



Food Hygiene Handbook for Businesses

Revised edition 2007

Colchester Borough Council

www.colchester.gov.uk



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Introduction

Public expectations and demands in relation to Food Safety have never been so high.

The Food Standards Agency estimates that as many as 5.5 million people in the UK may suffer from foodborne illness every year – that is 1 in 10 people. Each case is thought to cost up to £80 to the economy and health service when treatment and time off work is taken into account. This adds up to a staggering bill of £350m for the UK each year.

This booklet is intended as a general guide to help you to:

- Know what to do before starting a food business
- Maintain your business and self-audit your premises
- Comply with food law, namely EC Regulation 852/2004, the General Food Regulations 2004 and the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006.

Hygienic and safe food preparation practices need to be carefully planned and managed just like any other aspect of your business. It may even improve your business turnover and save you money.

Food business proprietors have responsibility to:

- ensure that food is prepared and handled safely
- demonstrate how that food is handled and prepared hygienically (please see section on Food Safety Management Systems).

Whilst this information will give you a general introduction please feel free to contact the Food Safety Team for any further guidance.



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Officers of the Food and Safety Section can also offer advice and guidance on health and safety matters.

If you need help with reading or understanding this document, please take it to Angel Court council offices, High Street, Colchester or ☎ 282222 or textphone 282266 and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

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Food Safety Officers & Food Hygiene

The work of a Food Safety Officer in addition to enforcing the law is to provide advice and education.

The purpose of a food safety inspection is to:-

- identify potential hazards and assess the risks to public health;
- assess the effectiveness of management control systems;
- ensure compliance with legislation;
- raise awareness and update owners on food hygiene matters.

The period between inspections is determined by the risks to food safety associated with the business. More often than not inspections will be carried out unannounced.

The inspection will begin with a preliminary interview, which includes gathering information on how you operate your business, for example, by referring to documented hazard analysis/food safety policies, staff training records, temperature control records and the competence of management etc.

A systematic approach will be taken when carrying out the inspection, for example, the officer may begin the inspection at the point of delivery of goods/ingredients and finish at the end product/service. The officer will assess risks associated with each stage of your food operation. The main areas of concern (if any) will be explained to you and practical advice given on how to reduce associated risks. Your commitment to resolving the problems, will be a necessary requirement.

At the end of the inspection the officer will discuss the following with you or your representative:-



-
- significant findings
 - legal requirements and solutions
 - recommendations for good food safety practice
 - any further action to be taken, for example, letters, improvement / prohibition notices, prosecution.

The officer will then ask you to confirm that you understand what is required and invite you to sign an inspection report. A copy of this report will be left with you or your representative. The report will include the inspection rating score for your premises. This score indicates the frequency of inspection.

You should use the inspection as an opportunity to keep yourself updated on food safety matters; achieving compliance with food safety legislation and how to reach and maintain high standards of hygiene.

Responsibility for complying with food safety requirements rests with traders and not with the Council's officers.



Registration of Food Businesses

Most food businesses must register with their local authority. This is free and just requires you to complete a registration form.

Food businesses must register 28 days before they open and on any occasion when the name of the business or owner changes.

A mobile food business should be registered at the address where the unit is normally kept overnight.

Registration forms are available from the Food and Safety Team or the Council's web site www.colchester.gov.uk



Establishing a Food Business

Setting up a food business will require much planning and forethought in order to avoid practical, economic and legal pitfalls.

The following sections of this booklet are designed to assist you in interpreting the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations and also to achieve a good standard of food hygiene.

The following publications may be helpful: "Starting up" by the Food Standards Agency (available in several languages) and free to download at: www.cleanup.food.gov.uk/data/starting-up.htm and "Success with a small food business – a guide to starting, developing and expanding your business" by Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

It may be necessary to consult other departments in the Council and also other relevant Authorities. Before undertaking a project check whether planning permission and/or Building Regulation approval is required.

It is important not to assume that an established business complies fully with the law and so before taking over you are advised to contact the Food and Safety Team.

Design of the Food Premises

When planning the layout of a business, the following criteria should be considered (some may not apply to all types of businesses).

It is strongly recommended that you also purchase and refer to the Industry Guide to good hygiene practice. Guides are available for different types of businesses and give advice on how to comply with food safety regulations. The guides are available from good bookshops, priced £3.60.



Layout

Food preparation areas should be of sufficient size to avoid contamination of food.

