

Food Safety Guide

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1. Introduction

This is the fourth edition of the Food Advice Handbook produced by North Somerset Council and is primarily designed for people considering entering the catering trade, setting up a new food business or refurbishing an existing premises.

The handbook contains information and advice on:

- Structural standards
- Provision of toilets
- How to register your business
- How to ensure the food you provide is safe to eat
- Refuse management
- Food hygiene training
- Health and safety at work
- Trading standards
- The Food Hygiene Rating scheme

The guidance contained within is as up to date as possible, however if you are starting a business importing, manufacturing food not for direct sale or selling unusual foods then please contact a Food Safety Officer for further advice through Council Connect.

You may also find further advice from the [Industry guide to good hygiene practice](#) appropriate to your business. These industry guides are published by Chadwick House Group Limited and provide detailed information on a variety of food business categories.

2. The premises

When planning the layout of a business to operate efficiently and within current legal standards, the following criteria should be considered:

2.1 Layout

Food preparation areas should be of sufficient size to avoid the bacterial contamination of food, either during preparation or when cooking is complete. To this end, a minimum free floor area of 9.3 square metres is advised to provide sufficient space to set out the kitchen hygienically.

The layout of the kitchen should be such that there is a flow from raw ingredients, through the preparation of food to the finished item, be it a cooked meal or a sandwich. In addition consideration should be given to ensuring that any person working in the kitchen is able to move around safely avoiding trip hazards or heat sources.

Failure to consider this work flow could result in bacterial contamination of prepared foods, either from items in preparation or waste food. Areas for consideration when designing a kitchen layout include:

- Location of cooking facilities and ensuring that sufficient mechanical and/or natural ventilation is provided
- Sinks for washing food and equipment should be located where appropriate
- A wash hand basin should be provided in a location where it will be used and is accessible to anyone working in a kitchen.
- Maintain the “working triangle” of cooker, refrigerator and sinks to produce an efficient work environment that also avoids staff cross over and minimises contamination potential.

2.2 Surfaces and finishes

The food hygiene regulations require that “ceilings, walls, floors and all other parts of the structure are maintained in such good order, repair and condition to enable effective cleaning”. In practical terms this can be interpreted as follows:

Area	Recommendation
Ceilings	These should be of a smooth, impervious nature and light in colour. The use of textured plasterwork should be avoided, as should acoustic (absorbent) ceiling tiles.
Walls	<p>These should be of a smooth impervious finish and light in colour. The type of finish provided will be dependent on the use of the food room. A heavily used room would require a hard-wearing, durable finish, whereas in a food store smooth painted plaster may suffice. For walls, suitable surfaces include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ceramic tiles ▪ Stainless steel ▪ Smooth painted plaster (it is advised that a two tile high splash back is provided to a wall above a work surface 45cm +) <p>Plastic cladding</p>
Floors	<p>When considering floor finishes it is necessary to pay attention to both food safety requirements and health and safety. Thus a floor should be both readily cleansable and slip resistant. Suitable floor surfaces include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slip resistant vinyl tiles ▪ Ceramic tiles/ quarry tiles ▪ Slip resistant vinyl sheet ▪ Specialist floor screeds
Work surfaces	<p>As with wall finishes, the type of material chosen will be determined by the nature of the activity. In all cases, finishes should be readily cleansable, durable and suitable for purpose. Rolled edge laminated surfaces may be used, as long as they are sealed properly at the edges.</p> <p>Heavily used work surfaces should be constructed of stainless steel; whereas shelves can be constructed of laminate or painted timber (unsealed timber is too absorbent for use in food rooms).</p>

