



Food safety guidance for mobile vehicles, trailers and temporary food stalls

The information in this guidance is intended to provide assistance for any person wishing to operate a food business from a mobile vehicle, trailer or temporary food stall. They include hot dog vendors, burger stalls, ice-cream vans, fish and chip vans and any other hot or cold food products, usually intended for immediate consumption. It is not a complete guide to the law; however, applying the guidance will help you to comply with the legislation.

1. FOOD PREMISES REGISTRATION

Before you start to operate your food business you must register with the Local Authority where the business is based, sometimes called the 'Home Authority'. The application should be made 28 days before you intend to start trading.

Where a mobile caterer trades outside their Home Authority area, the host Environmental Health service may consult the Home Authority.

2. FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

Under Section 7 of Food Hygiene Rating Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, you must display a valid rating sticker at or near each public entrance or at your stall. You must display the rating where it can be readily seen and easily read by customers. It is an offence to fail to display a valid rating sticker and you may receive a fixed penalty of up to £200 or we may prosecute you.

3. HACCP / FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT

HACCP stands for 'Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point'. It is an internationally recognised and recommended system of food safety management. It focuses on identifying the 'critical points' in a process where food safety problems (or 'hazards') could arise and putting steps in place to prevent things going wrong. This is sometimes referred to as 'controlling hazards'. Keeping records is an important part of HACCP systems. You are also required to provide some simple written evidence of your procedures to ensure food safety have been thought through carefully and are being properly applied.

To assist you in complying with the requirements of HACCP the Food Standards Agency has developed a number of generic models which are tailored towards your type of business including, Safer Food Better Business and Safe Catering. These models are practical and easy to use and will assist you in the following:

- comply with the hygiene regulations
- show what you need to do to make food safely
- train staff
- protect your business's reputation
- improve your business e.g. by wasting less food.

You can download a pack on-line by visiting www.food.gov.uk.

You must keep a copy of your HACCP available for inspection at all times.

4. TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Effective temperature control and storage is one of the most important safeguards for controlling the growth of food poisoning organisms.

Cooking / reheating

To kill food poisoning bacteria such as *E. coli*, food must be thoroughly reheated and/or cooked. This means ensuring you achieve a minimum temperature at the centre of the food of 75°C. The temperature of food can be checked using a probe thermometer. You must be able to demonstrate an effective way of disinfecting your probe thermometers, e.g. sanitising probe wipes, and ensure it is calibrated on a regular basis.

If you are cooking burgers, sausages, chicken etc. you must ensure they are fully cooked before they are sold. You can also ensure this type of food is cooked by cutting into the centre and making sure the juices run clear and the meat appears cooked. You must ensure there is no pink/red meat in the centre of the chicken.

Refrigeration

Sufficient refrigerated storage is required if you are selling any high risk foods. High risk foods include: cold cooked meats, fish products, cold cooked vegetable dishes, any cold cooked dish containing egg or cheese, prepared salads and dressings, soft cheeses, sandwiches which contain any of the above, low acid desserts and cream products, fresh pasta, and smoked or cured meats which are not ambient stable. These high risk foods must be held at or below 8°C, preferably between 0°C – 3°C. If a gauge on a chilled unit is used this **must** reflect product temperature. Chilled ready to eat foods can be kept at an ambient temperature for one 4 hour period only. At the end of this period the food must be disposed off or kept chilled below 8°C until sold. If you intend to make use of this exemption you must be able to provide evidence to the inspecting officer that the time period has not been exceeded. It is recommended that freezers should operate at -18°C or below.

Hot holding

If you intend to hot hold food for more than 2 hours, e.g. sauces, burgers etc. then it must be held above 63°C and regular checks undertaken to ensure this temperature is achieved. Foods being hot held can go out of temperature control for one 2 hour period. At the end of this period the food must be returned to a temperature above

63°C or disposed off. If you intend to make use of this exemption you must be able to provide evidence to the inspecting officer that the time period has not been exceeded.

You must have any relevant records available for inspection at all times.

5. DELIVERIES

Routine checks must be made periodically on deliveries of food. High risk food must be transported, stored and displayed at a temperature of 8°C or below. You must check 'use by' dates of foods that have them. You must not accept foods past their 'use by' date. Perishable foods should only be used with enough 'shelf life' to enable you to sell them. It is not good practice to use/sell food past its 'best before' date.

6. TRAINING

All food handlers are to be supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters appropriate to their work activity.

