

# Guidance on Compliance with Food Hygiene and Safety Requirements for Catering and Other Food Preparation Facilities

This guidance has been produced to provide information to those running catering and other food preparation facilities about some of the requirements of the food hygiene legislation (Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regs 2013, and to outline some good food hygiene practices. Please note the guidance covers only the minimum standards for food premises operating in the Eden District Council area.

## Further Information

Further information on food hygiene and safety is available from the Food, Health and Safety Section. See contact details below. It may be useful to look at Food Hygiene - a Guide for Businesses and Starting Up - Your First Steps to Running a Catering Business, which are publications from the Food Standards Agency. Copies can be obtained from the [Food Standards Agency website](#) or from The Food, Health and Safety Team at Eden District Council. There is also the Industry Guide to Good Hygiene Practice for Catering Businesses which is available from Chadwick House Group, Chadwick Court, 15 Hatfields, London, SE1 8DJ, Telephone 020 7827 5882.

## Planning

Anyone thinking of starting a catering or food preparation business is advised initially to contact the Development Control Officers in the Council's Department of Planning Services, telephone (01768) 817817 for further advice.

## Registration as a Food Business

Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 Article 6(2) requires food business operators to register each establishment under their control with the local Environmental Health Department, at least twenty-eight days before opening. Nearly all business types will need to be registered, including restaurants, hotels, cafes, shops, supermarkets, staff canteens, kitchens in offices, warehouses, guest houses, delivery vehicles, buffet cars on trains, market and other stalls, hot dog and ice cream vans, etc. There is no fee to register and a registration form is available on request or [on line](#) at [www.eden.gov.uk](http://www.eden.gov.uk).

## Licences

A licence will be required to do the following things:

- sell or supply alcohol
- sell hot food between 11.00pm and 5.00am

- provide entertainment, such as theatre, cinema or live music
- sell food from a stall or van on certain, designated streets

Businesses should contact the Council’s Licensing Department (01768) 817817 or Food, Health and Safety Team (01768) 212491 for information on licensing.

## Health and Safety

The main piece of health and safety legislation is the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. This sets out the general duties which employers, the self employed and people in control of premises have towards their employees and others who could be affected by their work activities, such as visitors and customers. It also gives employees the general duty to ensure the health and safety of themselves and each other.

Further advice, including various leaflets, booklets and information sheets can be obtained from [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk). The Food, Health and Safety team can also provide information and advice and Eden District Council has produced some guidance notes on health and safety which can be found on the [council’s website](#).

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## Legal Requirements and Good Practice Recommendations

The guidance has been split into legal requirements and good practice recommendations, Legal requirements **must** be complied with, good practice recommendations should be followed where possible as they will assist food business operators to maintain high standards of hygiene in their premises.

The list is not exhaustive and as food premises vary greatly, you are strongly advised to discuss your individual situation with a member of the Food, Health and Safety Team.

## Food Hygiene Essentials

No matter what type of food you handle, there are four main things which can help you to prevent the most common food safety problems – these are:

- **Cross-contamination**
- **Cleaning**
- **Chilling**
- **Cooking**

### Cross-contamination

Cross-contamination is when bacteria spread to food, equipment and surfaces. For instance when raw food touches ready to eat food, or when the same utensil is used to handle raw food and then used to handle ready to eat food without being washed thoroughly in between. Cross-contamination is one of the most common causes of food poisoning – to prevent it:

- Clean work surfaces, chopping boards and equipment thoroughly before starting to prepare food and after they have been used to prepare food
- Use different chopping boards and knives for raw and ready to eat food
- Wash hands before preparing food

- Wash hands after touching raw food
- Keep raw and ready to eat food separate; if raw and ready to eat food have to be stored in the same fridge, keep raw products wrapped or enclosed in containers at the bottom of the fridge, to prevent juices dripping onto ready to eat products.
- Train staff so they know how to avoid cross-contamination

## **Cleaning**

Effective cleaning is vital, to remove bacteria from hands, equipment and surfaces:

- Make sure staff wash and dry their hands thoroughly before handling food
- Clean surfaces and equipment between different tasks, especially after handling raw food
- Follow the 'Clean As You Go' system – clear away used equipment and spilt food from one task before starting another

## **Chilling**

Chilling food helps to stop bacteria, including the ones that cause food poisoning, from growing. Some foods have to be kept chilled to keep them safe, for example, foods with a 'use by' date, cooked dishes and other ready to eat foods like prepared salads and desserts. It is very important not to leave these types of food at room temperature for any length of time, so:

- Check chilled food when it is delivered to make sure it is still cold enough
- Put food that needs to be kept chilled in the fridge straight away
- Cool cooked food as quickly as possible (within 2 hours) and then put it in the fridge
- Cook food in smaller amounts (for instance keep joints of meat down to 6 pounds or 3 kilos) or divide dishes into smaller portions after cooking so that they can be cooled down within 2 hours
- Keep chilled food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible during preparation
- Check regularly that fridges and chilled displays are operating correctly

## **Cooking**

One of the main food safety controls is thorough cooking. Always check that cooked or reheated food is piping hot all the way through. Poultry, pork, rolled joints and products

made from mince meat, such as burgers and sausages must be thoroughly cooked right the way through, because products like these could have bacteria in the middle. They should not be served pink or rare. Whole cuts of beef or lamb, such as steaks, cutlets and whole joints can be served pink or rare as long as they are fully sealed on the outside.

The core temperature of cooked food should reach at least 75°C. Check the temperature from time to time with a probe thermometer. Make sure that the thermometer probe is cleaned before and after use. If the probe is disinfected using anti bacterial wipes, these **must** be suitable for use with food.

The probe can be checked for accuracy by placing in boiling water – it should measure between 99°C and 101°C – and holding in a container of crushed ice and water – it should read between -1°C and +1°C. If it doesn't get it checked by the manufacturer or replace it.

See the section below on Temperature for keeping chilled foods out of temperature control and hot holding of food.

## **Food Safety Management Procedures**

Under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regs 2013 food business operators **must** have food safety management procedures based upon the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). The food safety management procedures **must** be in writing but how food business operators meet this requirement will depend upon the size and the nature of the business, for example, whether the food products handled are high risk or not.

### **But What is HACCP?**

Put simply, HACCP is a way of managing food safety, and it involves:

- looking closely at what happens in a food business and considering what could go wrong and what needs to be done to stop it going wrong
- identifying the critical control points - these are the steps, when preparing food, where something must be done which will eliminate hazards or reduce them to an acceptable level
- establishing critical limits – set the standard which shows the critical control point has been achieved
- setting up a monitoring system – to measure if the critical limit has been reached
- deciding what has to be done if the critical limit isn't reached
- checking the system occasionally to make sure it is working
- keeping appropriate records to show the system is working

HACCP can appear to be very complicated and sometimes it has to be, if there are a lot

of steps in manufacturing the products or it involves highly technical equipment or processes. However, the important thing is to have food safety management procedures that are appropriate for each business. No specific type of food safety management system has to be used. Any system, provided it covers all aspects of the food operation and is designed to ensure that the food produced is safe to eat will comply. Small food businesses don't need the extensive HACCP system a large food manufacturer would.

### **Small to Medium Sized Food Businesses (Mostly Caterers and Small Retailers)**

For small food businesses, like cafés, or pubs serving food, food takeaways, or small food retailers, the packs produced by the Food Standards Agency, called 'Safer Food Better Business' (SFBB), might be appropriate. At the present time there are separate packs for the catering and retail trades. Packs for other types of businesses will become available in due course. The packs contain simple fact sheet systems that tell food business operators how to ensure that the most significant hazards in a food business can be safely controlled. They also include a diary and other useful forms which, when completed, give the food business operator a practical way of meeting the requirements to document their food safety management procedures.

The booklets mentioned above, 'Food Hygiene - a Guide for Businesses', and 'Starting Up - Your First Steps to Running a Catering Business' contain lots of useful advice and information as well.

The SFBB packs, or the booklets, are available free of charge from the Food Standards Agency by calling 0845 606 0667 or email [foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com](mailto:foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com), or the packs and the booklets can be viewed on the [Agency's website](#).

Alternatively, SFBB packs or the booklets or both can be obtained from Eden District Council, telephone (01768) 212491 or email [env.health@eden.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@eden.gov.uk).

Eden District Council has also produced a range of guidance notes to help to comply with the food legislation which applies to different activities. These are listed below:

- Retail Shops
- Food Vending Vehicles
- Food Stalls and Marquees (including Food Stalls at Farmers' Markets)
- Bed and Breakfast Establishments and Guest Houses
- Childminders and Nurseries
- Community Buildings
- Village, Community and Church Halls
- Guidance on HACCP for Larger Caterers and Retailers
- HACCP Options for Food Businesses

- Producing a HACCP System
- Guidance on HACCP for Food Manufacturers
- Guidance on Temperature Control in Food Premises
- Guidance on Safer Cooked Meat Production
- Guidance on Fitness for Work for Food Handlers

### **Larger Food Businesses - Food Manufacturers**

Food manufacturers will probably need a more comprehensive food safety management system than that in the SFBB packs. In fact, they may require a more formal HACCP system. The Council has produced some guidance on HACCP for food manufacturers, as listed below.