2.3 Washing and cleaning facilities

Area	Recommendation
Sinks	<p>A double bowl sink unit should be provided (or a commercial dishwasher used to supplement a single sink) for all premises handling low risk foods, with the exception of smaller premises.</p> <p>Adequate supplies of hot and cold water should be piped to the sink(s) and the unit should be connected to the foul drainage system via a trapped waste pipe.</p>
Vegetable preparation	<p>If you are preparing vegetables and salads you may be required to provide a separate sink for washing these items. A sink for this use will only require a supply of cold water.</p> <p>The scale of activity will determine the need for a vegetable preparation sink so it please contact us for advice.</p>
Wash hand basins	<p>Wash hand basins are quite different from sinks in that they must only be used for securing personal hygiene, for example hand washing.</p> <p>All food premises must have sufficient wash hand basins in convenient locations for food handlers to use. They should be provided with adequate piped supplies of hot and cold water or water at a suitably controlled temperature. The waste should be connected via a trap to the foul drainage system. Soap and clean towels are required at each wash basin. Liquid soap dispensers and paper towels are the preferred option.</p>

2.4 Food storage

Food stores should be positioned to avoid the necessity to carry deliveries through areas where open food is handled. Please note that the room should satisfy the basic structural standards detailed above.

3. Temperature control

The correct management of food temperatures can prevent food poisoning by providing environments which will either destroy the bacteria (cooking), or dramatically reduce or stop the growth of bacteria (chilling/ freezing).

Refrigerators should be sited in well-ventilated areas away from any heat sources. The units must be maintained in good condition, serviced regularly and checked daily to ensure that foodstuffs and ingredients are maintained at correct temperatures.

It is recommended that refrigerators hold foods at 5°C or below and are monitored daily, using an independent digital thermometer. It is essential that the refrigerator is not overloaded and is subject to regular cleaning (at least weekly). The legal maximum for refrigerated food temperatures is 8°C

Freezers should be capable of holding food at a temperature below -18°C and subject to regular temperature monitoring. It is essential that freezers are regularly defrosted and that date checks are made to ensure that manufacturers shelf lives are not exceeded.

The current regulations regarding temperature control specify 8°C or below and hot foods held above 63°C for high risk foods. They are to maintain the safety of ready to eat and cooked foods as temperature control can help prevent food borne illnesses.

The food must be stored at or below 8°C include:

- Soft cheese
- Pâtés
- Cooked pies, pasties and sausage rolls (unless intended to be consumed on the day of preparation or following day)
- Salads, cream cakes, pastries and certain dairy desserts
- Smoked or cured fish
- Cut or sliced smoked or cured meat
- Sandwiches or rolls containing meat, fish, egg, soft cheese etc
- Cooked products containing meat, fish, eggs (or their substitutes), cheese, cereals, pulses or vegetables which are usually eaten without further cooking or reheating

Alternatively, the foods listed above where appropriate and where intended to be served hot should be kept at or above 63°C. **Please note this temperature is for the holding of hot food and not the cooking of food.**

3.1 Refrigerated storage

Adequate provision should be made for storage of perishable foods at or below 8°C. To avoid situations arising where insufficient refrigerated storage is available, maximum demand should be planned for. If possible, separate refrigerators should be provided for raw and cooked products. The advice is to purchase fan assisted commercial refrigerators, which are able to maintain temperatures more efficiently.

3.2 Freezer storage

Adequate provision should also be made to enable frozen food to be stored at or below -18°C.

3.3 Temperature reminders

3.3.1 Refrigerated Cold Food

- MUST be below 8 Degrees Celsius
- Ideally 5 Degrees Celsius

3.3.2 Static Freezers (guidelines only)

- Should be minus 18 Degrees Celsius

3.3.3 Frozen Deliveries

- Should be minus 10 Degrees Celsius

3.3.4 Hot Food

- Heated to 75 Degrees Celsius for 30 seconds or hotter

3.3.5 Hot Food Holding (after cooking)

- Should be 63 Degrees Celsius
- If the temperature falls below you have 2-hours to serve

3.3.6 Buffets (cold)

- Can be left out for up to 4-hours

3.4 Use of a Temperature Probe

There is no requirement to use but it is a good idea. It must be disinfected between uses.

4. The workplace

4.1 Equipment

When purchasing equipment attention should be paid to the ability and ease of cleaning it will be. Equipment should be constructed of smooth, non-absorbent materials free from traps for dirt and food particles to collect in.

When installing large items, such as cookers, fridges and warming cupboards, it should be ensured they are moveable to allow for cleaning.

