

**PORT HEALTH  
GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
ARRANGEMENTS**

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Issue 1/ Sheet 1

## INTRODUCTORY GUIDE

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Port/ Environmental Health  
Officers, Port/ Environmental  
Health Service Managers

### GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES

Good Practice Guides assist organisations to assess their current performance in comparison with others and set goals for future improvement. It is better to consolidate all elements at the good practice level rather than to excel in some areas and fail in others, although of course local priorities and individual differences in service provision need to be borne in mind.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

Local authorities, including Port Health Authorities are responsible for the enforcement of a range of public and environmental health controls at sea and air ports in the UK.

A series of six Good Practice Guides were developed, for seaports, as part of a study led by the Syniad Benchmarking Centre. This Guide accompanies these original six Guides and represents the minimum standard that is expected of **all ports**.

This Guide details the steps that are necessary to make arrangements to effectively regulate the activities taking place within the port environment including:

- **Organisation and Planning**
  - Service Planning
  - Procedures
  - Authorisation and training
  - Enforcement
  - Contacts and liaison
  - Record keeping
  - Health and Safety
  - Monitoring
- **Environment**
  - Waste
  - Pollution, transport, premises
- **Public and Animal Health**
  - Imported Food
    - High Risk, special control provisions
    - POAO (inc. Illegal Imports)
    - Organic
  - Transport
    - Infectious disease control
    - Food Safety
    - Deratting Certificates
    - Water

It is expected that in all cases the *minimum standard* required by: - Guide 4 – Environmental Protection,  
Guide 5 – Health and Safety, and  
Guide 6 – Training  
will apply at **all ports**.

The activities detailed in this guide should provide sufficient information to be able to determine whether the other Good Practice Guides apply. For example the section on *Imported Food Surveillance*, where checks revealed that imported food is received the requirements of Guide No 1 Control of POAO from third countries (arriving at seaports) or Guide No 2 Control of Imported Food Not of Animal Origin would apply.

The standards set in this Guide rely heavily on those detailed within the Food Standards Agency publications –

- [The Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement](#), and the
- [Guidance for Local Authorities in Great Britain on Imported Food and Feed Controls](#)

In many cases the minimum standards set reflect the requirements of this statutory guidance as issued by the FSA. Compliance with this guide will not guarantee compliance with these documents. It is recommended that the three documents are read in conjunction with one another to guarantee compliance and to reflect best practice.

### CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Resources effectively directed according to priorities
- Staff trained and authorised to act under relevant legislation.
- Effective communication established with stakeholders to enable monitoring and control of activity at port.
- Any imports of foodstuffs identified and relevant controls identified and carried out.
- Equipment and facilities available for relevant tasks
- Any vessel/ aircraft movements identified and relevant controls identified and carried out.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

- Maintain an appropriate presence at the port (including ports with no regular trade in imported food) to be aware of the status of the port, and familiar with the environment.
- Obtaining, and regular checking of, vessel arrival / movement information prior to vessels arriving and identification of vessels in port.
- Obtaining and monitoring any manifests prior to clearance of goods at port.

This guide is intended to supplement the [series of guides](#) produced as part of the study led by the Syniad Benchmarking Centre and has been produced by the Association of Port Health Authorities with assistance from The East of England Small Ports Network

