

Food Standards Agency Publications

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Food safety regulations



This booklet provides a general guide to two sets of Regulations that are very important to food hygiene:

- Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995
- Food Safety (Temperature Control) Regulations 1995

These are Regulations made under The Food Safety Act 1990. Similar laws apply in Northern Ireland.

Who the rules apply to

These two sets of Regulations apply to all types of food, and food business, but they do not cover primary production or food prepared in the home for domestic purposes. The Regulations also cover some non-commercial activities, such as charity fundraising events.

Some businesses – generally manufacturers of products of animal origin, such as dairies or wholesale fish markets – must follow product-specific regulations. Consult your local environmental health officer for more information. The proprietor of every food business is responsible for ensuring that their business complies with the relevant legislation.

1. Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995

These Regulations set out basic hygiene requirements for all aspects of your business, from your premises and facilities to the personal hygiene of your staff. The following sections contain a brief summary of the main requirements of the Regulations.

Food premises

Premises of food businesses should be kept clean, and in good repair and condition. The following table sets out more specific requirements for premises.

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Layout, design, construction and size	Make sure the premises permit good hygiene practice and easy cleaning, and protect food against external sources of contamination, such as pests.	Schedule I, Chapter I.2
Handwashing facilities and toilets	Make sure there is an adequate number of washbasins available, designated for cleaning hands. There must also be an adequate number of toilets and these must not lead directly into food areas.	Schedule I, Chapter I.3
Washbasins	Make sure that basins have hot and cold (or appropriately mixed) running water. You must provide materials for cleaning and hygienically drying hands. Where necessary, facilities for washing food must be separate from handwashing facilities.	Schedule I, Chapter I.4

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Ventilation	Make sure there is suitable and sufficient ventilation; natural or mechanical. Ventilation systems must be accessible for cleaning and/or replacement of parts.	Schedule I, Chapter I.5
Ventilation of toilets	All toilets inside food premises must have adequate ventilation, either natural or mechanical.	Schedule I, Chapter I.6
Lighting	Make sure the premises have adequate natural and/or artificial lighting.	Schedule I, Chapter I.7
Drainage	Make sure there are adequate drainage facilities.	Schedule I, Chapter I.8
Changing facilities	Where necessary, you must provide adequate changing facilities for staff.	Schedule I, Chapter I.9

Food rooms

There are specific requirements in rooms where foodstuffs are prepared, treated or processed, excluding dining areas.

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Floors, walls and surfaces	Make sure floors, walls and surfaces in contact with food are in a sound condition. They must be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect.	Schedule I, Chapter II.1 (a), (b) and (f)

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Ceilings	The design and construction of ceilings should prevent accumulation of dirt, condensation, growth of moulds and shedding of particles.	Schedule I, Chapter II.1 (c)
Windows	Windows must be constructed to prevent the accumulation of dirt. Where necessary, windows that can be opened to the outside must be fitted with insect-proof screens.	Schedule I, Chapter II.1 (d)
Doors	Doors must be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect.	Schedule I, Chapter II.1 (e)
Cleaning and disinfecting of tools, utensils and equipment	You must provide adequate facilities for cleaning and disinfecting tools, utensils and equipment, where necessary. There must be an adequate supply of hot and cold water.	Schedule I, Chapter II.2
Washing food	Where appropriate you must provide adequate facilities for washing food, including a supply of hot and/or cold potable (drinking) water as required.	Schedule I, Chapter II.3

Movable/temporary premises

There are different requirements for:

- movable and/or temporary premises
- vending machines
- premises used primarily as a 'private dwelling house'
- premises used occasionally for catering purposes

Movable and/or temporary premises include marquees, market stalls and mobile sales vehicles.

