

**Q&A on Administrative Regulation No. 5/2024 “Standards for Use of Food Additives in Food”
(For Trade)
Introduction**

Administrative Regulation No. 5/2024 “Standards for Use of Food Additives in Food” came into effect on 1 May 2024. In addition to integrating and updating the existing safety standards for three types of food additives, namely food colourings, sweeteners, and preservatives and antioxidants, the Administrative Regulation also covers over 20 more functional classes of food additives, including emulsifiers, acidity regulators, stabilisers, anti-caking agents, flavour enhancers and colour retention agents, that are common in local food products in order to better guide and regulate the trade’s use of food additives and further enhance food safety.

To regulate the use of food additives by those engaged in food production and operation, the new standards lay out the principles of using food additives, the types of additives allowed to be used in food, the food categories that the use of additives is allowed, the maximum amount of additives allowed to be used in certain food categories, etc. However, the standards for labelling the names and nature of use, among other details, of these food additives in relevant products are not within the regulatory scope of the standards.

Below are frequently asked questions regarding the new standards and the corresponding answers for the trade’s reference.

1. Where can I find Administrative Regulation No. 5/2024 “Standards on Use of Food Additives in Foodstuffs”?

- Administrative Regulation No. 5/2024 “Standards on Use of Food Additives in Foodstuffs” was published on 15 February 2024 and took effect on 1 May 2024. For details on the Administrative Regulation, please visit the Printing Bureau website: <https://images.io.gov.mo//bo/i/2024/07/rega-5-2024.pdf>.

2. Is there a transition period for Administrative Regulation No. 5/2024 “Standards on Use of Food Additives in Foodstuffs”?

- Administrative Regulation No. 5/2024 “Standards on Use of Food Additives in Foodstuffs” was published on 15 February 2024 and took effect on 1 May 2024,

after which the relevant departments start to evaluate sample test results in accordance with the new standards. Any test results with anomalies will be analysed, and timely follow-up actions are taken if food safety issues are detected.

3. What should I pay attention to when using different food additives with the same function in the same food item?

- When a combination of food additives like different food colourings with the same colour, preservatives and antioxidants is used in the same food item, the sum of the total proportion of the amount of each additive used to its maximum permissible amount should not exceed 1, so as to keep the overall food additive content in this food item within the safe range.
- That is, the sum of the quotients derived from dividing the amount of each additive used in the food by its maximum amount allowed (i.e. used amount/maximum permissible amount) should not go beyond 1.
- For example, a food manufacturer uses sorbic and benzoic acids when making a pudding product. If we use A to indicate the amount of sorbic acid used (whose maximum amount allowed in puddings is 1,000 mg/kg) and B to indicate the amount of benzoic acid used (whose maximum amount allowed in puddings is 300 mg/kg), it is necessary to make sure that $A/1000+B/300 \leq 1$ when they are used together in the pudding product.

4. What are the conditions for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) in Macao's Standards for Use of Food Additives in Food (hereinafter referred to as the standards)?

- According to the current standards in Macao, food additives must be used in line with designated GMPs, including the practices where food manufacturers aim to use the minimum amount of food additives required in their industrial practices, minimise the content of food additives brought into their food products via ingredients, packaging materials, etc. to avoid higher food safety risks posed by excessive additive content, and only use food additives with food-grade purity and quality in their food products.

5. How can I understand the principles of “indirect food additives” in the standards?

- Food additives are allowed to make their way into food through raw materials and ingredients in the following circumstances in addition to being added directly:

- a. The specific food additive is permitted for use in the raw materials or ingredients concerned in accordance with Macao's standards;
 - b. The amount of food additives used in the raw materials or ingredients concerned is lower than the maximum amount allowed according to the standards of Macao;
 - c. In normal manufacturing processes, the amount of this specific food additive contained in the food does not exceed the amount brought into the food via the raw materials or ingredients concerned.
- *Note: The food referred to in this question does not include infant formulas, follow-up formulas, infant formulas for special medical purposes and complementary foods for infants.
- For example, when using mango juice to make mango puddings, food additive A, though not permitted for use in mango puddings directly, can appear in the puddings as an “indirect food additive” if the following conditions are met:
 - a. Food additive A is allowed to be used in mango juice according to Macao's standards;
 - b. The amount of food additive A used in the mango juice does not exceed the maximum amount allowed in Macao's standards;
 - c. When mango juice is used in a normal manufacturing process, the content of food additive A present in the mango puddings does not exceed the amount of food additive A brought by the mango juice.

