



Food hygiene training

Food handlers must be supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters.

Level of training required

Food businesses must decide what training or supervision each of their food handlers' need. The training needed must relate to the food operation and the job of the individual.

If the food operation is low risk only (e.g. a fruit and vegetable stall), some instruction plus close supervision of staff may be enough to ensure food safety.

Any operation employing staff handling unwrapped foods that must be kept under temperature control, e.g. on a delicatessen counter should be trained to the equivalent to the Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering.

If food handlers are not trained to the appropriate level, they must be supervised and instructed by someone else who is. It is good practice for senior supervisors and managers to have a higher level of training than the staff they supervise, e.g. intermediate and advanced training.

Further guidance can be found in the "Industry Guides to Good Hygiene Practice". These are available for different types of food operation including Catering, Retailing, Baking, Wholesale Distribution and Markets and Fairs.

New employees

All food handlers should be instructed in the essentials of food hygiene training before they start work for the first time. This should cover the basics including personal hygiene, temperature control and the prevention of cross contamination.

Staff handling "low risk" foods (e.g. vegetables or wrapped food only) should receive hygiene awareness instruction within 4 weeks. This should allow staff to develop knowledge of the basic principles of food hygiene e.g. personal hygiene, stock rotation and cleaning.

Staff preparing open "high risk" foods (e.g. cooked meat) should be trained to the same level as a Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering course within 3 months.

Checks should be made on new staff claiming to have undertaken food hygiene training in the past. Their specific training may not be relevant to your operation or it may have been forgotten.

Records of food hygiene training

The law does not require that food handlers have a certificate of food hygiene training. However, written evidence of food hygiene training can show that food handlers are trained and able to recognise food safety hazards and how to control them to prevent things going wrong. Written records can also show that there is compliance with the law and may form part of your 'Food Safety Management System'.

It is good practice for businesses to have training plans to help identify training needs of staff, including the need for refresher training.

Who offers food hygiene training courses?

There are a number of organisations that offer courses, e.g. consultants, colleges and local councils.

Most courses are general in nature and at different levels. These are Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering, intermediate and advanced courses.

The main awarding bodies are listed below. The organisations listed will be able to tell you what courses are available, where they are offered in your area and how relevant they are to your food business.

Certificate awarding bodies

- The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Tel. 0207 928 6006 (This is the organisation used by Dacorum Borough Council for training courses)
- The Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene, Tel. 0171 5802731
- The Royal Society for the Promotion of Health, Tel. 0171 6300121

These notes are produced to help you. They are not a definitive guide on the precise meaning of the regulations.

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