4.2 Staff changing facilities, toilets and clothing lockers

It is strongly recommended that a separate room is provided for staff to change in and outdoor clothing should be stored in lockers or something similar to avoid the risk of contaminating food.

In addition it is recommended that a separate WC with its own wash basin is provided for the sole use of staff. Please note that the WC must not directly link to a food room.

To avoid contaminating food, regulations require that where open food is handled outdoor clothing should be placed in lockers or similar accommodation.

4.3 Over-clothing

In order to protect the food from becoming contaminated by your ordinary clothes, it is essential to wear suitable over-clothing. It is advised that this is appropriate to the task in hand and should adequately cover your ordinary clothes. It is recommended that the over-clothing is light in colour and should be clean. If there is a risk of contamination by hair, it is suggested that appropriate head covering or a hair net is worn while you are preparing and handling food and long hair is tied back.

It is necessary that food handlers maintain an excellent standard of personal hygiene. Regular hand washing is necessary – particularly when hands may have become contaminated from raw food, after cleaning the kitchen, coughing/sneezing or taking a break. Wearing gloves is not mandatory, however they do offer an additional layer of protection to hands after hand washing has been carried out. It must be borne in mind that they should be changed regularly and if the gloves become contaminated they must be changed.

There has been no link between handling coins and transfer of food poisoning bacteria due to the metals producing an inhibitory effect on bacterial growth. However, to minimise the risk to food handling activities from handling banknotes you may wish to separate handling money with separate staff. If this is not possible then wearing gloves may be an option in some cases.

4.4 Fitness to work

It is essential to ensure that you minimise the risk of food becoming microbiologically contaminated by food handlers.

This can be done by:

- Explaining good hygiene practice to employees
- Ensuring employees are suitably trained and have a working understanding of the principles of hygiene
- Ensuring that employees report to you any infectious or potentially infectious conditions
- Ensuring that any infectious or potentially infectious employees are excluded from work in line with guidance from the Food and Safety team

The general rule for an employee returning to work following illness due to gastro intestinal infections is that an employee should be excluded from work until symptom free for 48 hours. There are some illnesses that require further specific precautions, please contact us on **01934 888 802** for more information.

4.5 First aid

Many food businesses utilise dangerous machinery that involve a great amount of cutting, slicing etc. Such processes make first aid an important consideration as serious injuries can occur. The quantities and type of equipment required, the need for trained first aiders and provision of medical rooms is determined by the size and nature of the business.

4.6 Refuse storage and removal

As refuse is a source of contamination it should not be allowed to accumulate in a food room. Refuse bins should be of minimal size and emptied regularly. All refuse bins in food rooms should be washable and provided with a close-fitting lid.

The external refuse store should be constructed to facilitate cleaning and provided with a concrete hard standing. Bulk refuse bins should be regularly cleaned to avoid smell nuisance. It is essential that refuse stores are maintained in a clean condition and that all refuse is kept in the bin to avoid attracting pests. The storage area should not be used as a dumping ground for disused equipment as this may further attract pests.

The removal of refuse from the business can only be undertaken by a recognised refuse disposal company, for which you should have appropriate documentation. This will be in the form of 'a waste transfer note' to show that you have made these arrangements. It is an offence to fly tip refuse or to deal with it as though it were domestic waste.

4.7 Lighting

Sufficient lighting of food rooms is essential to facilitate cleaning, avoid eye strain and accidents. Generally levels of 100 Lux are required for food rooms. In situations where intricate work such as cake decorating is being carried out, higher levels may be required. Advice from an electrician may be sought regarding Lux levels and guidance will be found on individual products.

When designing lighting schemes it is important to remember people prefer to work in natural light. Lighting provided by fluorescent tubes should have its units covered by diffusers to aid cleaning.

4.8 Ventilation

The amount and type of ventilation required for a food room will be determined by the use of that room. The provision of a restaurant type meal utilising a cooking range and fryers will necessitate the installation of a canopy incorporating grease filters and giving 20 air changes per hour. A greater air exchange rate may be necessary if excessive cooking temperatures are likely or the food is pungent in nature.

