

legal memo

Sanitary registration of food continues during quarantine because of COVID-19

Due to the emission of the decree No. 12 of the Executive Body, in the health area published on the Official Journal, Volume 426, Issue 59, dated March 21, 2020 referring to the exceptional measures of prevention and containment to declare the national territory as an area subject to sanitary control, in order to contain the pandemic COVID-19, some government entities have suspended their activities or are just not providing attention to users, such as some mayors, courts and the National Center of Registers, etc., however, as established in the decree, the Ministry of Health and all its dependencies continue with their work since it is a vital Ministry in the fight against the pandemic.

One of the Units of the Ministry that is most visited by users, and that concerns us its operation is the Food Unit, which is in charge of approving and granting certificates of "Sanitary Registration" to products that are suitable for human consumption. During the quarantine, the Unit continues with its activities, both, in customer service and on the virtual platform, so that, the request of Sanitary Registrations, approvals, presentation of samples, payment of laboratory analysis, presentation of files and post-registration procedures may continue to be carried out normally.

The only variation in the Food Unit is that the files for the Sanitary Registration process will no longer be reviewed at the time that people presents them, instead, they will be received by reception staff and if there's any observations, these ones will be notified through the virtual platform of the SISAM, by the technician responsible for the process. People may wonder that, if having to go to the Unit Food in person, whether it is to present samples, or to pay laboratory analysis or to present files of sanitary registration or post-registration procedures, could they be infringing the decree because of the fact that, the freedom of transit of the citizens is limited throughout the territory of the Republic to prevent the spread of the virus? The answer can be found in the decree in the article 2, second paragraph, since it contains exceptions, which includes private sector workers, whose companies will be authorized to carry out work. The workers must carry the ID card of the company and a letter signed by their employer authorizing the mobility from their home to the workplace, and when traveling, they have to respect the corresponding recommendations and measures (use of a mask, gloves, alcohol gel, avoid physical contact with other people, among others).

In addition, it is established on the article 3, letter "a" of the decree that "the following companies that provide services to the Salvadoran people with services that are necessary for subsistence in the emergency, such as: food, are excepted from the restriction of the exercise of the aforementioned rights."

Because of the crisis that we are facing, it is important that the people and the companies that are included among the exceptions of the limit of the freedom of transit stay informed about the measures that they have to follow so they don't get punished.

In the same way, we recommend to reduce the outputs of the workers or to try to cover as much work as possible in one output, for example, to present as many files or as many

samples as they can when they go to the Food Unit, and if you have and doubt, it would be better if you call to the Unit or send an email.

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