- Guidance on HACCP for Food Manufacturers

### **Larger Food Businesses - Caterers and Retailers**

Some larger caterers and retailers, those making or selling large amounts of products, or with several outlets, for example, may require a more extensive food safety management system than SFBB, but one which isn't necessarily a formal HACCP system, although this will depend on the size and complexity of the business. The Council has produced some guidance for these types of premises as well:

- Guidance on HACCP for Larger Caterers and Retailers

Businesses of this size may also find the Guidance on HACCP for Food Manufacturers helpful.

### **CookSafe**

CookSafe is a food safety management system produced by the Scottish Food Standards Agency, and it may suit some food manufacturers and other, larger food businesses. It also contains information which will be of use to most food businesses. It can be accessed below:

[Food Standards Agency Scotland](#)

### **Smaller Food Businesses**

Very small scale food business, like a bed and breakfast establishment or a childminder will only need a very simple system. Even if a straightforward lunch or an evening meal, like a larger family meal, is provided, it wouldn't be necessary to have anything complicated. If the person running the business has a good understanding of the hazards and knows what to do to produce safe food, that may be enough. The guidance, listed below, which the Council has produced for businesses such as these should be

sufficient:

- Bed and Breakfast Establishments
- Guidance for Food Hygiene and Infection Control for Childminders

### **More Advice**

More [food safety advice](#) on a wide range of topics can be found on the Council's website.

## **Food Premises**

Food premises include all of the rooms or buildings used in a food business. The following points apply to all parts of food premises.

### **General Requirements**

Premises **must** be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition.

The kitchen size and layout **must** allow for safe working practices, including the separation of raw food preparation, cooking, cooked food preparation and washing up. At least 1 metre should be allowed between work surfaces and any equipment or work surfaces opposite them, 1.6 metres where staff work back to back.

In general terms, the layout, design, construction, siting and size of the premises **must**:

- allow adequate maintenance, cleaning and/or disinfection - the premises have to be set out so they can be kept clean and any equipment maintained
- avoid or minimise air-borne contamination (ie contamination carried in the air) - the system used to ventilate the premises mustn't contaminate the food produced
- provide enough working space to carry out all tasks hygienically - there has to be enough room to work hygienically
- protect against the build-up of dirt, contact with toxic materials, shedding of particles into food and forming of condensation or mould on surfaces - premises have to be constructed, using the right materials to reduce the likelihood of contamination
- allow good food hygiene practices, including protection against contamination and, in particular, pest control - premises have to be well maintained and prevent the entry of pests
- provide, where necessary, suitable conditions for handling and storing food while keeping it at appropriate temperatures, designed to allow those temperatures to be monitored and, where necessary, recorded - enough refrigerated storage needs to be provided to cope with the amount of food handled. Businesses need to be able to measure the temperatures

You will find more information on these items later on in this guidance.

A commercial kitchen should be separate from any domestic kitchen in the same premises.

Where this is impractical the kitchen **must** comply fully with food hygiene and safety requirements and in particular:

- there should be no facilities for washing or drying clothes in the food preparation area
- all pets **must** be excluded from places where food is prepared, handled or stored.

If you are looking at new premises or making changes to premises you already have, it is recommended that you consult the Food, Health and Safety Section who will be pleased to advise you.

### **Hand Washing Facilities and Toilets**

Adequate numbers of flush lavatories, connected to an effective drainage system, **must** be provided.

On 2 November 1995 the Council formally adopted the provisions of Section 20 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1976, together with the following standards:

Ladies	WCs	1 per 25
	WHBs	1 per 25 up to 100, 1 per 100 thereafter
Gents	Urinals	1 per 25
	WCs	1 per 100 up to 400, 1 per 250 thereafter
	WHBs	1 per 25 up to 100, 1 per 100 thereafter

Within new buildings, sanitary accommodation for the disabled **must** be provided.

The standard will apply to both licensed and unlicensed premises and assumes equal numbers of men and women.

In unlicensed premises with a capacity of twenty covers or less, one unisex toilet and a wash hand basin is acceptable.

Wash hand basins **must** be provided with hot and cold water, properly plumbed in and connected to the drainage system.

The standard will apply to new buildings and premises being converted to places of refreshment for the first time. In respect of existing premises undergoing major alteration

or improvement work it is proposed that the standards will form the basis of discussion with the respective developers in order to determine the appropriate standards for that development.

The requirement to provide sanitary provision will apply in all places of refreshment, notwithstanding the type of meal served, the number of covers or the presence of public conveniences within close proximity to the premises.

Toilets **must not** open directly into rooms where you handle food. There needs to be an intervening space, a lobby between the toilet compartment and the food room.