At the other extreme air-bricks may be suitable for a food store, or an openable fly-screened window for a sandwich preparation area.

The services of a suitably qualified ventilation engineer to design full mechanical extract systems should be sought.

Points of consideration:

- Gas fired catering equipment must have proper ventilation to comply with Gas Safety and Use Regulations as well as the Health and Safety at Work Act and Codes of Practice.
- A free and unrestricted air supply is required for proper and complete combustion of gas used as a fuel source in gas fired appliances.
- External wall mounted ventilators or a mechanically assisted supply air system interlocked to the gas supply to prevent the use of gas-fired appliances without proper ventilation must be fitted, to prevent their unsafe use.
- The extract canopy must over sail all gas-fired equipment in accordance with the health and safety recommendations and the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA) specifications as well as the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Mesh filters are not recommended for use in extract canopies due to risk of fire.

- Filters should be approved by your insurance company and fitted according as per the manufacturer's instructions. Failure to do so may invalidate your insurance should you later need to claim for a kitchen fire.
- Extraction rates are governed by the equipment being used and ventilation requirements. Correct fan selection is important especially if the system is also designed as a smoke removal system in the event of a fire.
- Fans should be rated and capable of maintaining their performance in the event of a fire or alternatively interlocked to a gas safety and fire alarm system linked to the building control management systems. Fan selection should maintain suitable and safe working temperatures in a hot kitchen environment.
- Ducting runs should be kept simple and straight with regular inspection hatches for cleaning and maintenance. Ducting systems must be compartmental to comply with fire officer requirements.
- External ducting will be subject to planning approval and should be sought at the early stages of kitchen design.
- Noise and odour control must be minimised when designing a system to reduce any impact on adjoining properties and neighbours. Many solutions are available and professional advice should be sought to ensure compliance with local authority requirements.
- Light fittings installed in ventilation systems should be IP rated, water and heat proof and provide suitable lighting levels for food production.
- Hygiene and safety are important and all systems should be regularly inspected and cleaned.
- A fire safety suppression system should be fitted in high-risk systems where open flame cooking techniques are used, typically in Oriental and Indian cuisine.
- Total fire stop filters should also be used with high efficiency grease filtration systems to remove grease carried within the air stream and products of combustion associated with char grilling and high temperature flash wok cooking.
- Broilers and fryers also give off high levels of grease and oil in the cooking process. Ensuring that the correct extract rates and grease filtration systems are installed will improve ventilation and make the working environment better and safe.

Text above provided by David Pedrette of Target Catering Group 01452 410 447.

4.9 Drainage

If your business results in fats, oils or grease entering the drainage system, it is possible that the drains may become blocked. You should ensure that your drainage system is fitted with a grease interceptor to prevent this happening.

You will need to fill out a building regulations application, as one of our building control officers would need to come and inspect it.

Oils and fats should not be poured down drains. Instead it should be collected by a licensed oil removal company.

For more information see our 'Disposal of used oils' information sheet on our website.

4.10 Public sanitary accommodation

Where food and drink is provided for consumption on the premises it will usually be necessary to provide toilets for customers.

The table below indicates the standard of facilities that would normally be required. Customer toilets should be provided with ventilated entrance lobbies.

Please note that the toilets should be accessible without the need to pass through either food stores or food preparations rooms (see table).

Appliances	For males	For females
WC's	2 per 100 persons up to 400 Additional 250 persons thereafter	2 per 50 persons up to 200 persons Additional 1 per 100 or part thereof
Urinals	1 per 50 persons Recommended that a low level urinal be provided for boys	
Wash hands basins	1 per WC + 1 per 5 urinals	1 per WC
Cleaners sink	Recommended	Recommended

4.11 Access and disabled toilet facilities

If building regulation approval is required then some or all of the following provisions may apply to the premises:

- At least one wheelchair accessible unisex toilet should be provided with a minimum size of 2200mm by 1500mm. If this is the only toilet in the building, the size is increased to 2200mm by 2000mm and it should include an additional standing height wash hand basin.

