



ISWA Halal Standards and Guidelines

I. Requirements for Facilities Seeking Halal Certification

The facilities which require Halal certification for their products must accept and comply with the following general requirements of the Islamic Society of the Washington Area (referred to thereafter as ISWA):

1. The slaughter facility must be a USDA inspected one (applies Meat/Poultry Harvest and Further Processing Facilities).
2. Identify the animal species and/or the products requiring Halal certification.
3. The slaughtering and blessing of the animals are to be done by a Muslim.
4. The animals must be alive when they reach the Facility and must have passed pre-slaughter health checks by competent authorities.
5. Stunning does not kill the animals when used.
6. Humane treatment of animals during pre-slaughter and slaughter.
7. Guarantee unannounced visits of the Halal supervisors and inspectors to the facility at all times, and to allow them to have access to each and every phase of slaughter, processing, manufacture and documentation.
8. The Halal supervisors and inspectors are not connected with the facilities (abattoirs and processing plants) in any way. Any interference with these independent bodies will result in an immediate revocation of the Halal certification of the facility involved.
9. The facility must thoroughly control the purchasing procedures of raw materials with regard to Halal status, safety, quality and legality.
10. All raw materials used in the production of Halal products must be Halal in origin.
11. In abattoirs where Halal and non-Halal slaughtering is performed, Halal slaughtering shall precede the non-Halal one with thorough prior cleansing of the site and equipment along the whole slaughter and production line. Similar requirements shall also apply to further processing in the same facility.
12. In processing plants, where Halal and non-Halal production is performed, the production of Halal products shall be performed in a separate unit or in an approved segregated area in the production facility. In cases where the plant does not do Halal all the time, the Halal production shall precede the

non- Halal production with thorough prior cleansing of the equipment and the production area to avoid any cross-contamination with non- Halal remnants.

13. Halal products must be segregated from non- Halal materials by means of a physical barrier.
14. The production lines for Halal products must be completely separated from pork and pork by-products.
15. Halal products must be labeled at the plant before shipping.
16. The management of the facility must be fully committed and provide the resources needed to implement all relevant requirements with regard to authentic Halal production, food safety and hygiene, as well as to quality and legality.
17. The facility shall document all operations and procedures in place for Halal production and other relevant requirements to demonstrate compliance with the rules and regulations and to ensure that all operations and procedures are effective and under control.

II. Requirements & Procedures for Halal Meat and Poultry

A. Species

1. Land Animals/Birds

Species among land animals including cattle, lambs, goats, buffalo, deer, camels, rabbits, and giraffes are acceptable animals for Muslim consumption. Chicken, turkeys, pigeons, ostriches, geese, swans, ducks and alike are acceptable birds. The acceptable animals and birds must also be alive and healthy at the time of slaughter. They must have passed pre-slaughter health checks by competent authorities.

Un-acceptable species including swine from which all pork and pork products are produced are considered Haram, and they are unfit for Muslim consumption. Also un-acceptable are all animals which are considered beasts or birds of prey having talons, fangs or tusks such as lions, wolves, dogs, cats, tigers, hyenas, foxes, jackals, elephants and alike. Birds that prey on other animals and birds or eat the flesh of dead animals are also Haram, such as: falcons, eagles, vultures, crows, owls, etc. In addition animals which are considered filthy or dangerous are also Haram such as domesticated donkeys, mice, rats, poisonous snakes, scorpions, spiders, lice, etc. The milk and eggs of prohibited species are similarly prohibited for consumption.

2. Aquatic Animals

All fish and seafood including shellfish, crustaceans, shrimps, crabs, and lobsters are considered Halal without having to be slaughtered. Excluded are species which are poisonous, intoxicating or hazardous to human health.

3. Plants and other Species

All plants and other species such as mushrooms, algae, bacteria, etc. are considered Halal except those which are poisonous, intoxicating or hazardous to human health.

B. Halal Supervisors & Inspectors

1- Requirements for Selecting Halal Supervisors & Inspectors

According to the rules of our Islamic organization the criteria for selecting Halal supervisors and inspectors are:

- a. They must be sane and mature Muslims;
- b. They must be qualified and experienced in lawful slaughtering as well as in Halal supervision & inspection in line with the Islamic Law;
- c. Carry organization's ID card at all times during their duties;
- d. Undergo periodical training on lawful Halal slaughtering, supervision & inspection.

