

## **A GUIDE TO HYGIENE AND SAFETY STANDARDS FOR MOBILE FOOD BUSINESSES**

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.

### **FOOD PREMISES REGISTRATION**

Before you start to operate your food business you must register with the Local Authority where the van, trailer or stall is ordinarily kept or returns to between trading, sometimes called the 'Registering Authority'. The application should be made 28 days before you intend to start trading. Registration is free

Where a mobile caterer trades outside their Registering Authority area, the Environmental Health Service in the Council area you are trading may consult the Registering Authority.

### **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.

Food Hygiene Ratings are issued by the Council in which your business is registered.

Due to the nature of your business you will be subject to regular food hygiene and or food standards inspections by other Environmental Health Departments when trading in their area. Should any breaches of food hygiene legislation be

noted when trading; other councils will notify the registering Council of such findings. This will result in a review of your current Food Hygiene Rating. You should be aware that your FHRS may be reduced should evidence show a drop in the standards of your food business.

## **ALLERGEN CONTROL**

The EU law has listed 14 allergens that need to be identified if they are used as ingredients in a dish. As a food business serving loose foods, you will have to supply information for every item on your menu that contains any of the 14 allergens if requested. Allergen information should be easily accessible, in a conspicuous place, easily visible and clearly legible. This can be in a number of ways:

- Menu
- Chalkboard
- Signposting to where information may be obtained (**an allergen sign has been enclosed**)
- Information leaflet

## **FOOD HYGIENE MATTERS**

### **The Food Hygiene (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2006 Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004**

#### **1. 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](http://www.food.gov.uk).

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

## **2. 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 of 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.

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.

## **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 of. 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.

### **3. 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.

### **4. 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.

### **5. 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.

## **6. 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.

## **7. 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 and disinfect 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

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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.

## **11. 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.

## **12. 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.

## **13. 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.



## **14. 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.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS**

### **Making Sure That Problems Do Not Occur**

One of the first steps towards having a safer mobile catering unit is to look at your operation and try to list as many possible causes of accidents as you can. You should involve your staff when you do this as it is important to get their views on the dangers. You need to look at how serious any accidents would be and how likely they are to happen. Then starting with the accident which is the most likely to happen or would be the most serious, sort out what you would do to reduce the chances of it occurring e.g. giving training and proper instructions, using safe working methods, carrying out routine maintenance.

Here are two examples;

- 1) Slips and trips. These can be prevented by cleaning up spills immediately, wearing suitable footwear, and having a floor covering which is non-slip and in good repair. Also check appliances such as boilers for leaks, and as far as is possible avoid moving full containers which could spill.
  
- 2) Scalds and Burns. Surfaces of equipment such as boilers, generators and deep fat fryers may cause burns. You also need to consider whether members of the public can come into contact with hot surfaces. Staff need to be adequately trained. The movement of boiling water should be avoided as much as possible, or carried out with great care. Fat should always be cooled before emptying fryers.

### **1. MANUAL HANDLING**

Activities such as unhitching a trailer from a van, manually handling a trailer, and carrying equipment and heavy water containers could easily cause back problems if done incorrectly. You and your staff need to know how to carry out these types of activities safely. Leaflets are available from your local Environmental Health Department to help you.

### **2. USE OF CHEMICALS**

The law requires you to make sure that chemicals used in your business e.g. bleach, oven cleaner etc. are used and stored safely. The manufacturers instructions must always be followed carefully e.g. gloves may need to be worn.

### **3. EQUIPMENT**

The law requires equipment used at work to be properly designed, constructed, maintained and used in a proper manner. Some equipment e.g. generators, needs fixed guarding to dangerous parts such as moving belts and nipping hazards. Equipment should be regularly checked and maintained. Proper instructions and training must also be given.

### **4. FIRST AID**

A suitably stocked first aid kit must be provided. The contents are specified in guidance leaflet First Aid At Work (ISBN 011 883958 6). Remember aspirin, paracetamol, TCP, antiseptic creams etc. are not allowed in the first aid kit.

### **5. FIRE SAFETY**

You need to have a dry powder extinguisher (1.36kg min. size). If you have deep fat fryers you also need a fire blanket. Both should be easy to reach and next to the door.

You should always ensure that you can easily leave the vehicle in the event of an emergency. Clear instructions on what to do in the event of fire or gas leakage should be displayed inside the vehicle.