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Premises and vending machines	Make sure that these are sited, designed, constructed, kept clean and maintained in good repair, so as to avoid the risk of contaminating food and harbouring pests.	Schedule I, Chapter III.1
Personal hygiene facilities	There must be appropriate facilities to maintain adequate personal hygiene, where necessary.	Schedule I, Chapter III.2 (a)
Surfaces	Where necessary, make sure that surfaces in contact with food are easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect.	Schedule I, Chapter III.2 (b)

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Cleaning of utensils and equipment	Where necessary, you must make adequate provision for the cleaning and, where necessary, disinfecting of utensils and equipment.	Schedule I, Chapter III.2 (c)
Cleaning of foodstuffs	You must make adequate provision for the cleaning of foodstuffs, where necessary.	Schedule I, Chapter III.2 (d)
Hot and cold water supply	Make available an adequate supply of hot and/or cold potable (drinking) water, where necessary.	Schedule I, Chapter III.2 (e)
Waste storage and disposal	Make adequate arrangements for storage and disposal of waste, where necessary.	Schedule I, Chapter III.2 (f)
Temperature control	You must have adequate facilities for maintaining and monitoring suitable temperature conditions.	Schedule I, Chapter III.2 (g)
Avoiding contamination	Place foods where the risk of contamination will be avoided, as far as is practical.	Schedule I, Chapter III.2 (h)

Transport

Food must always be transported in a way that minimises the risk of contamination. See the following table.

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Containers and vehicles used for the transport of food	Any container or vehicle used for transporting foodstuffs must be kept clean and maintained in good repair to protect food from contamination. Where necessary, the container or vehicle must be designed and constructed to permit adequate cleaning and/or disinfection.	Schedule I, Chapter IV.1
Dedicated containers and vehicles used for bulk transport of food in liquid, granulate or powder form	<p>Receptacles in vehicles and/or containers must not be used for transporting anything other than foodstuffs, where this may result in contamination of foodstuffs.</p> <p>Bulk foodstuffs in liquid, granulate or powder form must be transported in receptacles and/or containers/tankers reserved for the transport of foodstuffs, if otherwise there is a risk of contamination.</p> <p>Containers reserved for foodstuffs must be marked clearly to show they are used only for foodstuffs.</p>	Schedule I, Chapter IV.2

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Containers or vehicles used for different foodstuffs or for both food and non-food products at the same time	You must separate products effectively, where necessary, to protect against the risk of contamination.	Schedule I, Chapter IV.3
Containers or vehicles used for non-food products or for different foodstuffs	You must clean the containers/ vehicles effectively between loads to avoid the risk of contamination.	Schedule I, Chapter IV.4
Minimising the risk of contamination	Foodstuffs in conveyances or containers must be placed and protected in a way that minimises the risk of contamination.	Schedule I, Chapter IV.5
Maintaining and monitoring temperatures	Where necessary, vehicles and/or containers used for transporting foodstuffs must be capable of keeping foodstuffs at appropriate temperatures. Where necessary, the vehicle and/or container must be designed to allow those temperatures to be monitored.	Schedule I, Chapter IV.6

Equipment

All articles, fittings and equipment that come into contact with food must be kept clean.

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Minimising contamination	Make sure that all articles, fittings and equipment that come into contact with food are constructed, made of such materials and kept in good repair, so as to minimise the risk of any contamination of the food.	Schedule I, Chapter V.1 (a)
Cleaning and disinfecting	All articles, fittings and equipment that come into contact with food must be constructed, made of such materials and kept in good repair, so as to enable them to be kept thoroughly cleaned and, where necessary, disinfected.	Schedule I, Chapter V.1 (b)
Installation	All articles, fittings and equipment that come into contact with food must be installed in a way that allows adequate cleaning of the surrounding area.	Schedule I, Chapter V.1 (c)

Waste

The storage and disposal of waste can present a risk of contaminating food, so you must make sure you follow the requirements of the Regulations.

