

Centre for Food Safety launches online application for import licences and import permissions for game, meat and poultry

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (March 30) launched online services for application for import licences for meat and poultry as well as import permissions relating to game, meat and poultry through the Food Trader Portal (FTP).

A CFS spokesperson said, "We have been rolling out different online services of the FTP in phases since December last year, starting with the trader registration module which allows food traders to complete registration as food importers or distributors, renew registration and update trader information online after opening user accounts at the FTP. The online services launched today enable importers to submit electronic applications for import licences for meat and poultry and import permissions for game, meat and poultry at any time. Importers are not required to send staff to submit application forms to and obtain import licences or import permissions from the CFS in person. They can check application status online as well as records of past applications, lists of approved slaughtering plants and processing plants eligible for export, the list of foods suspended from import, and more."

In tandem with the rollout of the new online services, the CFS has implemented a series of enhancement measures, including simplification of the application forms for import licences and import permissions and the rollout of a new CFS Food Coding System to facilitate efficient food tracing as well as data retrieval and analysis.

"Along with the provision of an online submission service, the Import Licensing Office of the CFS has been operating seven days a week with extended operation hours for expeditious handling of online applications for import licences. The turnaround time for processing and issuing import licences is expected to be reduced from one working day to within several hours at the earliest," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson added, "To streamline the application process, an import permission is in general no longer required for the import of meat and poultry, except for prohibited meat, meat with an export declaration issued by eligible member states of the European Union (EU), and meat or poultry for re-export to the Mainland or Macao via Hong Kong. At the same time, an original or copy of the health certificate or export declaration (for meat from EU member states) is required from importers when applying for the import licence for meat or poultry."

The spokesperson said, "Importers can still submit applications on paper having regard to their operational needs. Importers who wish to use the online services at the FTP should open their user accounts as soon as practicable if they do not have one."

To facilitate the use of these convenient and fast online services, the CFS has conducted a number of workshops for importers, focusing on training for online application for import licences and import permissions and the use of shortcuts to streamline the application process.

For further information on the use of the online services, please visit the FTP webpage at www.ftp.cfs.gov.hk.