6. How can I learn more about the food category system for food additives?

- To make it easier for the trade to understand the food classification for food additives and thus identify the scope of use of different food additives, IAM has introduced the “Guidelines on Food Category System for Food Additives” (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines) to explain each category in detail, together with the principles of using the food category system. For the complete and latest version of the guidelines, please visit this link on the Food Safety Information website:

https://www.iam.gov.mo/foodsafety/file?p=foodsafetyinfo/List22/72_7a7e24e840140eb449f4a68a8a6524ab.pdf

7. How can the trade obtain the details of food additives used in imported food that account for the lion's share of food products in Macao?

- As it is incumbent on the trade to determine if the goods concerned are compliant with applicable regulations, the trade can obtain relevant details from food labels or

information provided by distributors/manufacturers. Furthermore, the Food Safety Law requires food producers and operators to keep purchase and sales records or relevant receipts to enable competent authorities to trace and track the food in a timely and effective manner in accordance with the law when necessary.

8. Can I use food additives not included in the lists?

- For food additives included in the scope of the standards, it is stipulated in Article 6.2 that only those listed in Annex 1 and 3 can be used in food. Therefore, food additives not listed in these annexes cannot be used in food.

9. What are the regulations on the use of flavourings and spices, processing aids (including enzyme preparations) and nutrition enhancers in Macao?

- There are currently no published standards on the use of flavourings and spices, processing aids (including enzyme preparations) and nutrition enhancers in food. The standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the place of origin and neighbouring regions are used as reference for the regulation of food additives not covered by existing standards in Macao.

10. How can I know about the functional class of a food additive?

- You can refer to the information on functional classes of food additives provided in the “Macao Food Safety Standard Database — Food Additives” section on the IAM’s Food Safety Information website. However, it only covers the major functions of corresponding food additives and cannot be viewed as an exhaustive list. Moreover, the trade can also refer to recognised information provided by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, relevant national standards in China or other countries/authoritative organisations.

11. How can I find the “Macao Food Safety Standard Database — Food Additives”?

- Visit the Food Safety Information website at <https://www.iam.gov.mo/foodsafety> , and you will find the “Macao Food Safety Standard Database” button on the right side of the page. Another way to access the database is to go to “Trade Information” in the navigation bar and click “Food Additives” under “Macao Food Safety Standard Database”.

12. What are the regulations on the use of food additives in dietary supplements/food for special dietary purposes (except for infant formulae, formulae for older

infants, infant formulae for special medical purposes and complementary food for infants and young children) in Macao?

- Dietary supplements/ food items for special dietary purposes (except for infant formulae, follow-on formulae, infant formulae for special medical purposes, and complementary food for infants and young children) are categorised according to the ingredients they contain or whether they claim to have medical efficacy, and are regulated in accordance with applicable laws or regulations based on their categorisation. If a dietary supplement for sale contains drugs, claim to have medical efficacy, or contains vitamins and/or minerals whose total daily dosage exceeds a certain range, the product should be regulated by the Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau in accordance with applicable laws. It is therefore recommended that you contact the Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau for information on product categorisation in the ways listed below:

Tel: 2852 4708

Fax: 2852 4016

Email: info@isaf.gov.mo

Website: <https://www.isaf.gov.mo/>

- The “Food Safety Law” applies to dietary supplements/ food items for special dietary purposes (except for infant formulae, follow-on formulae, infant formulae for special medical purposes, and complementary food for infants and young children) that do not contain drugs, claim to have medical efficacy, or contain vitamins and/or minerals whose total daily dosage exceeds a certain range. All food sold in Macao and their raw materials must comply with Law No. 5/2013 “Food Safety Law”, which was published and has entered into force, and a series of food safety standards, including the “Standards on Use of Food Additives in Foodstuffs”.
- However, Administrative Regulation No. 5/2024 “Standards on Use of Food Additives in Foodstuffs” does not apply to food items for special dietary purposes, except for infant formulae, follow-on formulae, infant formulae for special medical purposes, and complementary food for infants and young children. For food category definitions, the food trade may refer to “Guidelines on Food Category System for Food Additives” of Macao. For food additives not covered by existing standards in Macao, it is necessary to refer to the standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the place of origin and neighbouring regions, such as the national standards of China.