2- Responsibilities of Halal Supervisors & Inspectors:

- a. Supervise Halal slaughter men in order to ensure that they perform their duties according to Islamic Law.
- b. Monitor the slaughtering, and ensure that Halal carcasses are separate from non- Halal throughout the production line (i.e., from the slaughter to the end of the process, including cleaning, cutting, processing, packaging, storage and dispatch).
- c. Initiate corrective action in collaboration with the management of the facility if any non-conformity with the Halal guidance is detected or if standards of Halal program are not met.
- d. Ensure that the slaughter men use sharp & clean (sterilized) knives.
- e. Ensure that slaughter men follow the meat works and instructions from their supervisors or managers, as long as those do not interfere with the Halal program.
- f. Ensure that the production site (abattoir, processing plant) maintains high standards of hygiene and food safety practices at all times.
- g. Ensure the Halal integrity of the products (processed & non-processed products), and that all products designated for Muslims are free of pork and derivatives and any other material prohibited by Islamic Law.
- h. Ensure that all machines and equipment are thoroughly cleaned prior to Halal production.
- i. Ensure that all staff and responsible operators working with Halal products and for cleaning/cleansing have received Halal awareness training.

- j. Keep records on the results of supervision and monitoring of Halal program and corrective actions undertaken.

C. Slaughter men

1- Requirements for Selecting Halal Slaughter-men

According to the rules of our Islamic Organization the Slaughter men in order to be permitted to perform Halal slaughtering must be mature and sane Muslims and qualified in lawful Halal-Slaughtering. They must also undergo periodical training on Halal Slaughtering according to Islamic law.

2- Responsibilities of Halal Slaughter men

The Slaughter men shall perform their work in accordance with the Islamic Law, and ensure that:

- a. The slaughter tool “the Knife” used for slaughtering is sharp, clean (sterilized) and cuts by its sharp edge and not by its weight;
- b. Slaughtering of animals is made from the front side of the neck (towards the chest), and not from one side or the back of the neck;
- c. The slaughtering is carried out by cutting the animal’s trachea, esophagus and jugular veins without cutting the whole neck;
- d. The God’s name is invoked on the animal to be slaughtered “In the Name of God and God is Great” (Bismillah wa Allah Akbar);
- e. Further processing of animal’s body is not allowed before the animal’s death.

D. Slaughtering Tools:

The slaughtering instrument should be sharp, a one edge instrument that cuts by its edge not by its weight, such as knives, swords, etc. The instrument cannot be a claw, tooth, nail or un-sharpened object.

E. Methods of Slaughter:

Hand Slaughter: In this method, the animal or bird is slaughtered by an instrument held directly by the slaughter-man’s hand. When an animal is slaughtered by an individual slaughter man, that individual must be well trained to cause no pain or suffering to the animal. This difficult task requires swiftness and strength. The person must be strong enough to assume the responsibilities associated with the task of slaughter.

Mechanical Slaughter: Many Muslim countries now accept mechanically slaughtered birds. The machine is considered as a tool and is in the control of

the slaughter man. The mechanical slaughtering machine and the process of slaughtering should be monitored by the appointed ISWA supervisor/inspector. The mechanical knife must be a single sharp blade that produces a sharp cut on the front side of the bird's neck. Any bird that misses the mechanical knife has to be slaughtered by hand.

Stunning: Stunning of animals/birds before slaughtering is intended to render the animals /birds less sensitive to pain, increase safety and efficiency at the plant and maximize bleed out of carcasses. Stunning is permissible as long as the animal/ bird does not die during the process of stunning. Stunning of animals and birds if necessary should be performed using a stunning method at a certain strength approved by the health and Islamic authorities.

F. Slaughtering

At the time of slaughter, the tasmiya and takbir: Bismillah Allahu Akbar (by the name of God, the greatest) must be pronounced over the animals or birds by a trained, religiously-observant Muslim slaughter man. It is very important to treat animals humanely and reduce pain and suffering to the animal during slaughtering. The knife should cut the skin, trachea, esophagus and two major blood vessels to ensure thorough and quick bleeding of the animal. The spine of animal/bird should not be severed at the time of slaughter. There should be enough time for bleeding of animal/bird until the animal/bird dies completely before further processing.