Washing up areas should, where possible, be separated from food preparation areas.

Work flow should be designed so that raw food does not come into contact with cooked/prepared food.

Refuse should not be taken through areas where open food is handled.

Food storage areas should be positioned to avoid the need to carry deliveries through areas where open food is handled.

Cooking facilities should be positioned with ventilation requirements in mind.

Finishes and Surfaces for Food Rooms

The basic requirements in the Regulations are that "ceilings, walls, floors and all other parts of the structure are in such good order, repair and condition to enable effective cleaning". In practical terms this can be interpreted as follows: -

Ceilings – These should be of smooth impervious finish and light in colour. The use of textured plasterwork and artex must be avoided, as should acoustic (absorbent) ceiling tiles.

Walls – Again, these should be of a smooth impervious structure and light in colour. The type of finish provided will be dependent upon the use of the food room. A heavily used area will require a hard wearing durable finish, where in the case of a dry store smooth painted plaster would suffice. For walls, suitable surfaces include:



-
- ceramic tiles
 - stainless steel
 - smooth painted plaster
 - plastic cladding

Floors – When considering floor finishes it is necessary to pay attention both to food hygiene and health and safety. Thus floors should be both readily cleansable and offer a high degree of slip resistance. It is recommended that wall/floor junctions be coved.

Suitable surfaces include: -

- slip resistant vinyl sheet such as 'Altro' or 'Polysafe' floor coverings
- quarry tiles that contain carborundum dust or similar
- specialist screeds
- ceramic tiles that contain carborundum dust or similar

Work Surfaces – As with finishes, the type of material chosen will be determined by the nature of the activity. In all cases the finishes should be easy to clean, durable and suitable for the purpose. For example, heavily used work surfaces should be constructed of stainless steel or high quality laminate, whereas a rarely used shelf could be constructed of painted or varnished timber. (Timber that has not been sealed is too absorbent for general use in a food area). Laminated chipboard should not be used unless any cut ends have been effectively sealed.

Ventilation

The amount and type of ventilation required for a food room will be determined by the use of the room. Where restaurant type meals are produced and/or where food is deep fat fried, mechanical extract

ventilation is usually required which includes a canopy incorporating grease filters giving 30 air changes per hour (greater exchange rates may be necessary if excessive cooking temperatures are likely). At the other extreme, an openable window (fly screened) may be all that is required for a sandwich filling area. A ventilation engineer should design mechanical ventilation extract systems. Environmental control should also be consulted with regard to reducing noise and smell from such systems.

Lighting

Sufficient lighting of food rooms is essential to facilitate cleaning, avoid eye strain and accidents. Generally levels of at least 300 lux are required for food rooms. In situations where intricate work such as cake decorating is being carried out, higher levels will be required. When designing lighting schemes it is important to remember people prefer to work in natural light.

If lighting is provided by fluorescent tubes the units should be covered by diffusers to facilitate cleaning.

Sinks

For all but the smallest of premises involving low risk foods, a double bowl sink unit should be provided (or a commercial dishwasher used to supplement a single sink). Adequate supplies of hot and cold water should be piped to the sink(s) and the unit should be connected to the foul drainage system via a trapped waste pipe.

Vegetable Preparation – If you are preparing vegetables and salads you may be required to provide a separate sink for washing these items. The scale of activity will determine the need for a vegetable sink so it will pay to seek advice.



Wash Hand Basins – Wash hand basins are quite different from sinks in that they must only be used for hand washing.

All food premises must have sufficient wash hand basins in convenient situations for food handlers to use. They should be provided with adequate piped supplies of hot and cold water or water at a suitably controlled temperature. The waste should be connected via a trap to the foul drainage system. Soap and clean towels are required at each basin. Liquid antibacterial soap dispensers and disposable paper towels are preferred.

Public and Staff Sanitary Accommodation

Where food and drink is consumed on the premises, it is necessary to provide sanitary accommodation for customers. Toilets are also required for staff, however these need not be separate from those provided for use by the public. Such accommodation must be accessible without the need to pass through any food rooms. The toilet cubicles must be ventilated. Suitable hand washing facilities must be provided.

Equipment

To facilitate cleaning, all equipment large or small should be constructed of smooth, non-absorbent material, free from traps for dirt and food particles. When purchasing equipment attention should be paid to the 'cleanability' of the particular item.