No wheelchair user should have to travel more than 40 metres to use the WC facility.

- At least one WC cubical should be provided in each separate-sex toilet space, for use by ambulant disabled people, minimum width 800mm in width.
- Where there are 4 or more WC cubicles in separate sex toilets, one of these toilets should have an enlarged cubical for use by people who need extra space, minimum 1200mm in width.
- Reasonable provision may be needed for people to gain access to the premises, including suitable ramped or stepped approaches.

You must also consider your legal responsibilities under the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995 to remove or alter any physical feature which makes it unreasonably difficult or impossible for disabled people to make use of your services.

The above list is by no means exhaustive and advice on the requirements of building regulations should be sought before commencing alterations to any premises.

5. Cleaning and disinfection

5.1 What is cleaning?

The removal of visible dirt, food debris and grease. This then enables disinfection to be carried out.

5.2 What is disinfection?

The reduction of bacteria to a safe level, by the use of disinfectants that are labelled for use in food rooms or food stores.

5.3 Why clean and disinfect?

You will reduce contamination risks, minimise the danger of food poisoning, create a safer working environment and impress your customers.

5.4 How do I ensure cleaning is carried out properly?

Prepare a cleaning schedule which lists every item of equipment and all parts of the structure to be cleaned, including:

- Frequency of cleaning
- Cleaning method
- Materials/ chemicals to be used
- Name of staff member assigned with responsibility for that area

Ensure that staff follow the manufacturer's instructions with all cleaning chemicals and disinfectants. Failure to do so may lead to the continued presence of food poisoning bacteria in food rooms.

It is essential that 'food grade' cleaning chemicals and disinfectants are used if there is a likelihood of their coming into contact with food.

6. Pest control

Pest control at food premises is very important because many pests carry diseases that are transferable to humans. They can contaminate food with their waste products, hairs and bodies and also transfer bacteria from raw to cooked food.

To avoid problems with pests, it is essential that the premises are designed to prevent the entry of them and regular checks are made to determine whether an infestation has developed.

Simple measures as follows will help to control the pests:

- Make sure all external doors are close fitting to their frames and thresholds
- Install fly screens over external windows and doors
- Avoid spillages and clean up immediately
- Keep the refuse storage area clean to void attracting rodents
- Electric insect kills are effective if sited correctly

Keep in mind that knowing your surroundings, taking smart precautions and educating your employees about the importance of pest control are valuable aspects of your food safety system.

7. Health and safety

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires that you safeguard the health, safety and welfare of your employees, contractors and members of the public who may visit your business.

You must use safe systems of work and ensure that all equipment provided is safe for use.

If you intend to employ five or more people, you are required to have a written safety policy which documents your responsibilities to:

- your employees
- contractors/ temporary staff working at your premises
- members of the public who may visit you

If there are no employees then under the act you have a duty to avoid unsafe practices and therefore any danger to yourself.

7.1 Accidents

If you or one of your employees is off work for more than three days as a result of an accident at work, or a member of the public has an accident and is taken to hospital, you must inform us by calling:

Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 99 23

For more information on accidents please look either on our [health and safety web pages](#) or visit the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) website](#).

8. Food hygiene training

8.1 What the course covers

The general requirement for those people preparing raw food is formal training to level 2, which is a formal course of approximately six hours duration and covering the following topics:

- Food poisoning and micro-organisms
- Simple microbiology, toxin spores, growth and death
- Premises and equipment
- Common food hazards - physical, chemical, micro-biological
- Personal hygiene, basic rules and responsibility
- Preventing food contamination
- Food poisoning symptoms and causes
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Legal obligations
- Pest control
- Effective temperature control of food, for example storing, thawing, reheating and cooking

It is recommended that anyone who manages a food business should obtain a level 2 or 3 in food hygiene training. You should provide hygiene awareness instruction to develop knowledge of basic the principles for those serving food.

The staff should be told how to do their particular job in a hygienic manner. They should be instructed in any control or monitoring points required to ensure that they can fulfil their part in the production of safe food.

8.2 How do book

For further advice on training or to book a level 2 training course please contact us on 01934 888 802.