G. Packaging & Labeling

Unless the whole day slaughter is produced as Halal, carcasses and wogs must be properly marked and traced throughout evisceration, processing, packaging and storage so the Halal slaughtered meat does not mix with non-Halal. All packages and containers must be labeled with the proper information and ISWA's Halal label/logo and stored in specially identified storage areas for Halal products. Shipments of Halal meat should be accompanied with a Halal certificate issued by ISWA.

III. Further Processing and Co-Packing Guidelines

A. General:

1. All raw materials (meat or poultry) must be from a Halal Certified abattoir. The delivery trucks with these Halal raw materials must have a Halal certificate accompanying the shipment to the further processing plant.
2. The delivered raw Halal products must be put in segregated or designated areas in the plant's cold store to avoid any cross-contamination (it's recommended to use colored film wraps around the palates).
3. On the scheduled production day (if the plant does not do Halal all the time), the shift manager must ensure that only raw Halal materials delivered must

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be used to produce any further processed Halal items. According to the requirements of ISWA, the processing plant must start their first shift with the Halal lots/loads until completion if it does not do Halal all the time.

4. No pork or pork by-products must be run on the equipment used for the Halal products to avoid any cross-contamination with pork or pork derivatives.
5. Shipping and receiving must have a good tracking system, preferably with bar codes to ensure that only the Halal products that are shipped or received.
6. It is highly recommended that in the co-packer's lab or the further processing plant lab, they haven pork testing equipment (basically samples are taken from the completed products at random) and tests are done onsite to make sure there are no traces of pork or pork by-products. In the case that any traces of pork are found in the products exported to Muslim countries then the producing company will be banned from exporting to those countries and can have serious implications for all involved parties.

B. Guidelines and Standards for Producers / Manufacturers

For products to be labeled Halal, the production facility, together with its management, policies and production practices must be closely evaluated by an ISWA auditor (supervisor/inspector). The auditor must assist in implementing the required production practices and changes. (For simple or dedicated production lines, where the same processes are used daily, there is not much need for supervision like fixit canning plants.) Once production practices are documented and set up, the trained supervisor doesn't need to be present to supervise all aspects of production. There will be unannounced visits during production by inspectors to ensure that the documented procedures are being implemented. For complex production where Halal meat products are processed, the Halal certifying body must be informed every time the Halal production is scheduled. There needs to be special cleaning and preparation of the equipment and facility prior to commencing Halal production. An ISWA auditor (supervisor/inspector) must be present on-site at the beginning of production. He/she needs to identify and inspect all ingredients that are going to be used, confirm packaging and labeling, check and approve cleanliness of the facility and equipment that will be used, and review all Halal procedures in place.

C. Inspection and Approval of Plants and Production Processes

Overall Plant and Production Approval: For a facility to be approved for general Halal certification, it must accept the general requirements for Halal certification of ISWA. It also must consistently perform the same type of

production and produce the same group of approved products using the same ingredients. The main criteria for approval are as follows:

1. Review and verify the production layout, production procedures, policies, practices, storage facilities, vehicles for transport of Halal products, etc. This will involve direct inspection and discussion with plant management and other responsible personnel.
2. Review and approve all ingredients. Ingredients and their supplier procedures need to be established and all new suppliers or any change in the ingredients must be evaluated.
3. Approve written procedure for "Halal-only" certified production, which could differ from non-Halal production.
4. Authorize (in writing) how and when producer could use ISWA's name and Halal logo on its label or in advertising.
5. Check documentation, sign-in logs, packaging and labeling.
6. Review and verify sanitation procedures and sanitation chemicals to evaluate the cleaning & cleaning programs.

D. Requirements for Packaging Materials

Packaging materials may be questionable in their Halal status. Plastic containers of frozen foods may appear to be acceptable while the source of some of the ingredients used to create the plastics may not be clean. In many cases stearates of animal origin may be used in their production. Metal cans are also suspect and some of them may use oil to manufacture cans. Such oils could be derived from animal sources. The packaging materials and containers must be clean from any Najs (unclean) material.

E. Guidelines for Complex Production

Complex products include those produced at a plant which produces meat and/or non-meat based Halal products as well as Halal meat products for other customers at different times.