### **Hand Washing Facilities and Sinks for Washing Food in Food Rooms**

Adequate numbers of wash basins **must** be provided in food preparation rooms, suitably located so that food handlers can access them easily whilst preparing food, and they must only be used for cleaning hands. It's difficult to be precise on where wash hand basins must go, but they should be fitted into food rooms so that food handlers can reach them quickly, and wash their hands between handling raw meat and ready to eat foods, or when first entering the food room, for instance.

Washbasins for cleaning hands **must** have constant supplies of hot and cold running water, or hot water at a suitably controlled temperature, and materials for cleaning hands (for instance, unscented or antibacterial soap) and for hygienic drying (for example, paper towels).

Where necessary, a separate sink for washing food should be installed. This will also require constant supplies of hot and cold water and be properly drained, by a trapped waste pipe.

### **Ventilation**

There **must** be enough ventilation, either natural (eg opening windows or vents) or mechanical (eg extractor fans) to service each food room. In most circumstances, canopies with a grease filter system and ducting to the outside air will be required.

Additional extraction may be required over other parts of the premises, dishwashing areas, for example.

Ventilation systems **must** be constructed to allow access to clean or replace filters and other parts.

Filters need to be cleaned on a regular basis so that the ventilation system operates effectively.

Ventilation systems with filters should not be operated with the filters missing or damaged as this can lead to a dangerous build up of grease in the ducting.

Toilets **must** have enough ventilation, either natural or mechanical. (See the section on

Hand Washing Facilities and Toilets above).

## **Other Requirements**

### **Lighting**

There **must** be adequate lighting, either natural (daylight) and/or artificial (electric light). Food handlers and cleaners have to be able to see what they are doing, work safely and have sufficient light at all times to see if the premises need cleaning and that they are clean when they've been cleaned.

Plastic diffuser covers should be fitted to fluorescent strip lights in the food preparation areas, to assist with cleaning light fittings and to help contain glass fragments in the event of a breakage.

### **Drainage**

Drainage facilities **must** be adequate for the purpose intended. They **must** be designed and constructed to avoid the risk of contamination. The drains need to be able to take away waste water and waste pipes need water traps to prevent odours getting into food rooms. It may be necessary to install a grease trap. The Council's Building Control Department can advise on this.

### **Changing Facilities**

Adequate facilities for staff to change their clothes, where necessary, **must** be provided. A separate room would be ideal but is not always possible. Clothes lockers in food rooms with closable doors are acceptable.

### **Cleaning Chemical Storage**

Cleaning chemicals and disinfectants **must not** be stored in areas where food is handled. A separate store room or cupboard **must** be provided.

## **Rooms where Food is Prepared, Treated or Processed**

There are special requirements for rooms where food is prepared, treated or processed. These do not include dining rooms. The design and layout of the room **must** allow good food hygiene practices, including protection against contamination between and during tasks. (See General Requirements Section above).

### **Floors**

Floor surfaces **must** be maintained in a sound condition and be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect. Floors should be non slip and durable.

They **must** be made from materials that are impervious (ie do not allow fluid to pass

through) and non absorbent.

Thermoplastic coverings, terrazzo and epoxy resins may be suitable.

Where appropriate, floors **must** allow adequate surface drainage, that is laid to falls so that the waste water flows to a drain or channel.

The junction between walls and floors or floors and fixed equipment should be coved, to allow for easy cleaning.

## **Walls**

Wall surfaces **must** be maintained in a sound condition and be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect.

They **must** be made of materials that are impervious (ie do not allow fluid to pass through), non-absorbent, washable and non-toxic, and must be smooth, up to a height appropriate for the work carried on, unless it is confirmed with the Food, Health and Safety Team that other materials are appropriate.

Smooth wall surfaces covered with washable paint may be acceptable.

Tiles, metal panels and plastic cladding are all suitable.

## **Ceilings**

Ceilings (or, where there are no ceilings, the interior surface of the roof) and overhead fixtures **must** be constructed and finished in a way that prevents dirt from building up and reduces condensation, the growth of undesirable mould and the shedding of particles.

A plastered ceiling, sealed with washable paint will usually be acceptable.

## **Windows**

Windows and other openings **must** be constructed to prevent dirt from building up.

Windows and other openings (eg doors) that can be opened onto the outside **must** be fitted, where necessary, with insect-proof screens that can be easily removed for cleaning. For instance, if opening windows are used for ventilation they will need to be fitted with fly screens.

Where open windows would cause contamination, windows **must** remain closed and locked or fixed shut whilst producing food.

## **Doors**

Doors **must** be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect.

The surface of doors **must** be smooth and non-absorbent, unless it is confirmed with the Food, Health and Safety team that other materials are appropriate.

