appropriate actions/ penalties for violations of this AO.
- 10.1.4 Provide forum to address issues arising from the implementation of this Circular.
- 10.1.5 Maintain a list of accredited CSWs, non-compliant and/or non-accredited CSW and monitor regularly.

Section 11
POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ACCREDITATION OFFICER

The concerned Bureau Director (BFAR, BAI, BPI) and Executive Director (NMIS) as Accreditation Officer shall have the following powers and functions:

1. Review all documents submitted by the Accreditation Committee Technical Working Group including its recommendations as basis for the appropriate action.
2. Upon finding that all the documentary requirements and needed information are complete, the Certificate of Accreditation shall be issued. Otherwise, the issuance of Letter of Disapproval of Accreditation.

Section 12
REPEALING CLAUSE

The provisions of existing Memorandum Circulars, Administrative Orders, Special Orders and other issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Circular are hereby modified, revoked or repealed accordingly.

Section 13
PENALTY PROVISION

All persons, firm or corporation found guilty of directly or indirectly violating any provision of this Circular shall be penalized under all existing relevant laws, which shall have suppletory application to this Order.

Section 14
EFFECTIVITY

This Administrative Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation or the Official Gazette and filing of a copy at the UP Law Center.

Done this 24th day of February 2021.


WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D.
Secretary

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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