

Food Business: Guidance on Compliance with Food Hygiene and Safety Requirements for Retail Premises

This guidance has been produced to provide information to those running food shops about some of the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regs 2013 and The Food Information Regulations 2014, and to outline some good hygiene practices. Please note the guidance covers only the minimum standards for food premises operating in the Eden District Council area.

Planning

Anyone thinking of opening a food shop 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 28 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 on the Council's website.

Licences

A licence will be required to do the following things:

- sell or supply alcohol
- sell hot food between 11pm and 5am
- 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 or the Food, Health and Safety team on (01768) 817817 for information on all of these licences.

Health and Safety

Retail food business operators must comply with certain duties laid down in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. This legislation 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 the Health and Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk. or on the council's website.

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.

Not all information can be included in this guide and food premises vary greatly so you are strongly advised to discuss your individual situation with a member of the Food, Health and Safety Team.

Food Hygiene Essentials

This guidance provides advice for all activities that may occur at retail food premises including those that prepare or handle open food such as delicatessens, open display counters and dispensing equipment, bake off provision or takeaway foods.

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, utensils 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 and Reheating

One of the main food safety controls is thorough cooking and reheating. Always check that cooked or reheated food is piping hot all the way through. Poultry, pork and beef products such as chicken wings, pies, burgers, bacon and sausages must be thoroughly cooked or reheated right the way through, because products like these could have bacteria in the middle. They should not be served pink or rare.

The core temperature (in the middle of the thickest part) 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 or not the food products handled are high risk.

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
- identifying the critical control points – these are the steps, when handling food, where something must be done which will eliminate hazards or reduce them to an acceptable level
- putting in place procedures to make sure that appropriate action is taken at the critical control points identified
- deciding what action needs to be taken if something goes wrong
- making sure procedures are working by carrying out checks
- keeping appropriate records to show procedures are 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 Retail Food Businesses

For small food businesses, like food retailers, the packs produced by the Food Standards Agency, called 'Safer Food Better Business For Retailers' (SFBB), might be appropriate. These 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 SFBB packs and other guidance to help new businesses to start up are available from the [Agency's website](#) where they can be printed free of charge.

Larger Retail Food Businesses

Larger retailers, for example those making or selling large amounts of products, or with several outlets, will require a more extensive food safety management system than the SFBB pack, but one which isn't necessarily a formal HACCP system as this will depend on the size and complexity of the business. Please contact the Council if you would like further information on HACCP.

Smaller Food Businesses

Very small scale food business, like a corner shop or independent small retailer, 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.

Further Advice

Further food safety advice on a wide range of topics and specific guidance for different types of food businesses such as Bed and Breakfast establishments, childrens nurseries, caterers, mobile vendors and community buildings for example 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 size and layout of any preparation area **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 for back to back working.

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

- allow adequate maintenance, cleaning and/or disinfection – the premises have to be set out that 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.

Handwashing Facilities and Toilets

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

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.

Handwashing Facilities

Adequate numbers of washbasins **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 be properly drained, by a trapped waste pipe. Materials for cleaning hands (for instance, unscented or antibacterial liquid soap) and for hygienic drying (for example, paper towels) must be provided.

Ventilation

There **must** be enough ventilation, either natural (eg opening windows or vents) or mechanical (eg extractor fans) to service each food room.

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

Filters **must** 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 Handwashing Facilities and Toilets above).

Other requirements

Lighting

There **must** be adequate lighting, either natural (daylight) and/or artificial (electric light). Food handlers and cleaners must 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 must 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 in addition to the General Requirements above for rooms where food is prepared, treated or processed. The design and layout of the room **must** allow good food hygiene practices, including protection against contamination between and during tasks.

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 should be made from materials that are impervious (ie do not allow fluid to pass through),

Thermoplastic coverings, terrazzo and epoxy resins may be suitable.

Where appropriate, floors **must** allow adequate surface drainage.