9. Food hygiene rating scheme (FHRS)

The FHRS is a scheme by which the public can view the outcome of the latest food hygiene inspection of a business premise by visiting the Food Standards Agency (FSA). This availability of information fits in with the Freedom of Information Act and the FSA's (FSA) core values of openness.

Developing a national scheme has enabled the local authorities involved to ensure consistency in their approach:

The aim of FHRS will be:

- To improve food safety in retail, catering and manufacturing food premises

The objectives of FHRS are:

- To improve compliance through public awareness
- To meet Freedom of Information legislation requirements
- To provide up to date information to the public to enable informed choice
- To make the inspection results available in an easy to understand format
- To promote a 'best value' service
- To provide an improved service to inspect businesses

The FHRS scheme applies to all but the lowest risk food premises.

9.1 Find the ratings for business in your area

To check food premises in your area online [click here](#).

9.2 Rating scheme scores

The rating scheme will reflect the risk rating score awarded at the end of a routine food hygiene inspection and will be as follows:

- 5 Very good
- 4 Good
- 3 Generally satisfactory
- 2 Improvement necessary
- 1 Major improvement necessary
- 0 Urgent improvement necessary

Exempt These premises are not rated as they fall outside the remit of the scheme. (for example it is a low risk food operation or food handling/preparation was not going on at the time of the inspection.)

Excluded Premises that do not supply food to the final consumer

Sensitive Premises where the details include the home address of the food business operator

The ratings show what standards were seen by the officer at the last inspection and are a snapshot at that time. This could mean the rating may not reflect what you see when you visit a business at a different time.

9.3 Window stickers

At the end of each, routine food hygiene inspection proprietors will be awarded a rating and presented with a sticker. Displaying the sticker is voluntary but if displayed it must be visible from the outside of the premises allowing the public to view the latest hygiene score before entering the premises.

Any premises scoring a 0 or 1 rating will not receive a sticker but the information will still appear on the website.

The stickers remain the property of the council and we retain the right to withdraw/suspend them at any time.

In accordance with data protection requirements, premises such as mobile caterers will only have the trading address displayed on the website. Home caterers, however, will have their home address and telephone number displayed unless they specifically ask for them to be removed.

10. Safer Food Better Business

It is a requirement of food legislation that systems and procedures are put in place to ensure that all food provided for your customers is safe to eat and without risk to their health, and that these are documented appropriately.

The Food Standards Agency has developed guidance on this aspect of your business, focusing on the following elements of food provision.

The following guidelines will guide you on how to obtain the lowest acceptable standard of compliance with food hygiene regulations. You may wish to build upon these.

10.1 Cleaning

Effective cleaning is essential to get rid of harmful bacteria in your kitchen and to stop them spreading. The tips in this section will help you to be sure that you and your staff are cleaning properly.

Please refer to the 'Cleaning and disinfection' section of this guide book for further details.

10.2 Cooking

Thorough cooking is important because it kills harmful bacteria in food. If bacteria survive in food because it has not been cooked properly, it could make your customers ill.

What you need to do:

- Do not serve food that is not cooked properly
- Once food is cooked, serve it immediately or keep it hot until serving
- If you are cooking in advance, cool and chill it quickly

How to check:

- Inspect food to make sure it is thoroughly cooked. For example, check that it is piping hot all the way through and that meat juices run clear.
- Check regularly that hot food is kept hot until serving

Remember hot food must be kept at a temperature above 63°C (145°F).

When you are serving or displaying hot food, you can keep it below 63°C for a maximum of two hours. You can only do this once, and then you must throw the food away or cool it as quickly as possible and keep it chilled until it is used.

10.3 Chilling

Some foods need to be kept chilled to keep them safe, for example food with a 'use by' date, food that has been cooked that is not intended for immediate consumption or other ready-to-eat food such as prepared salads. If these foods are not properly chilled, bacteria can grow and make any person consuming them ill.