## **Surfaces**

Surfaces (including surfaces used for food preparation or surfaces of equipment and work benches) in areas where food is handled, particularly those that are touched by food, **must** be maintained in a sound condition and be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect.

Surfaces **must** be made of materials that are smooth, washable, corrosion-resistant, non absorbent and non-toxic, unless it is confirmed with the Food, Health and Safety Team that other materials are appropriate.

Stainless steel is often used for surfaces on which food is prepared. Other surfaces are acceptable but they must be durable and easy to clean.

## **Washing Equipment and Food**

Adequate facilities, for example, sinks, **must** be provided where necessary, for cleaning, disinfecting and storing utensils and equipment.

These facilities **must** be made of corrosion-resistant materials, be easy to clean and sinks must have an adequate supply of hot and cold water.

Usually two sinks are necessary for washing equipment, but advice can be obtained from the Food, Health and Safety Team. A dishwasher may be used in addition to these facilities.

As mentioned above, adequate facilities are required, where necessary, for washing food. Every sink (or other facilities) for washing food **must** have adequate supplies of hot and/or cold water.

The water **must** be 'potable' (drinking quality).

These facilities **must** be kept clean and, where necessary, disinfected.

## **Food Storage Areas**

Any areas where open food is stored **must** comply with the structural requirements above.

Areas where wrapped or packaged food is stored **must** be soundly constructed, well maintained and capable of being cleaned effectively.

## Transport

Vehicles and/or containers used to transport foods **must** be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition, to protect foods from contamination.

Where necessary, they **must** be designed and constructed to allow adequate cleaning and/or disinfection.

Items used to hold food (eg boxes) in vehicles and/or containers **must not** be used for transporting anything other than foods where this may cause contamination.

Where vehicles and/or containers are used for transporting anything other than foods, or for transporting different foods at the same time, products **must** be separated effectively, where necessary.

Where vehicles and/or containers have been used for transporting anything other than foods or for transporting different foods, they **must** be cleaned effectively between loads to avoid the risk of contamination.

Foods in vehicles and/or containers **must** be placed and protected in a way that minimises the risk of contamination.

Where necessary, vehicles and/or containers used for transporting foods **must** be capable of keeping foods at appropriate temperatures and allow those temperatures to be monitored. In other words, it may be necessary to have a refrigerated vehicle, or to use insulated boxes to transport certain food products.

## Equipment

All items, fittings and equipment that food touches **must** be:

- effectively cleaned and, where necessary disinfected, frequently enough to avoid any risk of contamination
- constructed, made of appropriate materials and kept in good order, repair and condition, in a way that minimises any risk of contamination
- constructed, made of appropriate materials and kept in good order, repair and condition in a way that enables them to be kept clean and, where necessary, to be disinfected, except for non-returnable containers and packaging
- installed in a way that allows adequate cleaning of the equipment and the surrounding area
- fitted, where necessary, with an appropriate 'control device' (eg a temperature sensor)

Equipment needs to be clean, made from materials which will allow it to be effectively clean and will not cause contamination, either by bits breaking off, or by absorbing

substances like food or cleaning products which might contaminate food. See below for controls on refrigerators.

If 'chemical additives' have to be used to prevent the corrosion of equipment and containers these **must** be used in accordance with good practice.

It is recommended that all equipment is moveable to allow cleaning but if fixed it must be adequately sealed in place to prevent cleaning difficulties. Fixed equipment needs to be fitted in such a way that it doesn't lead to dirt being trapped in inaccessible areas where it can't be cleaned properly.

## **Food Waste**

Food waste and other rubbish **must** be removed from rooms where food is present as quickly as possible, to avoid them building up.

It **must** be placed in containers that can be closed, unless it is confirmed with the Food, Health and Safety team that other types of containers or systems of disposing of waste are appropriate. These containers **must** be of appropriate construction, kept in sound condition, be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect. This means that they **must** be made of materials that are smooth, washable, non absorbent and non toxic.

There **must** be adequate facilities for storing and disposing of food waste and other rubbish. Stores for waste **must** be designed and managed in a way that enables them to be kept clean and, where necessary, free of animals and pests. Waste stores are usually sited outside food rooms, quite often in the open air. They must be cleaned and maintained to minimise attracting pests.

If possible facilities should be available (eg water point and hose) for washing bins and the refuse area.

All waste **must** be disposed of in a hygienic and environmentally friendly way, in accordance with EC legislation. There are rules about the way certain types of food waste can be disposed of. Waste from foods of animal origin, for example, may have to be collected by specialist contractors – waste from all types of catering premises is often exempt from this requirement. Contact the Food, Health and Safety Team for details.

