



Useful Information when Starting a New Food Business

When starting a new business you can refer to the Trading Standards Business Companion website: <https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink> which gives free information on all aspects of starting a new business.

Food businesses are required to put in place simple documentation detailing the procedures used in the business to ensure safe food is provided. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has put together a pack called Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) to help smaller businesses with this requirement. There are several different types of SFBB packs, you will find them here: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/sfbb> **I recommend using the SFBB pack for Caterers for your type of business.**

You may download, print out the pack and complete all sections to use in the business. Alternatively you can devise your own system based on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. If the food business operations that you intend to undertake do not fall with SFBB you will need to ensure that they are covered in your written documentation.

The Food Standards Agency's "Food Hygiene: A Guide for Businesses" can be found at <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/hygienebooklet.pdf>.

General advice about food hygiene and structure can be found here: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/startingup>

Since December 2014 new legislation came in regarding the provision of allergen information in loose foods details of which and free training can be found here: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide>

At your inspection you will be rated as part of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) this is based on a 0 – 5 scale with 5 being the highest score. Your score reflects the food safety controls that you have in place, the structure and cleanliness of the premises and the management controls including your written documentation further details can be found here: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/hygieneratings>

Please have your written food safety documentation and any other written information available such as training certificates, allergen documents etc. at the premises for your inspection.

Other points to consider:

- 1. Food Hygiene Training** - You should be able to demonstrate sound food hygiene knowledge particularly in the areas of cross contamination, cleaning and allergens. Food Hygiene training in your local area will be able to provide you with this information and it is good practice to have undertaken food hygiene training particularly if you are handling both raw and ready to eat products in a confined space.
- 2. Premises Structure** – Consider the structure of your mobile catering unit:

- Consider your ability to access a flush lavatory in the vicinity in which you are trading. Any WC that you use must have adequate hand washing facilities.
- Walls, floors and ceilings of the unit should be easy to clean and in good condition.
- Windows, doors and hatches must be well fitted, easy to clean and where necessary fitted with insect screens.
- **There should be adequate hand washing facilities with hand soap, hot and cold water and a means of drying hands (we recommended disposable paper towels to reduce the risk of cross-contamination).**
- Adequate facilities to wash food and equipment with a supply of hot and cold water. If foods need to be washed, it is good practice to wash them at home prior to trading so that the sink in your mobile catering unit is only used for washing equipment.
- Surfaces (including equipment) must be maintained in a sound condition and easy to clean and disinfect. This means they must be made of materials that are non-absorbent, smooth, and washable. **We do not recommend the use of wooden utensils.**
- Fridges –ensure there is sufficient space for both raw and ready-to-eat foods so that they may be adequately separated in storage. The temperature of the food in the fridge(s) must be 8°C or below, ideally less than 5°C.
- Consider how you and your customers are going to dispose of any waste created by your business. Food waste must be kept in lidded containers and removed from food rooms as quickly as possible. All waste must be disposed of hygienically and collected by the appropriate licensed waste carrier. Ideally, bin lids should be opened without touching, for example with a foot pedal, or lids can be removed during use.
- The water supply must be of potable (drinking water) quality. Ensure that you change your water in your stills/containers regularly and use appropriate food grade disinfectant tablets to ensure effective cleaning and disinfection of the stills/containers.
- Consider what form(s) of ventilation you will have in your unit. Natural, mechanical or both. Ensure any mechanical ventilation is well maintained and cleaned on a regular basis.

- 3 Food Handlers** - People working with food must maintain a high level of personal hygiene, washing hands regularly eg after handling raw eggs, wear suitable protective clothing and where necessary tell their employer if suffering from illness or symptoms of food poisoning. Anyone suffering from diarrhoea, who has infected wounds, skin infection or sores or are suffering from or carrying a disease likely to be transmitted through food must not handle open food until they have been symptom free for a single period of 48 hours.
- 4 Cleaning Chemicals:** - You must ensure that you have appropriate cleaning chemicals to keep the kitchen clean and sanitise surfaces and equipment. Antibacterial sprays and sanitisers should meet a certain British Standard (BS EN: 1276 or 13697) if you are unsure whether your current sprays meet this requirement you may wish to visit: www.disinfectant-info.co.uk Different types of disinfectants require different dilutions and contact times. These are specified and validated by the manufacturer and you must follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and contact time to ensure the product is effective (**1 recommended using a 30 second contact time disinfectant as this makes for speedy cleaning and disinfecting**). All chemicals must also be stored away from the storage of foods to reduce the risk of contamination.
- 5 Pest Control:** You must ensure that your catering unit and any storage areas associated are always pest free. This can be achieved with regular checking of the unit and storage areas for



evidence of pests (droppings/nibbled food). Making sure that no food is left out and that the unit and storage areas are kept in a clean condition at all times. Any signs of pest activity should be treated straight away. It is a good idea to record any problems you have and what you did about the problem.

6. Storage: You need to ensure that at all stages of storage, transportation and production of the foods you produce are free from microbiological, chemical and physical contamination. Equipment such as pans, chopping boards, utensils etc. should be kept separate from food storage. Lidded containers are useful for preventing contamination of stored foods. Food in the fridge should be wrapped/covered to prevent items falling/dripping onto others.