What you need to do:

- Put cold food that needs to be chilled in the fridge straight away
- Cool cooked food as quickly as possible and then put it in the fridge
- Keep chilled food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible during preparation
- Do not overload fridges

How to check:

- Check chilled food on delivery to make sure it is cold
- Check that food that needs to be chilled is put in the fridge as soon as it arrives
- Check regularly that your fridge and display units are cold enough
- Check the time between cooking food and chilling it – this should not be more than two hours

Remember chilled food must be kept below 8°C.

When you are serving or displaying chilled food you can keep it above 8°C for a maximum of four hours. You can only do this once, and then you must throw away the food or keep it chilled until it is used.

10.4 Cross-contamination

Cross-contamination is when bacteria spread between food, surfaces or equipment. It is most likely to happen when:

- Raw food touches (or drips onto) other food, for example if raw meat juice drips onto a cake in a refrigerator
- Raw food touches (or drips onto) equipment or surfaces, for example cutting raw meat with a knife, then using the same unwashed knife to cut the cake
- People touch raw food with their hands, for example a food handler touches raw meat then touches the cake without washing their hands in between

You can avoid this by keeping raw and ready-to-eat foods separate and washing all surfaces, equipment and hands between uses.

How to check:

- Supervise cleaning and food handling
- Check that raw food and ready-to-eat foods are kept apart when they are stored, prepared and displayed
- Make sure that your staff know how to avoid cross-contamination

For more advice, see links below:

- [Caterers](#)
- [Retailers](#)
- [Child minders](#)

11. Trading Standards service

11.1 What is the role of the Trading Standards in food law enforcement?

The service regulates all marketing of food whether at the retail, wholesale or manufacturing level. Our aim is to ensure that the labelling, composition, pricing and quantities of food are correct.

How do we achieve this?

a) The routine inspection

Officers visit food businesses on a regular basis. These visits are normally unannounced. Officers always carry identification with them, which you may request to see. At the conclusion of the visit, the officer will leave a written report of their findings.

b) Sampling

In addition to routine inspection officers will, from time to time, take food samples. Some of these may be purchased by officers posing as members of the public. In catering or manufacturing premises, we may wish to take samples of uncooked products or raw ingredients. These samples are submitted for analysis to determine whether or not they comply with relevant legislation.

c) Advice

If your business is based in North Somerset we will be happy to give appropriate advice on the law we enforce. We stock a number of easy-to-read leaflets covering many subjects, most of which are available from our dedicated [Trading Standards team website](#).

If you need more detail or tailored business advice, please contact us through [Consumer Direct](#).

d) The Primary Authority Principle

North Somerset Council will participate in the Primary Authority Principle. This scheme seeks to ensure that businesses receive the legal advice that they need and that local authorities are consistent in their interpretation of what the law requires. In return, businesses will be expected to comply with advice which officers provide.

11.2 What does Food Standards Legislation require?

11.2.1 Food standards

The content of certain foods must comply with compositional standards. For example, a product described as a pork sausage must contain at least 42% lean meat.

Regulations control which additives are permitted and how much can be contained in food and drink. For example, the colour Sudan 1 is not permitted in food.

Manufacturers should look to obtain detailed advice from us. Do not be afraid to discuss recipes or other trade secrets with us as we are legally bound not to disclose them.

11.2.2 Food labelling

More food labelling is needed in some situations than in others. For example, full labelling (see 'i' below) must be provided when food is packed by one business and sold by another.

Where food is packed and sold in the same premise, or from a vehicle stall operated by the same business, then a lesser degree of labelling will be required (this is classed as 'pre-packed for direct sale' – see 'ii' below).

At catering establishments, little food labelling is needed (see 'iii' below), but descriptions applied via a menu, price list, etc must be accurate and not misleading.

i. Pre-packed food and drink

Most pre-packed food for supply to consumers must be labelled on the packaging in a legible and easy to understand manner with:

- A food name (for example "Cornish pasties")
- A list of ingredients in descending order by weight (which should indicate whether any genetically modified ingredients are present)
- A statement of which, if any, of the prescribed allergenic ingredients are present (for example milk, nuts etc)
- An appropriate durability indication – this will be either 'best before' or 'use by' date
- An indication of any special conditions for storage use (for example, 'once opened, keep cool, store in dry place')
- The name and address of the packer, manufacturer or of a seller in the EU

