

## INFORMATION NOTE ON THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR MEAT PROCESSING ESTABLISHMENTS

### Approval of Activities at Meat Processing Establishments

A food business operator, who wishes to operate a cold store, slaughtering, fresh meat, cutting, re-wrapping/re-packaging, game handling, etc establishment must in the first instance, submit their proposals including plans and specifications to Meat Hygiene and Animal By Products Division (MHABP). A *Notification of Intent Form* should be completed by the food business operator. At this stage a formal application form for approval should not be submitted. The applicant will be advised later in the process when to submit an application for approval.

A food business operator who is approved for certain activities at his/her establishment and intends to expand the business to include new activities must also apply to the Department under this approval process.

A food business operator must submit a completed *Notification of Intent Form*, plans, drawings and specifications of the *proposed activities* at the establishment to Meat Hygiene and Animal By Products Division (MHABP). The plans, drawings and specifications furnished should contain sufficient detailed information to enable the proposals to be examined. The proposals will be examined by a Department veterinary inspector.

Meetings with the food business operator and his/her advisors are held and inspections are carried out, as necessary, of the site of the proposed establishment and/or the establishment where the new activity is proposed. The food business operator is notified of any modifications which must be made to the proposals and of any additional information which is required. When the veterinary inspector is satisfied that, **in principle**, the proposal complies with the requirements of the relevant legislation, the food business operator is informed by Meat Hygiene and Animal By Products Division that he/she **may** proceed with the construction / alteration of the premises in respect of the proposed activities, subject to compliance with the planning and environmental legislation. The food business operator has 12 months from the date the approval in principle is given to begin construction. When the food business operator notifies MHABP Division that construction of the establishment has been completed, an on-site inspection is carried out by the veterinary inspector. Further inspections may be carried out, if necessary. The food business operator is required to provide evidence that operational programmes have been drawn up under its food safety management system inclusive of a HACCP Plan (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), Own Checks Programme and Staff Training Programme.

When the veterinary inspector is satisfied that the structures, equipment and food safety systems i.e. HACCP plans, SOPs, etc comply with the legislation the food business operator is then advised to submit a formal application for approval. The formal application for approval should only then be submitted by the food business operator for consideration on completion of all the pre-requisites for proof of compliance with the necessary health and food safety standards. The application for approval should be submitted to MHABP Division using the specified application form.

The veterinary inspectorate forwards a report and recommendation, in support of the submitted formal application for approval to Meat Hygiene and Animal By Products Division in relation to the approval of the relevant activities (slaughtering, cutting, storage etc.); the species to which the approval relates is also specified.

The recommendation may be for full approval or conditional approval. The Division notifies the applicant in writing of the approval status granted and of the approval number allocated to the establishment. In respect of an existing approved establishment a certificate of approval will issue for the new activity under the existing approval number.

### **Full / Conditional Approval**

This procedure applies to new applicants and in respect of new activities at previously approved establishments.

On recommendation of the veterinary inspector full or conditional approval may be granted. Conditional approval may be for an initial period of up to 3 months. During this period the establishment may continue to trade under its original approval number and for a new applicant under a newly assigned number.

Full approval may be granted following a new on-site visit within this 3 month period and satisfactorily compliance with the hygiene package requirements. The conditional approval may be extended for a further period of up to 3 months pending completion of any necessary compliance requirements. The conditional approval cannot exceed a total of 6 months.

### **Refusal / Suspension / Revocation of an Application / Approval**

In the event of the Department refusing an application or suspending or revoking an approval it shall-

- a) notify the applicant or holder of the food business approval of the proposal and the reasons for the proposal, and that he or she may make representations in relation to the proposal to the Department within 14 days of notification,
- b) consider a representation duly made before deciding whether to proceed with, modify or annul the proposal, and
- c) notify the applicant of the decision and the reasons for the decision.

If the Department is of the opinion that –

- a) it is necessary for the protection of human health, animal health or welfare or the environment including the prevention, control or eradication of a disease (within the meaning of the Diseases of Animals Act 1966 (No. 6 of 1966)), or

- b) it is necessary, ancillary or supplementary for an act of the institutions of the European Community (included an act cited in the preamble to the European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations 2020 (S.I. No. 22 of 2020)) to have full effect,

it may refuse an application or suspend or revoke an approval.

### **Major Re-Structural Works / Change of Management or Ownership / Closure of Business**

In the event of any major re-structural work at an approved establishment, change of management of the establishment and / or ownership or closure of the business the food business operator must give prior notice to Meat Hygiene Section, Meat Hygiene and Animal By Products Division immediately of any such change.

### **Main Legislation**

#### **European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations 2020 (S.I. No. 22 of 2020)**

Further information on the relevant legislation, trader notices, listing of approved meat establishments may be obtained from the Department's website

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/foodsafetyconsumerissues/foodsafetycontrolsonmeat/>

### **Enquiries**

**All enquiries on the approval process should be made to**

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