Food handlers must be trained to a level that is commensurate with the type of food handling work that they are expected to undertake. There is no legal requirement to attend a formal training course or get a qualification, although many businesses may want their staff to do so. The necessary skills may also be obtained in other ways, such as through on-the-job training, self-study or relevant prior experience. Those responsible for developing and maintaining the business's food safety procedures, based on HACCP principles, must also have received adequate training.

7. STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

The unit must be large enough for the type of operation carried out e.g. sufficient working surfaces for the separate preparation of raw and cooked products, so that cross contamination cannot occur. The unit must be proofed against pests (e.g. flies and vermin) as far as reasonably practicable.

All internal surfaces must be constructed of washable materials and be easy to clean e.g. vinyl floor tiles or continuous floor covering, plastic/laminate cladding for walls and ceiling. Tables, working surfaces, shelves, food display cabinets, counters, equipment utensils and display containers must be easy to clean and in good repair. Particular attention must be paid to ensuring the edges of shelves and wood surfaces are sealed to allow effective cleaning. Any surface that food comes into contact with must be capable of being disinfected. Suitable materials for food contact surfaces include stainless steel, ceramics or food grade plastics.

Regular inspections are essential to identify structural defects or broken equipment and to arrange for remedial action. If you use your unit on an occasional basis you must check it prior to use after periods of non use and storage. Personal belongings must not be kept in food preparation areas, lockers or cupboards should be provided.

An adequate supply of natural or artificial lighting must be available to all parts of the unit and must be good enough to facilitate safe food handling, cleaning and inspection.

There must be suitable and sufficient means of natural or mechanical ventilation. Adequate ventilation must be provided to ensure that heat or humidity do not build up to levels that could compromise food safety, and to avoid condensation. It is recommended that this is in the form of a canopy, connected to a flue with a mechanical extract fan, filters and grease trap, above any cooking or frying range.

8. CLEANING

The unit must be kept clean and maintained in a good state of repair, with surfaces that are free from cracks, splits, chips or flaking decoration to enable effective cleaning to be carried out.

There should be an adequate supply of approved disinfectant/sanitising products for the regular disinfection of equipment and work surfaces. The disinfectant/sanitising products should meet the following standard BS EN 1276:2009, BS EN 1276:1997 or equivalent. Check the label of the product or confirm this with your supplier.

Separate cloths, must be used for cleaning raw and ready to eat areas, utensils and equipment. The cloths should be colour coded or disposable.

When cleaning surfaces or equipment the area should be washed clean and then a disinfectant applied and rinsed. If you use a sanitising chemical then this must be applied twice to adequately disinfect the area or equipment.

9. CROSS CONTAMINATION

The following principles of cross contamination should be observed to prevent the spread of food poisoning bacteria:

- Raw and cooked/ready to eat food must always be kept separate during storage and preparation. Store cooked/ready to eat food above any raw foods.
- You should designate a "Clean Area" within your premise where only ready to eat foods are prepared. Raw food should never enter this area.
- Use a separate work surface to prepare raw meat or ensure adequate cleaning and disinfection of work surfaces between uses.
- Store food off the ground and protected from rain, dust, birds and animals.
- Handle cooked food as little as possible, use tongs where appropriate.
- Ensure you use different equipment and containers for the preparation, handling or storage of raw and cooked/ready to eat food unless they are heat disinfected using a dishwasher.
- Clean sinks after washing/preparing vegetables and raw food.
- Protection from public coughing or sneezing over food by providing a 'sneeze screen'.
- Designing/sitting displays or display equipment to avoid customers/staff reaching over food.
- You must not allow food to be contaminated by pests including insects, rats, mice and birds.
- Complex equipment must never be used for raw and ready to eat foods, e.g. vacuum packers, meat slicers, mincers, food mixers, weigh scales, heat sealers, and probe thermometers.

10. PERSONAL HYGIENE

Every person working in a food handling area must maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness. This applies to 'every person' working in a food handling area whether or not they handle food. The Food Business Operator must ensure all staff observe good personal hygiene and refrain from unhygienic habits and practices which may expose food to the risk of contamination.

The following will fulfil the requirements:

- Washing hands regularly, particularly after going to the toilet, after handling raw food, after handling rubbish, before starting work, on returning to work, after sneezing/coughing, after having a break (including smoke breaks), and after handling dirty packaging.
- Not smoking, eating, drinking or chewing gum where open food is handled.
- Covering any spots, skin cuts and abrasions (on exposed areas such as hands or lower arms) with water proof dressings.
- Not wearing jewellery, nail varnish or false nails which may present a risk of contamination. As well as physically contaminating food itself, jewellery can harbour dirt and bacteria.
- Ensure food handlers must wear clean protective over clothing whilst handling unwrapped food.
- It is also recommended that staff with long hair wear a hair net.