For example:

- If there is a gas leak - turn off all equipment. Turn off the gas supply from the cylinder. If a cylinder is leaking, carefully move it from the vehicle into the open air.
- If there is a fire - Evacuate the area immediately. If possible turn off the gas supply by closing the valve. Fire fighting should only be carried out by the fire brigade or persons who have been properly trained.

### **6. THE SAFE USE, STORAGE AND HANDLING OF LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS**

LPG is a pressurised liquid and the main danger is of the risk of fire and explosion especially if leakage occurs in confined spaces, such as a vehicle. LPG is heavier than air and collects at low level. Leaks are normally detected by the smell. The other main danger is from the production of carbon monoxide which occurs due to incomplete combustion of the gas in cases where there is insufficient ventilation.

## **7. CYLINDERS AND COMPARTMENTS**

Cylinders should be secured with the valves uppermost in a well ventilated compartment, preferably outside, gas tight to the inside of the vehicle. The compartment should have 30 mins fire resistance. Only the gas bottle, regulator and pipe should be in the compartment. Access to the compartment must only be from outside the vehicle.

Adequate high and low ventilation needs to be provided. There should be no sources of ignition or any openings into the vehicle at or below valve, or within 1 metre of the cylinder. Cylinders and compartments need to be protected from damage and vandalism.

## **8. CABIN**

Pipework should be kept short and contact with high temperatures avoided. Pipework should be supported every 1m, or 0.5m if it is flexible. The pipework needs to be protected against abrasion where it passes through walls using rubber grommets. Lengths of flexible rubber hose need to be kept to a minimum and should comply with BS (British Standard) 3212.

## **9. APPLIANCES**

Appliances need to be secure and fitted with flame failure devices. Do not light appliances whilst in motion. All LPG pipes should terminate with a shut off valve or tap immediately before the appliance and the on and off positions clearly labelled.

A master on/off gas valve must be positioned inside the vehicle, clearly labelled to terminate all gas appliances in the vehicle. This is in addition to the shut off gas valve/ tap sited just before the appliance.

## **10. VENTILATION**

All vehicles should have adequate ventilation equally divided between high and low levels. The more gas appliances used the more ventilation you will need.

## **11. FLUES**

Flue outlets should be made of non- combustible material and be at high level away from any openings in the vehicle.

## **12. MAINTENANCE**

Daily checks of containers, pipe-work, vents. Etc... should be carried out and a complete check of the whole system carried out annually by a competent gas

engineer. It is advisable to renew flexible rubber hose every five years. However if it becomes damaged or worn it should be renewed immediately. Leakages can be checked with soapy water. NEVER USE A NAKED FLAME TO CHECK FOR LEAKS.

Please note CORGI registration has been replaced by **The Gas Safe Registration Scheme** (operated by Capita). This scheme is the **only** gas engineer scheme approved by the HSE under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. All gas engineers wanting to undertake domestic and certain other gas work will need, under those regulations, to be registered with this scheme in order to be able lawfully to carry out any work on gas fittings, which includes gas appliances.

### **13. TRAINING**

You and your staff need to be aware of the dangers of LPG, should know emergency procedures, and safe methods of changing cylinders.

### **NO SMOKING SIGNAGE**

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

### **SUMMARY**

It is important for you to comply with all aspects of food safety and health and safety legislation. Generally the law gives a common sense approach which is aimed at preventing problems occurring such as food poisoning, or injury to yourself, your employees, or anybody else who may be affected by your actions. It is no excuse to say that you were unaware of the legislation. It is up to you to ensure you are complying. So don't wait for the inspector to call!

**Final Note:** This leaflet does not aim to state exact legal requirements, and compliance with this guidance may not secure full compliance with the law. For further information on the exact requirements of the legislation you should contact your local Environmental Health Department.

## **Further Information**

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

Calling us on:

**028 92 509250**

Emailing us at:

**[ehealth@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:ehealth@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)**

Writing to us at:

**The Food Section**

**Environmental Health Service Unit**

**Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council**

**Lagan Valley Island**

**Lisburn**

**BT27 4RL**

# **FOOD ALLERGENS AND INTOLERANCES**

WHEN MAKING YOUR ORDER, PLEASE SPEAK TO OUR STAFF ABOUT THE INGREDIENTS IN YOUR MEAL.

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT FOOD ALLERGENS MAY HAVE BEEN HANDLED IN PREPARATION OF YOUR ORDER. IN SOME CASES, ALLERGENS MAY BE UNAVOIDABLELY PRESENT DUE TO SHARED EQUIPMENT OR THE INGREDIENTS USED.

**THANK YOU**