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Food and other waste	Do not allow food and other waste to gather in food rooms, unless this is unavoidable for the proper functioning of your food business.	Schedule I, Chapter VI.1
Containers for waste	Make sure that containers can be closed, unless the environmental health services are satisfied that this is not appropriate.	Schedule I, Chapter VI.2
Arrangements for the storage and removal of waste	You must make adequate provision for the removal and storage of waste. Refuse stores must be designed and managed so as to enable them to be kept clean and to prevent pests gaining access.	Schedule I, Chapter VI.3

Water supply

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Water supply	There must be an adequate supply of potable (drinking) water. Use potable water in food preparation so that the food is not contaminated.	Schedule I, Chapter VII.1
Ice	Ice must be made from potable water. It must be made, stored and handled appropriately to protect it from all contamination.	Schedule I, Chapter VII.2
Steam	Steam used directly in contact with food must not contain substances hazardous to health or likely to contaminate the product.	Schedule I, Chapter VII.3
Water unfit for drinking	Water unfit for drinking must be conducted separately from potable water.	Schedule I, Chapter VII.4

Staff

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Personal hygiene	Everyone working in a food handling area must maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness. They must wear suitable, clean and, where appropriate, protective clothing.	Schedule I, Chapter VIII.1
Infected food handlers	Anyone known or suspected to be suffering from, or to be a carrier of, a disease likely to be transmitted through food, must not be permitted to work in a food handling area.	Schedule I, Chapter VIII.2

Foodstuffs

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Accepting raw materials	Do not accept any raw materials or ingredients if you know or suspect that they are contaminated and would still be unfit after normal sorting or processing.	Schedule I, Chapter IX.1
Storing raw materials	Raw materials and ingredients must be stored in appropriate conditions designed to prevent harmful deterioration and protect them from contamination.	Schedule I, Chapter IX.2
Protecting against contamination	All food that is handled, stored, packaged, displayed or transported must be protected against any contamination likely to make it unfit for human consumption, dangerous to health, or contaminated in such a way that it would be unreasonable to expect it to be consumed in that state.	Schedule I, Chapter IX.3
Hazardous and/or inedible substances	Hazardous and/or inedible substances, including animal feedstuffs, must be adequately labelled and stored in separate and secure containers.	Schedule I, Chapter IX.4

Training

Subject	What you must do	Part of the Regulations
Supervision, instruction and training	The proprietor must ensure that all food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters to a level appropriate to their job.	Schedule I, Chapter X.1

2. Food Safety (Temperature Control) Regulations 1995

These Regulations require certain foods to be held at temperatures that will prevent the growth of harmful bacteria or the formation of toxins. It is an offence to allow food to be kept at temperatures that would cause a risk to health, so you must make sure that any foods that need temperature control are kept at the right temperature.

Foods that need temperature control must be kept either:

Hot at or above 63°C

Cold at or below 8°C

These are the main categories of foods that need temperature control.

Dairy products

Dairy products must be kept chilled unless the packaging says they are 'stable' at room temperature (in other words, they do not need to be chilled to stop them going off). Products requiring chilling include many types of milk, yoghurt, cream, foods with a cream filling, dairy-based desserts and certain cheeses.

Cooked products

Many cooked products must be kept chilled until ready to be eaten cold or heated. These include most foods containing eggs, meat, fish, dairy products, cereals, rice, pulses or vegetables. Sandwiches containing any of these ingredients also need to be chilled.

Smoked/cured ready-to-eat meat or fish

Most smoked or cured products must be kept chilled until ready to be eaten cold or heated. These include sliced cured meats like ham, unless the curing method means the product is not perishable at room temperature.

Prepared ready-to-eat foods

Prepared ready-to-eat foods must be kept chilled. These include prepared vegetables (chopped and washed), bags of salad leaves, vegetable salads such as coleslaw, and products containing mayonnaise.

Uncooked or partly cooked pastry and dough products

These include pizzas and fresh pasta containing meat, fish or vegetables. Products must be kept chilled until they are heated.

Generally foods that need temperature control will be marked with a 'Use by' date and will be labelled 'keep refrigerated'.

Some of the products listed above might be preserved or prepared in a way that changes the need for temperature control. The packaging will indicate this.

Foods that do not need to be chilled

These are the main categories of foods that the Regulations do not require to be chilled.

