

Labelling requirements for unpackaged seafood

Country of origin labelling

Under the Food Standards Code any unpackaged seafood—raw or cooked—displayed for retail sale must include a label indicating the country where the seafood was harvested, processed or manufactured. This applies to:

- fresh seafood, either by itself or mixed with other ingredients, and
- fish that has undergone a process such as cooking, drying, salting, smoking—either with or without other added ingredients.

Exemptions

Restaurants, canteens, schools, caterers or self-catering institutions, prisons, hospitals or other similar institutions where the food is offered for immediate consumption are exempt from country of origin labelling.

What are the requirements?

There must be a label on or in connection with the display of the seafood that:

- identifies the country or countries of origin of the food (including Australia), or
- indicates that the seafood is a mix of local and/or imported ingredients, as the case may be.

The writing on the label must be in English, legible, and have lettering at least 9 mm high.

Examples accepted by the Authority

- Swordfish caught off NSW must be labelled with 'Product of Australia'
- Vietnamese basa must be labelled 'Product of Vietnam'
- Malaysian prawns marinated in imported olive oil and local garlic must be labelled 'Made from imported and local ingredients'
- Indonesian tuna fully processed in New Zealand where cost of processing is over 50% of the total cost—'Made in New Zealand from imported tuna' or 'Made in New Zealand from Indonesian tuna'
- Imported fish fillets, crumbed, par-cooked, frozen and packaged in Australia—'Made in Australia' or 'Made in Australia from imported and local ingredients'.

Naming of seafood

Under the *Food Act 2003*, it is an offence to describe food incorrectly. This includes calling one type of seafood another (seafood substitution).

What names to use for seafood

Use the names in the Australian Fish Names List. This list, which includes names for fish, crustaceans and shellfish, was developed in consultation with industry and government and is maintained by Seafood Services Australia.

You can obtain a copy of the seafood names list by:

- downloading it from Seafood Services Australia (www.seafood.net.au/fishnames), or
- phoning 1300 130 321.

Penalties for noncompliance

Falsely describing seafood or country of origin can result in penalty notices up to \$1320. Repeat or serious offences can result in court imposed fines of up to \$55,000 for individuals and \$275,000 for corporations.

The Authority publishes lists of businesses that have breached or are alleged to have breached NSW food safety laws on its website. See www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/offences/

About the NSW Food Authority

The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled.

More information

Food Standards Australia New Zealand has developed a user guide for country of origin labelling of all foods. This is available at www.foodstandards.gov.au.

For other factsheets on labelling requirements:

- visit the NSW Food Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/
- phone the helpline on 1300 552 406

Note

This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).