In these cases, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. There must be an on-site inspection at the beginning of each Halal production shift to check ingredients, cleanliness and packaging.
2. Whenever a non-Halal product is run using the same Halal production line, an on-site ISWA inspector must inspect all the ingredients, cleanliness and packaging.
3. ISWA must obtain a production report of what was produced as Halal and non-Halal by lot code.

4. Packaging control procedure must be in place to assure that only Halal certified products are labeled with Halal labels. In this case an inventory of packaging and labels before and after the production run must be made available upon the request of ISWA.
5. Complete and thorough cleaning must be done prior to the commencement of Halal production. Equipment, piping (CIP is in place or dismantled), feed lines, conveyors, cooking equipment, utensils, retorts, kettles, totes, barrels, and all other equipment used for Halal production must be thoroughly cleaned and free of any foreign material. They should be monitored by visual inspection and any remaining food or grease or other materials must be thoroughly cleaned.

F. Documents Needed for the Used Ingredients

Manufacturers supplying ingredients to processors need to provide information in the form of authorized statements that ingredients do not contain any animal based products or alcohol. These documents need to be produced before production of complex Halal products. If an inspector finds non-approved ingredients or supplies that cannot be accepted then the certification procedure is immediately suspended or revoked. Halal processed products should be stored separately from non- Halal products. Separation of Halal products from non-Halal products during shipping is not necessary if products are sealed. If products are not sealed there is a likelihood of leakage especially in fresh meats and this needs separation.

G. Requirements for Labeling

According to ISWA's conditions, a written agreement with the processor must be made which indicates that the printed labels and packaging materials being supplied to the processor must be approved by ISWA. Under no circumstances can a company use ISWA's name and or symbol on its packages as certified Halal unless they have a written approval from ISWA. All products labeled as Halal should also use ISWA's name and/or symbol. The information on packages or containers of Halal food should include, among other relevant information, the name of product, list of ingredients, weight, date of production, and special codes for tracking the products back to the source.

H. Requirements for Prepared Foods and Food Ingredients

Prepared foods usually contain a wide variety of ingredients and thus extra care is required in reviewing and approving supplier's sources. The production plant of complex and multiple meat based product like soups, stews, prepared meals,

etc. must have on-site Halal supervision. If the plant produces vegetarian and Halal products but also produces non-Halal meat based products on a regular basis, the facility needs to conduct specific cleaning and Halal preparation before starting Halal production. In such a case, on-site supervision is essential for any Halal-certified product containing meat.

IV. Requirements for other Halal Foods and Drinks

Halal foods other than meats include items that are derived from animals/birds that are slaughtered according to the Islamic guidelines, do not contain or come in contact with prohibited material such as pork or alcohol ingredients and do not contain any suspicious, harmful or Najs (filth) material. All ingredients must be approved Halal by the certifying organization. The processing of Halal foods must be performed in clean and sanitized machinery, equipment and other devices. Also, the packaging material must not contain any Najs, toxic or harmful material. All Halal packaged material must be labeled eligibly with the proper information and bearing a Halal label/logo of the certifying organization.

A. Milk and Dairy Products

Yogurt: Yogurt and yogurt products should not contain gelatin. If gelatin is used, it must be from bones and hides of Halal slaughtered animals.

Cheese: Many cheeses contain rennet and other enzymes are derived from animals. It is essential to ensure that these enzymes are derived from Halal slaughtered animals or from microbial or plant sources.

B. Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are all considered Halal. Processed fruits and vegetables may not be acceptable if they are processed in plants using non-Halal oils, fats, preservatives, flavoring, etc. The processing of these items does not warrant a continuous on-site Muslim inspection. The use of ingredients or processing oils must be evaluated for Halal status.

C. Bread, Breading, Cakes, and Pastries

Bakery goods do pose Halal concern. Breading on products like fried chicken or cheese sticks or use of breading in stuffing of fillers may contain questionable ingredients like cysteine, fats, oils, colors, flavors, preservatives and alcohol based ingredients. It is important to make sure no alcohol or animal based ingredients are used.

D. Oils and Fat

Fats must be derived from Halal slaughtered animals and oils from a plant source. Haram preservatives or processing aids must not be used in vegetable based oil.