- The place of the origin of the food – if the omission of such particulars would mislead
 - Alcoholic strength by volume – for drinks with an alcoholic strength more than 1.2%
 - The percentage of any ingredient which appears in the name of the food or which characterises it (for example, percentage of lamb and potato in a Sheppard's pie)
 - The variety name of certain fruit and vegetables
 - For fish, the species name together with the area in which it was caught or, if appropriate a statement that it was farmed
 - A lot mark, unless the durability indication fulfils this requirement
 - A metric indication of weight/ volume
- ii. Food which is sold loose or pre-packed for direct sale
(Excluding sales where food is to be eaten on the premises)

These foods need to be labelled with:

- A food name
- The category/ categories of any additives present (for example, 'contains preservatives')
- A statement of any irradiated ingredients present
- Meat content/ added water declaration – applies to certain meat products only

There are separate requirements for white bread, milk, some flour confectionary, carcasses of meat (or parts of them), eggs, fruit and vegetables.

- iii. Non-pre-packed food and drink sold at catering establishments

Although such food need not be labelled as such, you may need to display a notice if you sell raw milk or irradiated food.

Where food contains a genetically modified ingredient, customers must be made aware of this fact. You should also implement a system to ensure that, if any of the food you supply contains (or may contain) allergenic ingredients, such as nuts, consumers may be provided with this information upon request.

Otherwise there is no necessity to label food at such premises, but any description applied (such as 'Homemade') should be accurate.

11.2.3 Advertising, claims, misleading descriptions and nutritional labelling

Food labels, menus or advertisements must not include any false or misleading statements or claims. This applies equally to the composition of a food as it does to the manner of production (for example, 'made with fresh cream' or 'handmade on the premises').

When a nutritional claim is made for a pre-packed food (for example 'low fat' or 'high fibre'), the label must include a nutritional declaration in a legally prescribed format. This sets down how much energy, protein etc are typically contained in 100g or 100ml of the food and, optionally, in a specified serving of the food.

11.2.4 Chemical contamination of food

Many chemicals, such as pesticides, are known to be harmful to health if consumed. Accordingly, the law sets down maximum permitted levels for such chemicals in food. On a routine basis, officers take samples to ensure that foods are not contaminated with pesticides or contaminants such as arsenic, lead and cadmium.

11.2.5 The statutory defence of 'due diligence'

If you commit an offence but can demonstrate that you have acted conscientiously and taken all reasonable steps to comply with the law, then you may be able to establish a statutory defence to prosecution.

The effect of this defence is that, in general terms, only those traders who act in a negligent, reckless or fraudulent manner are likely to be prosecuted.

However, the law does require you to demonstrate that reasonable precautions are carried out routinely (this is routine following of reasonable precautions is what is known as 'due diligence').

11.2.6 Pricing: best practice

Food and drink should be clearly priced. In shops this would usually mean that goods are individually marked or shelf-edge signage used.

In cafes and restaurants, the prices could be marked in menus or price lists. So that consumers are informed from the outset, prices should be displayed in your window or the entrance to your premises.

11.2.7 Weights and measures

Most food and drink sold at retail premises must be marked with a weight, volume and number. Primary indications of weight or volume must be provided using metric units.

Some pre-packed foods, such as jam and milk may only be sold in prescribed quantities. Most foods sold loose from bulk should be labelled with a unit price (for example, £2.50).

In general, the standard of equipment permitted for use in the weighing or measuring of food and drink is very strictly controlled. The accuracy of such equipment is liable to routine testing.

11.2.8 Business ownership

Where a business is operated under a name which is not the name of individual, a notice must be displayed informing consumers of the identity of the legal entity and address at which legal documents can be served (for example, 'Paul Jones trading as PJ Bakers, 18 High Street, Any-town').

12. Disclaimer

The information contained in this guide is for general information purposes only. The information is provided by North Somerset Council's Food and Safety team and while information was correct at the time of publishing, laws governing food safety may well have been updated/ amended since. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.

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