

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE – FOOD SAFETY**

**ADVICE FOR FOOD BUSINESSES OPERATING WITHIN MARKETS AND FAIRS, FOR MOBILE VEHICLES and FOR STREET TRADERS**

This document is intended to provide advice on how to comply with Food Safety Management, Personal Hygiene, Equipment Washing and Temperature requirements of the:-

Food Hygiene Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 (Applied by regulation 17(1) of the above Regulations)

Regard must also be given to the other relevant parts of these Regulations.

This guidance has been produced taking into consideration the Industry Guide to Food Hygiene Practice: Markets and Fairs Guide and CIEH National Guidance for Outdoor and Mobile Catering.

**Food Business Operators are recommended to keep their copy of the Annex 6 “FOOD PREMISES INSPECTION REPORT” or similar documentation provided by their enforcing authority and to bring it with them to all events. This provides necessary information on when the business/stall was last inspected by an Environmental Health Officer**

For further information contact:

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**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 also an important part of HACCP systems. You are also required to provide some simple written evidence that 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 Safer Food Better Business pack which is tailored towards your type of business. This pack is 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 you business e.g. by wasting less food.

You can download the pack on line by visiting <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/sfbbfullpack.pdf> or alternatively if you would like a hard copy call us on 028 71 253253 and we will arrange to provide you with one

We also accept the Safe Catering Pack developed by the Food Standards Agency as a documented HACCP system. For further information on this visit <http://www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland/safetyhygieneni/safecateringni/>

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

**Temperature Control**

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

A thermometer, or equipment with a temperature display should be available, if holding food hot or, selling any of the following: cold cooked meats or fish cold meat and fish products, cold cooked vegetable dishes, any cold cooked dish containing egg or cheese, prepared salads and dressings, soft cheeses, smoked or cured fish, sandwiches which contain any of the above, low acid desserts and cream products, fresh pasta, smoked or cured meats which are not ambient stable.

The aforementioned high risk foods must be held at or below 8oC at or above 63oC if being hot held and records maintained.

If a gauge on a chilled unit is used this **must** reflect product temperature. Alternatively if using a probe thermometer it must be disinfected after use and calibrated on a regular basis.

Food should be transported using food grade containers with lids, foods requiring refrigeration should be transported in insulated containers.

Exemptions

Please note temperature control requirements are subject to certain exemptions:-

* Chilled Ready to Eat products can be kept on display for sale 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.
* Foods being hot held, for example sauces, burgers etc 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 > 63°C or be disposed off.

**Cooking**

If cooking or reheating foods it is recommended that a probe thermometer is provided to ensure a core temperature of at least 75oC is reached.

If cooking burgers, sausages, chicken etc you must ensure they are fully cooked before they are sold. You 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.

It is advisable that you cook or reheat small amounts of food at a time so they are sold shortly after cooking. Always use separate tongs and equipment to handle only cooked foods.

**What training do food handlers require?**

Regulation EC (No) 852/2004 Annex II Chapter XII Para 1 states that:

Food Business Operators are to ensure:

‘that food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with 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. Adequate supervision must also be arranged. There are a range of options for training as well as a range of training providers. Please contact us for a list of training providers.

Those responsible for developing and maintaining the business’s food safety procedures, based on HACCP principles, must also have received adequate training. 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. The operator of the food business is responsible for ensuring this happens.

**Type Of Food**

Most Mobile Catering Operations handle open, ready to eat high risk foods, including cooked meats or fish or, open mayonnaise products, unwrapped ice cream, unwrapped cut cheese, sandwiches or dairy desserts and cream products. It is very important that the following legal requirements are adhered to.

**Structural Requirements**

All mobile catering vehicles must be large enough for the type of operation to be carried out e.g. sufficient working surfaces for the separate preparation of raw and cooked products so that cross contamination cannot occur, unless those surfaces are cleaned and disinfected between uses. The design of the catering van should avoid the risk of harbouring pests. The following should be taken into consideration when considering structural finishes:

**Floors**

For flooring, slip resistant is important as mobile vans often become wet. Suitable finishes preferably include vinyl sheet or tiles. Well sealed waterproof wooden floor is acceptable if not frequently wet but is not ideal due to wear. Floors must be kept in a good state of repair which allows them to be kept clean and capable of being disinfected.

**Walls**

All wall surfaces must be readily cleansable, clean and free of mould or loose particles which can shed into food. Wall coverings that will satisfy the requirements include waterproof painted or varnished wood, stainless steel sheeting, plastic cladding or vinyl lining. Wall surfaces behind preparation areas should be protected with stainless steel or durable smooth plastic cladding. Walls must be kept in good repair to allow effective cleaning.

**Ceiling**

Ceiling covers must be waterproof sealed wood or metal or vinyl lining. The ceiling must be constructed and designed to permit periodic cleaning, reduce condensation and mould growth and prevent the shedding of particles (i.e. flaking paint, plaster or fibres).