E. Alcohol By-Products

Alcohol means ethyl alcohol. All products or ingredients containing alcohol are prohibited in Islam, even for cooking purpose or in filling for candies. Artificial and natural flavors, colors and some type of meat or vegetable bases may contain alcohol products used to carry the flavor. The level of alcohol in the final product should be below 0.5% to be acceptable. This amount will vary from country to country. Vinegar, a by-product of derivative of alcohol, is permitted in Islam but it is advisable not to use the words "wine vinegar" in order not to confuse consumers.

E. Gelatin

If gelatin is made from an unlawful substance, such as pig's meat, bones, skin, or the like, it is unlawful. Allah (may He be Exalted) says: Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5: 3 He has forbidden you only the Maitah (dead animals), and blood, and the flesh of swine. Religious scholars unanimously agreed that lard (pig's fat) falls under this prohibition. However, if the gelatin is free from any unlawful substance, there is no harm in using it.

Source: Fatwa no. 8039 Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta'

V. Storage of Halal Products

To maintain integrity, safety and quality of the Halal products (processed & non-processed), the facility must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Provide adequate storage areas for Halal products. These areas must be separate or, if this is not possible be segregated, through a physical barrier from those for non- Halal products.
2. The storage areas must be clearly identified (marked for Halal products only) to avoid cross-contamination with non-Halal Products.
3. The storage areas for Halal products must not be used for non-Halal products at any time.
4. The storage areas must operate at temperatures suitable to the product and in line with the relevant standards.
5. The storage areas must be regularly cleaned according to the hygienic program adopted in the facility.
6. Rotation of the stored products (stocks) must be maintained in the storage areas, according to the rule "first in – first out (FIFO)".

7. The container used for storage and transport must be fully and properly cleaned between uses.

VI. Product's Transportation

1. The Halal products must be transported on clean vehicles. All vehicles must be cleaned and checked for cleanliness prior to loading.
2. Carcasses and meat in unsealed packaging must not be transported on the same vehicle with pork products or on a vehicle that has been used for pork products.
3. The Vehicles must be suitable for purpose and operate at temperatures that are in line with the legal requirements and good manufacturing practices.
4. Refrigerated vehicles must maintain records and be checked thoroughly prior to loading.
5. In the case that Halal and non-Halal products in sealed packaging are transported simultaneously on the same vehicle, they must be properly labeled or otherwise demarcated to avoid cross contamination and mistaken delivery.
6. All transport records must be maintained.

VII. Traceability

1. Any facility requiring Halal certification for its products (Halal compliance) must have a traceability system able to trace and follow the whole processes at all stages of production, processing and distribution.
2. The traceability system must be ongoing and comply with USDA regulations.
3. It must cover products and materials from first entry of raw materials to the dispatch of the end products.
4. The system must easily allow the identification of the materials, their origin, the Halal status and quantities delivered to the production facility.
5. The system records must show that the origin of the products leaving the facility was Halal.
6. The system must allow easy stock reconciliation of finished products to raw materials used.
7. Full customer records must always be maintained including product description and quantity.
8. The system must be periodically tested, reviewed and updated by independent auditors.
9. The system must effectively enable product recall at any time.

VIII. Halal Certification

Halal certification is aimed to ensure Muslim consumers that the special characteristics of a product and its Halal integrity have been safeguarded at all stages of production, processing and distribution.

The procedures for issuing Halal certification applied by ISWA are as follows:

1. The facility (abattoir and/or processing plant) who intends to export its products to any Islamic countries should provide ISWA with detailed information concerning the products to be certified.
2. An authorized ISWA Halal supervisor/inspector attends the facility during slaughter and/or processing. He monitors and inspects the whole process at all stages of production (Halal slaughtering and/or processing) and ensures that all operations and procedures are correctly and lawfully performed in conformity with the Islamic law.
3. The supervisor/inspector then fills the Halal Certificate form approved by the VARIOUS COUNTRIES authorities (all Halal certificates have serial numbers and can be specially identified, and include all necessary information.
4. The Supervisor/inspector signs the certificate and forwards it to the ISWA's authorized representative.
5. The authorized representative verifies the document, signs it and stamps it with the Halal logo of ISWA and submits the original document to the facility holder/exporter, and keeps a copy for the society's record.