Waterproof plaster should be provided in the First Aid Kit and preferably coloured blue.

11. HAND WASHING FACILITIES

All food businesses handling open high risk foods must have access to a wash hand basin or bowl for the hygienic cleaning and drying of hands. The hand washing facilities must be separate from any facilities provided for the washing of equipment or food. Hot and cold water, a supply of soap or detergent and hygienic hand drying facilities must be maintained at the washbasin. It is recommended that liquid anti bacterial soap and disposable paper towels are used.

Where only low risk open foods are for sale (i.e. pre-wrapped, tinned or bottled goods, open dry goods such as sweets, nuts, cereals and plain bread products and whole fruit and vegetables, biscuits, olives etc) and utensils are used for handling the food; or where the food is fully wrapped antiseptic wipes and/or disposable gloves/communal facilities may be acceptable alternatives. EHO's will judge each case individually.

Food Business Operators will not be allowed to operate unless they can demonstrate that wash hand facilities are easily accessible.

12. SINKS

Adequate facilities must be provided for the cleaning and disinfecting of equipment and for washing food. Ideally a double sink unit for washing and rinsing should be used with a constant supply of hot and cold water. In most operations one sink is acceptable for both equipment and food washing, provided that both activities can be carried out effectively and without prejudice to food safety. It will be necessary to

clean and disinfect the sink between uses in particular in circumstances where root vegetables have been cleaned.

In circumstances where there is greater volume of preparation work and equipment and food washing separate sinks must be provided. This is also the case where it is impracticable to clean and disinfect a single facility between uses.

WATER SUPPLY

There must be an adequate supply of potable water available to ensure foodstuffs are not contaminated and must be used for; cleaning food, food contact surfaces, cleaning hands, cooking food, as an ingredient in food and drinks and any other operations where there is a risk of contaminating foodstuffs. If mains supply is not available then food businesses may use containers of water which can be filled from the mains supply, water tanks/bowsers, or a private water supply. Where containers of water are used they must be:

- made of food grade materials and be enclosed
- kept clean and disinfected frequently to avoid the risk of contamination
- emptied and refilled regularly so as to avoid unacceptable contamination by micro-organisms, and
- of sufficient capacity to store enough water for the businesses potable water needs.

Separate designated containers should be used for clean and waste water e.g. colour coded and labelled. Waste water should discharge into a proper drainage system where available. If this is not possible, waste water must be put into closed holding containers of adequate capacity and disposed of at an appropriate disposal point (foul water drain). Containers used for waste water must be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Waste food debris including oil/fat must be disposed of responsibly. It is against the law to dispose of the oil down drains or into ditches.

14. WASTE

Waste must not be allowed to accumulate on the floor. Any waste awaiting disposal, must be kept in suitable containers that are emptied regularly and not allowed to overflow. If disposal facilities are not available then the bin must be large enough to hold waste produced during the trading period. Waste must not be stored in any way that it will be an attraction to pests. It is recommended where open food is handled that all bins should have foot operated lids. The internal and external surfaces of non-disposable waste containers must be washable and kept in good repair and condition.

Sole traders who operate from an allocated base must make adequate refuse and collection arrangements at their base premises, such as a waste collection contract.

15. TRANSPORTING AND STORING FOOD

Simple cardboard boxes and paper-lined crates are satisfactory for most agricultural produce but higher-grade materials, such as metal or plastic crates, will be needed for bakery products and meats.

Food should be transported using food grade containers with lids. To maintain the temperature of food during transit insulated boxes containing frozen ice packs may be adequate for a short period of time.

16. FITNESS TO WORK

As a Food Business Operator it is your responsibility to ensure any person known or suspected to be suffering from, or to be a carrier of, food borne disease or infection, including vomiting, diarrhoea, skin infections, sores and open wounds is excluded from working in any food handling areas, until they have been **free of symptoms for 48 hours**, or medical clearance is obtained. You must also ensure your staff are aware of which illnesses should be reported, how to report them and who to report to.

17. LABELLING

If you are pre-packing any products for sale then you may require labelling e.g. cakes, biscuits, and sandwiches. It is recommended that you contact Environmental Health regarding the labelling and dating of foods.

18. NO SMOKING SIGNAGE

You should ensure a 'No Smoking' sign is displayed in a prominent position at the entrance to your unit.

19. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact the Environmental Health Section at Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council by:

Calling us on:

Emailing us at:

Writing to us at:

02892 447386

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The Food Section

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