**Lighting and Ventilation**

An adequate supply of natural or artificial lighting must be available to all parts of the vehicle and must be good enough to facilitate safe food handling, cleaning and inspection. Where open food is handled, lights should be enclosed to prevent contamination of food in the event of damage to the fitting, and to facilitate cleaning.

Fluorescent light fittings should either be provided with diffusers or be fitted with protected tubes. Light fittings should be flush mounted where possible and not suspended on hanging chains as these are dirt traps. Where practicable, wiring should be chased into the walls or ceiling. The use of surface mounted conduits and surface mounted switch boxes should be avoided.

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.

Spare sets of either washable or disposable filters should be kept for cleaning and replacement purposes.

**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 wash hand basin must be provided with hot and cold running water. A supply of soap or detergent and hand drying facilities must be provided for use with any wash hand basin or bowl. Ideally the wash hand basin should be a purpose built unit connected to a water supply and drainage facilities. Suitable materials for a wash hand basin include stainless steel, food grade plastic or ceramic.

The use of communal facilities, where available, is acceptable for businesses selling only low risk foods only (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) provided that staff have convenient access to these facilities at all times (i.e. to clean their hands after nose blowing, handling rubbish, cleaning operations or performing other operations which may contaminate the hands) and are able to leave the vehicle.

Where only low risk open foods are for sale and utensils are used for handling the food; or where the food is fully wrapped antiseptic wipes and/or disposable gloves may be acceptable alternatives. EHO’s will judge each case individually.

Larger stalls with several preparation areas and busy serveries will require multiple hand basins. In wet weather cash and coins can become heavily contaminated with mud and serving staff will require access to hand washing facilities.

Thermos flasks of hot water are NOT acceptable as they do not hold enough water and the water supply for hand washing must be separate from that used for making beverages for sale.

Hot water may be supplied from an urn that has a constant supply of hot water but NOT from a kettle where hot water is not necessarily immediately available.

Food Business Operators will not be allowed to operate unless s/he can demonstrate that wash hand facilities are READILY and SAFELY available.

**Sinks**

Adequate facilities must be provided for the cleaning and disinfecting of work tools and 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. The sinks must be of sufficient size to accommodate the food and equipment in use.

These facilities must be constructed of materials resistant to corrosion and must be easy to clean and have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. A hot water supply is not essential if a sink is to be used exclusively for the preparation of a single food type (e.g. washing salads only).

The number of sinks that should be provided will depend on the individual operation. The EHO will take into account a number of things:

1. How much food preparation is undertaken (e.g. salads, vegetables).
2. The amount of equipment in use and how often it needs to be cleaned.
3. Whether the type of food produced can allow one sink to be used for different functions at separate times.

In most retail or catering 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 were 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.

Sinks must drain hygienically to a waste water container such as a sink waste pipe into a waste water carrier. Large open buckets, dustbins, plastic crates and similar which can be difficult to carry some distance to wastewater points will not be accepted. Drainage facilities must be provided and protected from contamination.

**Equipment Requirements**

All food preparation, food/equipment storage and washing up areas must be enclosed and fully protected from the weather. The structure must be fully covered to the top and the sides including any food storage areas. This is to ensure that food and catering equipment is protected from contamination and pests. Surfaces must be easily kept clean and an assessment will be made on the risk of contamination.

Adequate space must be available for cooking areas. Ideally food storage should be separate from cooking and preparation areas but this may be difficult due to restricted space.

Food contact surfaces that will satisfy the requirements are stainless steel, durable plastic, or waterproof painted wood, or ceramic. Wooden blocks or unsealed wooden surfaces must not be used for ready to eat foods. Wooden chopping blocks are acceptable for raw meat provided they are in good condition and free from cracks and splits.

The vehicle must be maintained in a good state of repair to enable effective cleaning to be carried out and avoid contamination of food e.g. surfaces must be kept free from cracks, splits, chips or flaking decoration. Regular inspection by the Food Business Operator is essential to identify structural defects or broken equipment and to arrange for remedial action. If you use your catering van on an occasional basis you must check it prior to use after periods of non use and storage.

Food should also be protected from contamination by covering, wrapping or storing in pest proofed containers.

**Storage, display, service and transport of food**

To avoid possible contamination, food must not be placed directly onto the floor. You must ensure that high risk and low risk foods are well separated i.e. keep raw foods separate and below cooked ready to eat foods.

High risk foods must be protected from the public touching, coughing or sneezing in the display area. This will be achieved by sneeze guards or other coverings.

Staff must wear clean protective over clothing whilst handling unwrapped food.

**Deliveries**

Routine checks must be made periodically on deliveries of food. Effective temperature control is one of the most important safeguards in protecting food safety. High risk food must be transported, stored and displayed at a temperature of 8°C or below and frozen food at or below -18°C.

You must check ‘use by’ dates of foods that have them. You must not accept foods past their ‘use by’ date. Perishable foods should be accepted onto the stall with enough ‘shelf life’ to enable you to sell them. It is not good practice to use/sell food past its ‘best before’ date.