The waste **must not** be a direct or indirect source of contamination (eg touching surfaces that food is prepared on, or attracting pests).

## **Water Supply**

An adequate supply of 'potable' (drinking quality) water **must** be provided, which is to be used whenever necessary to ensure that foods are not contaminated. Mains water is potable.

Private water supplies will be subject to regular testing and water treatment will be

required in the event of unsatisfactory results.

Where 'non-potable' water (ie not of drinking quality) is used in the business, for example for fire control, steam production, refrigeration and other similar purposes, it **must** circulate in a separate, identified system. It **must not** connect with, or be able to get into, the systems for 'potable' (drinking quality) water.

If recycled water is used in processing or as an ingredient, it **must not** present a risk of contamination. It **must** be of the same standard as potable (drinking quality) water, unless the Food, Health and Safety Team are satisfied that the quality of the water cannot affect how safe the food is to eat in its finished form.

Ice that is touched by food, or may contaminate food (including drinks), **must** be made from 'potable' (drinking quality) water. Ice **must** be made, handled and stored in ways that protect it from contamination.

Steam that is used directly in contact with food **must not** contain any substance that presents a hazard to health or is likely to contaminate the food.

If foods are heated in hermetically sealed containers (containers that are specially sealed to be airtight), the water used to cool the containers after heat treatment **must not** be a source of contamination for the food.

## **Personal Hygiene**

Every person working in a food-handling area **must** maintain a high level of personal cleanliness.

Staff **must** wear suitable, clean clothing and, where necessary, protective clothing, which minimises the risk of them contaminating food. A washable, light coloured (to show the dirt) overall is best. It should be designed for the job – for instance, if a food handler is using dough regularly, a short sleeved overall may be best. As a minimum an apron or tabard must be worn when handling food. Press stud fastenings should be used in preference to buttons, which can fall into food, or Velcro, which is difficult to clean. If wearing an overall, don't have pockets on the outside, as they can contain things, like pens, which can fall into food.

Staff should keep hair tied back and it is recommended that they wear a suitable head covering, eg hat or hairnet, when preparing food.

Staff should not wear watches or jewellery when preparing food (except a wedding band). If staff are allowed to wear earrings, they should be one piece with no butterfly fixings.

Staff should not touch their face and hair, smoke, spit, sneeze, eat or chew gum when they are handling food.

Washable plasters (preferably coloured) **must** be provided in the first aid box.

## **Fitness for Work**

No one **must** be allowed to handle food or enter a food handling area if they:

- are suffering from, or carrying, a disease likely to be transmitted through food
- have infected wounds, skin infections, sores
- have diarrhoea

Anyone working in a food business, who is affected by any of these and is likely to come into contact with food through their work, **must** tell the business owner or manager immediately about the illness or symptoms and, if possible, what has caused them.

Staff with diarrhoea or vomiting should not return to work until they have had no symptoms for forty-eight hours.

It is recommended that food business operators contact the Food, Health and Safety team if a member of staff reports that they are suffering from food poisoning symptoms.

## **Hand Washing**

Effective hand washing is extremely important to help prevent harmful bacteria from spreading from people's hands to food, work surfaces, equipment etc. All staff working with food **must** wash their hands properly:

- when entering the food handling area, eg when starting work, after a break or going to the toilet
- before preparing food
- after touching raw food, such as meat/poultry and eggs
- after handling food waste or emptying a bin
- after cleaning
- after blowing their nose

Staff should dry hands thoroughly on a disposable towel - harmful bacteria can spread more easily if hands are wet or damp.

## **Foods**

### **Deliveries of Food**

Raw materials or ingredients, or any other material used in processing products, **must** not be accepted if they are known to be, or might reasonably be expected to be, contaminated in a way that means the final product would be unfit for human

consumption.

Packaging should be checked for signs of damage and pests and any contaminated product **must** be rejected.

## **Storage**

Raw materials and all ingredients **must** be stored in appropriate conditions, designed to prevent harmful deterioration and protect them from contamination.

This means that products **must** be stored so that they are not damaged and that they are kept under refrigeration or frozen if necessary.

## **Preparation**

At all stages of production, processing and distribution, food **must** be protected against any contamination likely to make it unfit for human consumption, harmful to health or contaminated in a way that means it would be unreasonable to expect it to be eaten in that state.

It is especially important to prevent raw foods, like raw meat and chicken, contaminating ready to eat foods, either by direct contact or by contaminating work surfaces on which ready to eat foods are prepared. The food safety management system in operation should cover this. For example, it may be that different coloured chopping boards are used, or different parts of the premises, or it may be that raw food is prepared at a different time to ready to eat foods and then the premises are cleaned down before the ready to eat food is made.

