

Buying Halal Foods

consumer brief

New Jersey was one of the first states in the nation to ensure that when consumers buy halal foods, they have access to information that will enable them to determine whether they are getting products that have been prepared according to Islamic dietary guidelines. Because of the special preparation and handling requirements for halal foods, there is an opportunity for misrepresentation and fraud. The law requires the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs to enforce the law ensuring that all food offered for sale or sold as halal has been prepared according to the halal dealer's representations of his practices.

The Halal Food Consumer Protection Act requires stores, restaurants, caterers, nursing homes, summer camps, and slaughterhouses to post information setting forth the procedures they follow in their purchase, handling, and preparation of the halal food they sell and requires dealers to keep records for inspection by the Division. A person found to be fraudulently representing the standards that person follows could be fined up to \$10,000 for the first offense and up to \$20,000 for each subsequent offense.

HALAL FOOD SALES - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is halal?

A. Halal is an Arabic word meaning lawful or permitted.

Q. What is halal certification?

A. Halal certification is the process of having an independent third party supervise the production of food, attesting that it was produced in conformance with the standards of halal.

Q. May a store sell both halal and non-halal food?

A. Yes. A store may sell both food represented as halal and food not represented as halal as long as the food is properly identified and the dealer notes that fact on the posted disclosure.

Q. When are oral halal disclosures acceptable?

A. In establishments such as hospitals or other places where representations that food is halal are not made until after the consumer has made a request for halal food, the disclosure may be orally provided to the consumer either prior to when the food is served or at the time that the food is being served.

Q. Is an establishment selling food as halal always required to post disclosures?

A. Yes. Any place selling food that is handled by that establishment or which is not in a sealed package from the original producer must place the necessary disclosures in a clear and conspicuous place. If all the food sold as halal is in its original package, disclosures are not required.

Q. Are caterers required to post halal disclosures?

A. Yes. Caterers, nursing homes, summer camps and other dealers who serve prepared food pursuant to a contract must post disclosures and furnish the consumer or his or her legal representative with a copy of the halal disclosure statement prior to the signing of the contract.

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CONSUMER TIPS

- Read the ingredients on the label carefully.
- Become familiar with halal certifying agencies and the standards they follow. If there are ingredients that are haram (prohibited or unlawful), the product may not be halal.
- The full text of New Jersey's regulations governing the sale of food represented as halal may be found at [N.J.A.C. 13:45A-22.1 et seq.](#)

Please contact the Halal Unit at 973-792-4217 or write to P.O. Box 45025, Newark, NJ 07101 for further information.

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