**Storage**

If you store food on your stall or vehicle or have a warehouse, you must ensure that the food cannot become contaminated and is stored in conditions to prevent harmful deterioration. Storage areas must be kept clean and tidy and kept free from pests.

Raw food must be stored with adequate separation from ready to eat foods to prevent cross contamination. It is good practice to keep foods covered and label containers with a date by which the food should be used.

To prevent food becoming contaminated by external sources you can employ the following:

* Physical separation of raw and ready to eat foods
* 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
* Not allowing animals on the food vehicle
* Storage food off the ground in covered containers
* Good staff personal hygiene

**Cross Contamination**

Key points to remember to avoid cross contamination:

* Ensure food is kept covered and cooked/ready to eat foods are stored separately and above any raw foods. Ideally separate refrigerators should be used.
* 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.
* Ensure you use different equipment for the preparation or handling of raw and cooked food.
* Clean sinks after washing/preparing vegetables and raw food.
* Disinfect all cloths regularly and replace as soon as they become worn/damaged. The use of disposable cloths and paper towels is recommended.

**Pest Control**

You must not allow food to be contaminated by pests including insects, rats, mice and birds. You must have a procedure to control any pests that could gain access. This procedure can be either

1. A contract with a pest control operator to regularly survey the vehicle and carry out necessary treatment and proofing work, or
2. You carrying out regular checks of food and the vehicle for the presence of pests and taking the necessary steps to deal with any problems.

Where it is impracticable to screen openings in enclosed premises, against flying insects, it may be appropriate to use an electric flying insect killer. This must not be sited over open food and should be emptied and maintained according to the manufacturer’s instructions. These devices should not be used as an alternative to screening against flying insects.

**Transport**

Vehicles and containers used for transporting food must be kept clean, made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected, or disposable materials, that will not contaminate food and must also be kept in good repair.

Food transported to events etc must be wrapped, covered or placed in suitable containers to prevent contamination. If both raw and cooked foods are transported at the same time, the items must be wrapped or kept in separate containers and placed so that no cross contamination can occur. Food grade plastic/stainless steel receptacles are recommended for storage of food.

To maintain the temperature of food during transit insulated boxes containing frozen ice packs may be adequate for a short period of time.

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Water Supply**

Food Business Operators must ensure that they have an adequate supply of ‘potable’ water (i.e. water that is safe to drink). Only drinkable water is to be used on the vehicle. 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. The Food Business Operator must ensure this water is potable.

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
* of sufficient capacity to store enough water for the businesses potable water needs

Potable water must be used whenever necessary to ensure foodstuffs are not contaminated and must be used for cleaning food, food contact surfaces, hands, for including in food and drinks, cooking food and any other operations where there is a risk of contaminating foodstuffs.

On no account has water for any ‘food’ use to be taken from within toilets or external taps.

**Waste**

Refuse and waste must not be allowed to accumulate on the floor. Any waste awaiting disposal later, must be kept in suitable containers that are emptied regularly and not allowed to overflow. If disposal facilities are not available on site 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.

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. Fats, oils and grease must be disposed of appropriately and not put into waste water containers or the drainage system.

The internal and external surfaces of non-disposable waste containers must be washable and kept in good repair and condition.

**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.

The standard and type of protective clothing will depend on the type of food handled and the duties carried out. Staff handling open food must wear suitable, clean protective clothing e.g. a white coat and head covering containing the hair. It is also recommended that staff with long hair wear a hair net. For low risk wrapped foods, suitable clean clothing is appropriate.

It is advisable to keep a first aid kit with a supply of blue waterproof dressings (plasters).

**Fitness to Work**

As a Food Business Operator it is your responsibility to ensure any person know 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 you staff are aware of which illnesses should be reported, how to report them and who to report to.

**Cleaning**

The vehicle must be maintained in a good state of repair to enable effective cleaning to be carried out and avoid contamination of food. Adequate supplies of approved disinfectants or sanitising agents should be used for the regular disinfection of equipment and work surfaces.

Were high risk foods are handled a greater frequency and depth of cleaning will be required. It is recommended that you draw up a cleaning schedule which will help ensure all aspects of your operation are covered.

It isalso essential to use the correct cleaning materials and follow the manufacturers’ instructions. The following is a short guide. You can get more detailed advice on cleaning chemicals from your supplier.

* **Detergents** or **Degreasers** are required to clean items or areas which are greasy or oily. These materials do not kill bacteria.
* **Disinfectants** should be used on surfaces which come into contact with food or hands, and must be of a ‘food safe’ type. They kill bacteria but do not have cleaning properties. It is important to clean items or areas with detergent before using disinfectants.
* **Sanitisers** are chemicals which have detergent and disinfectant properties. When used in food preparation areas they must be of a ‘food safe’ variety.

For further advice on any of the issues raised above, contact the Food Team on (028) 71 253 253.