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KEY ACTIVITY	MINIMUM STANDARD	GOOD PRACTICE	BETTER PRACTICE
<p><b>1 Service Planning</b> <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of The Framework Agreement, Chapter 2: The Standard, Part 3</i></p>	<p>Port health and imported food control Service plan is Drawn up in accordance with FA, Ch1 – Service planning guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model service plan format adopted from Framework Agreement.</li> <li>Details of resources allocated for imported food and feed control work should be separately identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A service plan <b>specific</b> to port health is produced.</li> <li>Performance indicators <b>specific</b> to port health work have been set and monitored</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 Enforcement (1) Policy</b> <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of The Framework Agreement, Chapter 2: The Standard, Part 15</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documented enforcement policy in place</li> </ul>	<p>Enforcement policy is <b>specific</b> to port health functions.</p>	<p>All staff trained and aware of enforcement policy and policy reviewed regularly.</p>
<p><b>3 Enforcement (2) Consistency</b> <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of The Framework Agreement, Chapter 2: The Standard, Part 15/ 18</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Port health service reviews enforcement decisions</li> <li>The authority liaises with other port health authorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A documented procedure is in place setting out the monitoring arrangements.</li> <li>Authority participates in inter authority auditing scheme or similar.</li> </ul>	<p>Arrangements are in place for service users to review decisions made (in addition to formal complaints procedure).</p>
<p><b>4 Enforcement (3) Documentation</b></p>	<p>Key reference documentation is available and system in place to ensure that is kept up to date inc.: - Statutory Instruments Commission Decisions Official Guidance from CCA Procedures</p>	<p>Document control procedure is in place.</p>	<p>Register detailing the location and status of all documentation is maintained.</p>
<p><b>5 Authorisation and Competence</b> <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of The Framework Agreement, Chapter 2: The Standard, Part 5</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documented procedure in place for the authorisation of officers.</li> <li>Authorisation is to be in accordance with:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils Scheme of delegation</li> <li>Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice</li> </ul> </li> <li>Officers are provided with written confirmation of the limits of their authority</li> <li>Records of qualification and training of officers are maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation of staff competencies is to be documented</li> <li>There is a system in place to ensure that authorisations:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For staff can be issued at short notice, if necessary</li> <li>Are kept up to date following changes to legislation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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KEY ACTIVITY	MINIMUM STANDARD	GOOD PRACTICE	BETTER PRACTICE
<p><b>6 Authorisation and Competence (2) Lead Officer</b> <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of Guidance for Local Authorities in GB on Imported Food and Feed Controls part 5/6.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least one officer to be trained and properly authorised to undertake imported food/ feed control work and enforcement action.</li> <li>Officer to be familiar with LA Resource pack on Imported Food Control.</li> </ul>	<p>At least one officer to be properly authorised and either to have attended FSA enforcement training on imported food control OR to have undertaken specific training in house or with another LA with imported food control functions. At least one officer to be familiar with LA resource pack on imported food control</p>	<p>All officers to be appropriately authorised L All officers to have received relevant training on imported food controls  All officers to have attended relevant update seminars</p>
<p><b>7 Monitoring and Training</b> <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of The Framework Agreement, Chapter 2: The Standard, Part 5</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual training needs are collated to produce a documented training programme.</li> <li>Where training is provided records are maintained.</li> </ul>	<p>Officer training needs are identified through programmed performance and development reviews. Individual training needs are documented.</p>	<p>Annual training programme, is reviewed against the budgetary provision available to ensure future needs can be met.</p>
<p><b>8 Facilities and Equipment</b> <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of The Framework Agreement, Chapter 2: The Standard, Part 6</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review has been carried out to identify the facilities and equipment required.</li> <li>Arrangements made to provide access to required facilities.</li> <li>Necessary equipment provided and record kept of all equipment for identification and maintenance.</li> <li>Documented procedure in place to ensure that the equipment is maintained in effective working order e.g. calibration of thermometers, scales.</li> </ul>	<p>Specialist equipment is available e.g. nut sampling spear for authorities registered to receive high-risk products such as groundnuts, or arrangements made to access equipment e.g. from neighbouring authority.</p>	
<p><b>9. Information</b></p>	<p>Up to date information is held on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities where imported food and feed inspection can be carried out</li> <li>Health and safety and security requirements</li> <li>Access to port /Customs areas.</li> <li>Appointed and specialist laboratories for analysis and/ or examination of samples</li> </ul>	<p>Documented system is in place to ensure that the information is kept up to date.</p>	

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<b>10. Contacts</b>	<p>Up to date contact telephone numbers are readily available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local HMCE, imports, anti smuggling and CITES</li> <li>• Local MCA</li> <li>• FSA Imported Food Division, Food Incident Branch</li> <li>• DEFRA (Local SVS, HMI, PH&amp;SI) or equivalent in Scotland &amp; NI</li> <li>• Forestry Commission</li> <li>• Local Trading Standards Officers</li> <li>• Port Operator,</li> <li>• Import agents,</li> <li>• Airlines/ Shipping lines</li> <li>• ERTS/ Transit shed operators</li> <li>• Local HSE (ELO)</li> <li>• Local HPA (PHLS, CCDC – inc. out of hours contact)</li> </ul>	<p>Documented system is in place to ensure that the contact information is kept up to date.</p>	<p>Liaison meetings are held between stakeholders to promote effective co-ordination of enforcement responsibilities.</p>
<b>11. Presence at port</b> (visits made in addition to service requests) (where there is not a regular presence at the port)	<p>Programmed three monthly visits made to the port - to ensure familiarity with environment and contacts as well as for surveillance of activity in respect of imported food, environmental protection and vessel movements.</p>	<p>Programmed monthly visits made to the port - to ensure familiarity with environment and contacts as well as for surveillance of activity in respect of imported food, environmental protection and vessel/ aircraft movements.</p>	<p>Programmed weekly visits made to the port - to ensure familiarity with environment and contacts as well as for surveillance of activity in respect of imported food, environmental protection and vessel movements.</p>
<b>12. Record Keeping</b> <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of Guidance for Local Authorities in Great Britain on Imported Food and Feed Controls, Part 8</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records of the following are to be kept in a secure and readily retrievable format: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Vessel/ aircraft movements</li> <li>– Trade type (volume, nature, trade routes)</li> <li>– Number and type of food and feed consignments received</li> <li>– Information relating any checks carried out or any deferred examinations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Back-up system is to be in operation for electronic databases.</li> </ul>	<p>Procedure in place to verify the accuracy of the data storage and retrieval system and to make any necessary improvements.</p>	<p>Routine reports and readily available data to help assess trends, to assist effective service planning.</p>