Foods that can be kept at room temperature throughout their shelf life, without causing any health risk. These include some cured/smoked products and certain bakery products. Some of these products can have a long shelf life, for example naan breads and some desserts.

Food that goes through a preservation process

This includes most canned/dried foods, jams, pickles and sauces, which are not perishable at room temperature until the container is opened or the food is rehydrated.

Food that must be ripened or matured at room temperature

This includes soft or mould-ripened cheeses. But once they are fully ripened or matured, these foods must be chilled while they are stored and/or displayed.

Raw food intended for further processing (including cooking) that will ensure the food is fit for human consumption

This includes fresh meat, fish and shellfish, except where it is intended to be eaten raw, for example sushi.

Mail-order food

Food delivered by mail order does not need to be chilled. However, it must not be transported at temperatures that could cause a health risk. Therefore, foods that need chilling should not be sold by mail order, unless they are delivered in a vehicle with an appropriate chilled compartment.

Circumstances where food may be kept outside required temperatures

There are certain circumstances (listed below) where it may not be practical to keep foods at the required temperatures. So the Regulations allow you to keep food out of temperature control for limited periods of time.

Service or display

Food displayed in restaurants or cafés, put out on buffets, or served or displayed in shops, can be kept out of temperature control for a limited time.

However, you must take care not to exceed the maximum display times, because otherwise you could cause a risk to health.

Foods that normally need to be kept chilled **can be kept unchilled for up to four hours**, to allow them to be served or displayed. Foods can only be kept unchilled for **one period of service or display**. After this, any food that is left must be thrown away or chilled until final use.

Food that will be served hot **can be kept below 63°C for two hours**, for serving or display. After this time, the food must be thrown away or cooled as quickly as possible and then chilled until final use. It must not be kept out of temperature control for more than two hours and **must not be reheated more than once**.

Regulations in Scotland

In Scotland, the Regulations apply slightly differently. A maximum temperature for chilling foods is not specified, but businesses are still required to chill foods if they need to be chilled to keep them safe. Maximum times for keeping foods out of temperature control for service or display are not specified. And when reheated, foods must reach a minimum temperature of 82°C (180°F).

Handling and unloading

Food can be kept unchilled for a limited time when:

- food is being loaded or unloaded from a refrigerated vehicle to be delivered to/from food premises
- there are unavoidable circumstances, for example when food has to be handled during and after processing, or if equipment is defrosted or temporarily breaks down

3. Further information

Environmental health officers

For advice on food safety legislation and how it applies to your business, consult your local environmental health officers. You can get contact details for your local environmental health department by contacting your local authority (or district council in Northern Ireland). The Food Standards Agency website contains a database of environmental health departments in England, Wales and Scotland.

Industry Guides

Industry Guides give advice to food businesses on how to comply with food safety regulations. They are officially recognised by Government. The range includes the following titles:

The Catering Guide

The Retail Guide

The Market and Fairs Guide

The Wholesale Guide

The Baking Guide

The Fresh Produce Guide

The Butchers' Guide

The Vending Guide

The Flour Milling Guide

The guides are published by the Chadwick House Group Ltd. You can order them online at www.shop.cieh.net or by calling 020 7827 5830 or 020 7827 9928.

Food Standards Agency publications

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Guide to food hygiene

Food handlers: fitness to work

Food law inspections and your business

Starting up – Your first steps to running a catering business

Food Standards Agency website

Visit the Agency's site for caterers at www.food.gov.uk/cleanup. The main website www.food.gov.uk also contains lots of useful information about food.

The information in this booklet is intended as guidance and is not a complete statement of the law. The proprietors of individual food businesses are responsible for checking how the legislation mentioned in the booklet and all other relevant legislation applies to them in practice

The **Food Standards Agency** is a UK-wide, independent Government agency, providing advice and information to the public and Government on food safety, nutrition and diet.

The Agency was created to protect the interests of consumers and its guiding principles are to:

- put the customer first
- be open and accessible
- be an independent voice

The Agency's advice is based on the best scientific evidence available from independent expert advisory committees and all its advice is made public.

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