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 fixed 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 have an adequate supply of hot and cold water and be properly drained, by a trapped waste pipe.

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.

You may need a second sink for handling food such as washing, draining or rinsing the food. Every sink (or other facilities) for washing food **must** have an adequate supply 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.

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)

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

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.

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 need to 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.

A suitable area will be needed outside for storing waste.

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, waste from foods of animal origin, for example, must be collected and disposed. Advice is available from the Councils Food, Health and Safety team.

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.

Private water supplies will be subject to regular testing and water treatment will be required in the event of unsatisfactory results.

If you have a private water supply there are strict rules to make sure that the water is safe, please contact the councils food safety team for advice on what you will be required to do.

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), it is necessary to ensure that water used to cool the containers after heat treatment is not 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.

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).

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

Washable plasters (preferably coloured) are required 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 48 hours.

Handwashing

Effective handwashing 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 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 damage, signs of damage by pests or are dirty or 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.

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.

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. 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. But businesses must be able to show that they have suitable food safety management procedures (the food safety management procedures mentioned above) 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 are allowed to 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. Where possible raw and ready to eat foods should be kept in separate refrigerators but where space available does not allow this, raw foods must be kept on the bottom shelf, so that they cannot drip onto ready to eat foods.

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 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 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 90 minutes.

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 reheating food, it is essential to make sure 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.

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 and kept at the correct temperature, either very hot or very cold (5°C or below).

All foods must be covered when stored under refrigeration.

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 must 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 the food must be kept 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 the 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. It is necessary to make sure, where appropriate, that the container is clean and not damaged, 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. If you are the person responsible for the business you must ensure that you understand the instructions and procedures you give to your staff.

Food business operators and their staff do not have to attend a formal training 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.

Food Allergy and Intolerance

If you own a food business, you **must** provide information about the 14 allergens listed below and ensure that the food you provide is safe. Allergens **must** be declared if you provide prepacked or loose food eg non-prepacked food. Most products sold in retail premises are supplied prepacked from your wholesalers and **must** already be labelled in bold print with the allergy information.

- celery
- cereals that contain gluten – including wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan), rye, barley and oats
- crustaceans – such as prawns, crabs and lobsters

- eggs
- fish
- lupin
- milk
- molluscs – such as mussels and oysters
- mustard
- tree nuts – including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts
- peanuts
- sesame seeds
- soybeans
- sulphur dioxide and sulphites (if they are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million)

Research has found that 60% of young people with food allergy or intolerance avoid eating out or ordering food because of their condition. However, more than half (59%) of them say that they often visit the same food outlet if they've eaten safely there before. This suggests that good allergen info could be good for business.

If you prepare or handle loose food for example on a display/takeaway counter or offer free taster samples you **must** ensure that information on any allergens the food contains is given to the consumer at the point of sale so that they can choose whether that particular food is safe for them to eat.

Keep a copy of the ingredient information of any ready-made foods you use. When you have been asked to prepare a dish that doesn't contain a certain food, make sure work surfaces and equipment have been thoroughly cleaned first. Make sure staff wash their hands thoroughly before preparing the dish. Give detailed information in the name or description of dishes on the menu, especially if they include the foods that include allergens eg chocolate and *almond* slice, *sesame* oil dressing.

Remember when you update the menu or when recipes change you **must** review and keep up to date the ingredients listed in them. If someone has a severe allergy, they can react to even a tiny amount of the food they are sensitive to. You must take care to avoid small amounts of foods that contain allergens to getting into the dish accidentally.

General advice on allergen controls can be found on the Food standards Agency website or your local Trading standards services.

For further information

- Contact: Food, Health and Safety Team, Eden District Council, Mansion House, Penrith CA11 7YG
- Telephone: 01768 212491
- Email: env.health@eden.gov.uk
- Website: www.eden.gov.uk

You may also find the following websites useful:

Food Standards Agency: www.food.gov.uk

Health and Safety Executive: www.hse.gov.uk