



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

TEA BLENDING REQUIREMENTS

APPLICATION

This requirement shall apply to blending and handling of tea in Kenya.

1.1 REFERENCE STANDARDS

All tea traders (buyers/exporters, packers, warehousemen) and producers (tea factories) shall, during their tea blending and handling operations comply with the **General Principles of food hygiene – Code of Practice KS EAS 39, Black tea specifications standard KS EAS 28, Tea Industry Code of Practice KS 2128**, or any other relevant law, standards and regulations.

Any entity blending tea shall comply with *food safety management systems* and demonstrate compliance to the standard (ISO 22000).

1.2 RESPONSIBILITY

All tea traders and producers who undertake blending of tea shall: -

- i. clearly mark to identify their premises from the outside with the registered business name;
- ii. declare to the board in writing of all locations /sites where they undertake their tea business activities including GPRS coordinates;
- iii. ensure every site of the location in (ii) above are independently approved by the Public Health Officer and obtain valid Premise Hygiene License;
- iv. ensure proper internal process control during the handling and blending of tea to guarantee its quality and safety. All parameters including physical, chemical and microbiological requirements shall comply with the requirements of ***Black tea specifications KS EAS 28 standard***.

1.3 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All tea traders and producers shall develop and implement Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are aligned to the provisions of **General Principles of food hygiene – Code of Practice**

KS EAS 39, Black Tea Specifications Standard KS EAS 28, Tea Industry Code of Practice KS 2128 in addition to other relevant laws, standards and regulations.

1.4 Mechanical /Automated blending

All primary grades and secondary grades of tea except grade BMF shall be blended by mechanically / automated blending method.

1.4.1 Personnel

- i) All operation personnel shall be in proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs). This includes but not limited to headgear, overalls/dustcoats, closed shoes, beard snood;
- ii) All operation personnel shall have valid medical and vaccination certificates and Management shall demonstrate monitoring of these records;
- iii) Changing rooms shall be conveniently located to the operation area;
- iv) Washrooms shall be conveniently located and maintained clean. The doors should be self-closing and not opening directly into the processing area.

1.4.2 Operations

- i) The operations area shall be structurally sound to conform to **General Principles of Food Hygiene – Code of Practice KS EAS 39**;
- ii) Technically qualified personnel shall be appointed to be responsible for the quality infrastructure. They shall be trained and certified in Food Safety;
- iii) The management and other staff shall be trained in Quality Management System on records and document Management;
- iv) Proper records and documents management system shall be implemented;
- v) Key documents including valid NEMA audit report on environmental impact assessment, waste destruction certificate, workers medical certificates shall be maintained;
- vi) Waste generated during operations shall be segregated in designated bins /containers as per the individual waste disposal SOP that demonstrates compliance to applicable regulations;
- vii) Blending equipment shall properly fitted, have a maintenance and Cleaning schedule;
- viii) Blended tea shall be identified by a name or blend number traceable against the respective blend sheet and blend sheet records maintained;

- ix) The blending zone shall be clearly segregated, clean, marked and high hygiene standards maintained;
- x) Blended tea shall be analysed for moisture content (M.C%) (using infra-red or halogen technology) before and after every blend and records maintained;
- xi) Blended tea shall be subjected to scheduled analysis on physical, chemical and microbiological parameters as provided for in the **Black Tea Specification KS EAS 28** by an accredited laboratory and records maintained;
- xii) Gas or electric forklifts shall be used within the blending area.

1.5 Manual Blending

Manual blending of tea shall be allowed for the Secondary grade – BMF only; upon an application to the Board for approval. The Board shall issue a written approval to the applicant.

1.5.1 Personnel and Hygiene

- i) All operation personnel shall be in proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs). This includes but not limited to headgear, overalls/dustcoats, closed shoes, hand gloves, dust masks, beard snood;
- ii) Technically qualified personnel shall be appointed to be responsible for the quality infrastructure. They shall be trained and certified in Food Safety;
- iii) All operation personnel shall have valid medical and vaccination certificates and Management shall demonstrate monitoring of these records;
- iv) Changing rooms shall be conveniently located to the operation area;
- v) Washrooms shall be conveniently located and maintained clean. The doors should be self-closing and not opening directly into the processing area.

1.5.2 Operations

- i) The operations area shall be structurally sound to conform to **General Principles of food hygiene – Code of Practice KS EAS 39**;
- ii) Technically qualified personnel shall supervise the tea blending operation;
- iii) The management and other staff shall be trained in Quality Management System on records and documents management;

- iv) Waste shall be segregated in designated bins /containers as per the individual waste disposal SOP that demonstrates compliance to applicable regulations.
- v) Key documents including valid NEMA audit report on environmental impact assessment, waste destruction certificate, workers' medical certificates shall be maintained;
- vi) The blending zone shall be clearly segregated, clean, marked and high hygiene standards maintained;
- vii) A retractable food grade material shall be in use on the floor during blending. It shall be cleaned after every blend and cleaning records of the same maintained;
- viii) Blending shovels shall be of food grade material;
- ix) Blended tea shall be analysed for moisture content (M.C%) (using infra-red or halogen technology) before and after every blend and records maintained;
- x) Blended tea shall be subjected to scheduled analysis on physical, chemical and microbiological parameters as provided for in the **Black Tea Specification KS EAS 28** by an accredited laboratory and records maintained;
- xi) Gas or electric forklifts shall be used within the blending area.