Where possible tongs, forks or other utensils should be used for handling food.

See Food Hygiene Essentials at the beginning of the guide for more information.

## **Prevention of Contamination by Pests and Pets**

Adequate procedures **must** be in place to control pests and to prevent domestic animals (pets) from getting into places where food is prepared, handled or stored. Domestic animals may be allowed in food rooms in special cases, but adequate procedures **must** be in place to prevent this from causing contamination. The Food, Health and Safety Team can advise on this.

Pests **must** be prevented from entering food premises, by pest proofing and by maintaining the building in good condition. There are lots of precautions which can be taken to prevent pests from getting into food premises. Contact the Food, Hygiene and Safety team or a professional pest control company for more information.

Staff **must** be trained to identify signs of pest activity and be instructed to report anything they see to management.

## **Hazardous or Inedible Substances**

Hazardous and/or inedible substances **must** be adequately labelled and stored in separate and secure containers.

## **Microbiological Standards**

Food made or sold **must** comply with specific 'microbiological criteria'. These criteria put limits on the levels of certain bacteria that are allowed to be in foods. Please note though, that in practice, most small catering businesses and small food shops will not need to do any testing of the levels of bacteria in the food they make or sell. However, as mentioned above in the section on Food Safety Management Systems, businesses **must** be able to show that they have suitable food safety management procedures in place that control the levels of bacteria in food. Packs and guidance produced by the Food Standards Agency and industry good practice guides will help businesses to comply with these requirements.

## **Temperature**

Foods **must not** be kept at temperatures that might cause a risk to health (see below).

The 'cold chain' **must not** be interrupted for foods that rely on temperature control for their safety. However, food businesses can have foods outside temperature control for limited periods of time to allow for preparation, transport, storage, display and service, as long as this does not cause a risk to health (see below).

Where businesses manufacture, handle and wrap processed foods, they **must** have suitable rooms, large enough to store raw materials and processed materials separately, and enough separate refrigerated storage.

Sufficient refrigerators and freezers for the amount of food preparation carried out **must** be provided. Keep raw and ready to eat food separate; if raw and ready to eat food have to be stored in the same fridge, keep raw products wrapped or enclosed in containers at the bottom of the fridge, to prevent juices dripping onto ready to eat products

The temperature of refrigerators should be checked in accordance with the written food safety management system. The temperatures shown on digital displays and thermometers kept in the fridges and freezers should be checked and a record kept of their readings. It will also be useful to check the temperature of a product stored in a refrigerator occasionally to see if the temperature the display or thermometer is showing corresponds to the temperature of the products in the fridge. If they don't, it may be that the food went into the refrigerator at a high temperature, or that the refrigerator is not set at a cold enough setting. Check the food again after a period of time and adjust the refrigerator if necessary.

If foods are going to be kept or served at chilled temperatures, they **must** be cooled as quickly as possible after cooking (or other heat processing), or after final preparation if they are not to be heated to a temperature that does not cause a risk to health (see below). It is recommended that foods which have been cooked and are to be cooled down for service either hot or cold at a later time are cooled down as quickly as possible, but at least quickly enough so that they can be refrigerated within two hours.

The temperature control requirements in the new legislation applying from January 2006 have not changed from the previous legislation.

- Cold foods (which have to be kept cold to be safe) **must** be kept at 8°C or below.  
This is a legal requirement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland food **must** also be kept cold.  
However it is best practice to keep foods at 5°C or below.
- Hot foods **must** be kept at 63°C or above.  
This is a legal requirement throughout the UK.

When you reheat food, make sure that it is piping hot all the way through. In Scotland, there is a legal requirement for reheated foods prepared on the premises to reach at least 82°C.

See the [Guidance on Temperature Control in Food Premises](#) for more information on which foods need to be kept chilled to be safe.

Food should be prepared immediately before service rather than many hours in advance. If this is not possible, the food should be prepared in small batches (to help cool them quickly) and kept at the correct temperature either very hot or very cold (63°C or above or 5°C or below).

All foods should be covered when stored under refrigeration. This will reduce the risk of contamination and can help to maintain the quality of the food product.

## **Service and Display**

When serving or displaying food, it can be kept out of temperature control for a limited period of time:

- Cold foods can be kept above 8°C for up to four hours. This should only happen once. If any food is left after this time, it should be thrown away or kept chilled at 8°C or below until it is used.
- Hot foods can be kept below 63°C for up to two hours. Again this should happen only once. If any food is left after this time, it should be thrown away, reheated to 63°C or above, or cooled as quickly as possible to 8°C or below. Remember to keep the food at a safe temperature until it is used.

Food should only be served and displayed like this if it is really necessary to do so. It is

vital that food is not kept out of temperature control for longer than these times.