**KEY ACTIVITY**

**MINIMUM STANDARD**

**GOOD PRACTICE**

**BETTER PRACTICE**

**13. Documented Procedures** and systems are in place to address the following tasks.

a. Identify vessel movements

- Planned contact is made with the port operator / Customs regarding vessel / aircraft movements including details of the nature, volume and origin.
- Where international traffic is identified compliance with GPG 3 – Ship Inspections is expected.

Checks are carried out to verify information received regarding vessel / aircraft movements is accurate.

b. Imported food surveillance  
*Minimum standards to meet requirements of Guidance for Local Authorities in Great Britain on Imported Food and Feed Controls*

- Contact the port operator and/ or Customs at least once every three months to check for imports of food/ feed. A record is to be kept for two years. Information must be accessed about all 3<sup>rd</sup> Country imports and goods from Europe.
- Where imported food of not of animal origin is identified compliance with GPG 2 – control of imported food not of animal origin is expected.
- Imports of POAO are to be addressed under GPG 1 – Control of products of animal origin from third countries (arriving at seaports) or as illegal imports as appropriate.

- Arrangements are in place with Customs /port operators/ ERTS managers to notify the authority when consignments of food/ feed are received.
- Information received from port operator is verified by cross checking with customs data.

Additional checks are carried out such as visiting the port and warehouses such as ERTS to check for imported food and feed in cargo.

c. Illegal imports of POAO

System in place to detain and refer illegal imports of POAO to HMCE. Follows requirements of POAO Regulations and Guidance in FSA Imported food Control Guidance Pack. Notice pro formas prepared

Contact made with HMCE to discuss any local agreements that may facilitate reporting and establish responsibilities operating procedures or MoU drawn up.

Testing carried out of system to verify effectiveness, system in place to periodically review arrangements.

KEY ACTIVITY	MINIMUM STANDARD	GOOD PRACTICE	BETTER PRACTICE
d. Detention, seizure, voluntary surrender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General procedure in place.</li> <li>Local arrangements developed for detention of consignments where there is no electronic manifesting system.</li> <li>Arrangements in place for storage of detained/ seized goods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedure specific to the work at the port</li> <li>Proforma notices prepared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information/ training provided to local magistrates regarding the seizure/ detention procedures</li> </ul>
e. Identify and regulate imports of NAO foodstuffs to which special controls apply <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of The Framework Agreement, Chapter 2: The Standard, Part 12</i>	<p>Aware of products to which special controls apply and whether port designated to receive.</p> <p>System in place to specifically identify products and carry out control measures</p>	Testing carried out of system to verify effectiveness, system in place to periodically review arrangements.	
f. Water sampling	The location of fixed water hydrants within the port health district are known to relevant officers.	Water samples from fixed water hydrants are taken for analysis periodically	Water from these fixed hydrants is sampled in accordance with Guidelines for Water Quality On Board Merchant Ships Including Passenger Vessels (HPA, 2003)
g. Waste disposal	Arrangements for waste disposal at the port are regularly monitored (in accordance with current legislation)	Liaison with local SVS/MCA/EA/ TSO representatives takes place regarding audit and disposal of waste	Activities are in accordance with the current Memorandum of Understanding with other agencies
h. Respond to reports of infectious disease	Documented procedure in place for control and investigation of reports of infectious disease including out of hours arrangements.	In house testing of arrangements.	Emergency plan tested in conjunction with other enforcement agencies.
i. Internal monitoring and peer review <i>Minimum standards to meet requirements of The Framework Agreement, Chapter 2: The Standard, Part 19</i>	Internal monitoring of the port health service takes place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-authority auditing of the port health service takes place to GPG standards.</li> <li>Action Plans are to be produced to address any deficiencies identified and subsequent reviews carried out.</li> </ul>	The audit is in accordance with a published audit programme.