



Food safety management procedures

Introduction

1. From 1 January 2006 a number of new food hygiene regulations apply in the UK. The most important regulations for your business are:

- Regulation (EC) No 852/2004
- The Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013

Almost all of the requirements in the new laws are the same as the ones they replace. The **main new requirement** is that you must be able to **show what you do to make or sell food that is safe to eat and have this written down**.

2. The law requires you to have in place procedures to manage food safety 'hazards'. This is similar to previous legal requirements, but you must now write your procedures down, keep them up to date and regularly review them.
3. These procedures can be in proportion to the size of your business and the type of work you do.

What does this mean in practice?

4. Your 'food safety management system' will be based on putting in place procedures to control the things that could go wrong. You will need to write down these procedures (think of it as an instruction manual for new staff). Begin by looking at your business and identifying what can go wrong, when and where. Things that could go wrong are known as 'hazards'.

Hazards

5. When considering the things that could go wrong, you need to think about all the things that could mean that the food is not safe to eat.

A hazard is something that could be dangerous and could be:

- Microbiological: Involving harmful bacteria, e.g. if certain foods are kept out of the fridge for too long, bacteria grow in them
- Chemical: Involving chemical getting into food, e.g. cleaning chemicals
- Physical: Involving objects getting into food, e.g. broken glass or pieces of packaging

Hazards can occur at any stage in your business from taking deliveries to serving customers. Write down all the things that could go wrong at each stage.

Controls

6. Deal with any hazards by putting in place controls that will prevent things from going wrong. For example, it might be hazardous to serve a dish that had not been cooked properly, so a control might be to cut into the centre of the dish to ensure it is steaming and piping hot throughout. You might even prefer to take the actual temperature of the dish using a thermometer. (It should be above 75⁰C.)
7. For all of the hazards you identify, decide on a control and write this down. You will also need to decide what action will need to be taken if something does go wrong. For example, if your control shows that a dish has not been cooked properly, what action will be taken?

Training

8. All food handlers must be supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters to the level appropriate to their job. Each business must decide what training and/or instruction and supervision their food handlers and management need. Your staff must be aware of **your** management systems – the hazards, controls and what to do if something goes wrong.

Monitoring and review

9. Keep any necessary records that would show your procedures are working and what action is taken if things do go wrong. This might include things like temperature records, cleaning schedules, a diary etc.
10. Keep your procedures up to date. If you change the way you do things, you may need to change your controls. Review your system regularly to make sure it is still relevant.

How do I put in place my procedures?

11. You may already have suitable procedures in place and if these comply with the requirement, can continue to use them. If you do not have procedures in place, you can either develop your own using the steps above or alternatively, you can use a pack that has been produced by the Food Standards Agency. This pack is suitable for small caterers and is called 'Safer Food Better Business'. A pack suitable for retailers will also be available soon.

For more information on 'Safer Food Better Business' contact a Food Safety Officer at Environmental Health (details below) or see the Food Standards website www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/hygiene/sfbb

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