## Defrosting

Food **must** be defrosted in a way that minimises the risk of harmful bacteria growing, or toxins forming, in the foods. Whilst they are being defrosted, foods should be kept at a temperature that would not result in a risk to health. If time allows, food should be defrosted in a refrigerator.

Where liquid coming from the defrosting food may present a risk to health (eg when defrosting raw meat) it **must** be drained off adequately. The liquid **must** not be allowed to drip onto ready to eat foods, for example.

Following defrosting, food **must** be handled in a way that minimises the risk of harmful bacteria growing or toxins forming (eg keeping it in the fridge).

## Wrapping and Packaging

If food is wrapped or packaged as part of the business (including selling food to take away) then these requirements **must** be met.

Material used for wrapping and packaging **must** not be a source of contamination.

Wrapping materials **must** be stored so they are not exposed to a risk of contamination.

Wrapping and packaging **must** be carried out in a way that avoids contamination of products. Where appropriate, containers **must** be clean and undamaged, particularly if cans and/or glass jars are used.

If any wrapping and/or packaging material for foods is re-used, it **must** be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect.

## Training

Food businesses **must** make sure that any staff who handle food are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene in a way that is appropriate for the work they do. The person or people responsible for developing and maintaining the business's food safety management procedures, based on the principles of HACCP (see Food Safety Management Procedures on page 6) **must** have received adequate training to enable them to do this. Packs produced by the FSA, or industry guides to good hygiene practice, can be used for training purposes.

Food business operators and their staff do not have to attend a formal course but many food handlers have found attending short basic food hygiene courses run by education establishments and private training companies have helped them get a clearer understanding of safe food handling practices. Such courses have the added advantage of giving food handlers the opportunity to ask questions on things they are not sure about. Certificates are usually awarded on successful completion of courses. There are a

number of on line courses available also.

A list of trainers delivering food hygiene courses can be found on the council's website.

## **Beer Cellars and Bottle Stores**

The floor may need extra protection in drop areas to prevent impact damage from barrels.

All stairs **must** be kept in a safe condition and provided with a secure handrail.

All external openings, eg hatches, **must** be suitably weather and rodent proof and safely secured when in use. Suitable guards may be required to prevent falls.

Full and empty gas cylinders **must** be secured within chains, brackets or suitable racking.

A cold water point and hose should be provided in all cellars.

## **Food Allergy and Intolerance**

Food allergy and food intolerance are both types of food sensitivity. When someone has a food allergy, their immune system reacts to a particular food as if it isn't safe. If someone has a severe food allergy, this can cause a life-threatening reaction.

Food intolerance doesn't involve the immune system and is generally not life-threatening. But if someone eats a food they are intolerant to, this could make them feel ill or affect their long-term health.

In theory, any food can cause a food allergy. But in fact just a handful of foods are to blame for 90% of allergic reactions to food in the UK. These foods are known as the 'big eight'. They are: milk, eggs, peanuts (groundnuts or monkey nuts), nuts (including Brazil nuts, hazelnuts, almonds and walnuts), fish, shellfish (including mussels, crab and shrimps), soya and wheat.

In children, the most common allergic reactions to food are to milk, peanuts, nuts, eggs, soya and wheat. Usually children grow out of most types of food allergy in early childhood. In adults, most allergic reactions are to peanuts, nuts, fish, shellfish and wheat.

It is essential to look carefully at the label on any pre-packed food if it is being purchased for someone with a food allergy or intolerance. Even if it has been purchased before, the label should still be checked as the recipe might have changed.

As well as the ingredients list, many food products have a statement or an allergy advice box on the label saying they contain a certain food, for example nuts, milk or eggs. Some manufacturers use symbols to show this.

From November 2005, food labelling rules will require pre-packed food sold in the UK or the rest of the European Union (EU) to show clearly on the label if it contains one of the

following (or if one of its ingredients contains, or is made from, one of these): peanuts; nuts such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts; eggs; milk; crustaceans (including prawns, crabs and lobsters); fish; sesame seeds; cereals containing gluten (including wheat, rye, barley and oats); soya; celery; mustard; sulphur dioxide and sulphites (preservatives used in some foods and drinks) at levels above 10mg per kg or per litre.

The new rules should make it easier for people to avoid the above foods in pre-packed food products, including alcoholic drinks. However, some people are sensitive to foods that are not on this list, so always check the ingredients carefully.

**For further information:**

**Contact:** Food, Health and Safety Team

**Address:** Environmental Services Section, Eden District Council, Mansion House,  
Penrith Cumbria CA11 7YG

**Email:** [env.health@eden.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@eden.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01768 212491