When installing large items such as cookers, fridges and warming cupboards, it should be ensured they are moveable to allow for cleaning.

Clothing Lockers

To avoid contaminating food, the Regulations require that where open



food is handled outdoor clothing should be placed in lockers or similar accommodation.

Refuse Storage

As refuse is a source of contamination it should not be allowed to accumulate in a food room. Refuse bins should be of minimal size and emptied regularly. All refuse bins in food rooms should be washable. It is recommended that foot operated pedal bins are provided. The external refuse store should be provided with a concrete hard standing to facilitate cleaning. Bulk refuse bins should be regularly cleaned to avoid smell nuisance.



Training

The proprietor of a food business must ensure that food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activities, (ie. trained to a level suitable for what they are doing).

The training needed will relate to the actual job of the individual. It will also relate to the type of food that they handle. Staff who handle 'high risk' food will need more training than those who handle 'low risk' foods. Special arrangements may have to be made for persons whose first language is not English and/or persons with learning or literacy difficulties. All staff should be properly supervised and instructed to ensure that they work hygienically. A greater degree of supervision may be needed for:-

- new staff awaiting formal training
- staff handling high risk foods
- less experienced staff.

Even if staff have received formal training, supervision must depend upon the competence and experience of the individual food handler. Where only one or two people are employed, supervision may not be practical. In such cases, training must be sufficient to allow work to be unsupervised.

Details of food hygiene training courses available locally are available from the Food and Safety Team or on the Council Web Site.

Periodic refresher training will be required to keep abreast of legal and practical developments in the catering trade.

It is recommended that the Foundation Food Hygiene course is retaken every 3 years.

Guidance on the level of instruction and/or training required by food handlers depending on the risks associated with the food they handle.

Category of food handler	Introduction to the essentials of food hygiene	CIEH Level 1 Hygiene awareness instruction	CIEH Level 2 Formal training (Basic)	CIEH Level 3 Formal training (Intermediate)	CIEH Level 4 Formal training (Advanced)
Handling of low risk or wrapped foods only	Before starting work for the first time	Within 4 weeks of employment			
Preparation of open, 'high risk' foods	Before starting work for the first time	Within 4 weeks of employment	Within 3 months of employment		
Food handlers with a supervisory role	Before starting work for the first time	Within 4 weeks of employment	Within 3 months of employment	Dependant on responsibilities, but must ensure relevant HACCP knowledge, sufficient to operate the business's food safety management system*	
Managers or owners of food businesses (may or may not be food handlers)	Prior to commencement of the business	Prior to commencement of the business	Prior to commencement of the business	Dependant upon responsibilities but ensure relevant HACCP knowledge, sufficient to operate the business's food safety management system*	

CIEH = Chartered Institute of Environmental Health



Food Management Systems

What are Food Safety Management Systems?

Food poisoning is unpredictable. It could occur at any time and usually when you are least expecting it. You therefore need to guard against it AT ALL TIMES. A food safety management system can help you to plan your food preparation activities and eliminate the poor hygiene and bad preparation practices, which may result in food becoming unsafe to eat. You have the security of knowing that your food is safe because your staff will have checked that all the important things have been done right.

Why do I need one?

- To ensure that you & your staff prepare food safely
- To prevent cases of food poisoning
- To protect your business's reputation
- To improve your business & reduce costs e.g. by less wasted food

And if those aren't good enough reasons . . .

- To comply with the new food law regulations – failure to do so could result in legal action by the Local Authority resulting in a fine of up to £5,000, not to mention any adverse publicity to your business.

How can I go about devising a food safety management system for my business?

There are several ways in which you can do this and several different examples or 'models' you can work from. These include:

- "Safer Food Better Business" (SFBB)



-
- This model has been devised by the Food Standards Agency for smaller catering businesses to be practical and easy to use. To operate it you will need to obtain a pack and work through it to devise some safe production methods. You will also need to keep a written diary of checks. You can download a pack by visiting the Food Standards Agency website at:
<http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/hygiene/sfbb/>
or request a hard copy by calling 0845 606 0667 or e-mailing: foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com
 - Colchester Borough Council are organising a series of seminars to further explain “Safer Food, Better Business” to which you will be invited to attend free of charge.
 - Some companies will devise their own corporate food safety management systems. These are usually tailored around a food safety manual that contains a set of procedures, detailing exactly how food is to be prepared and the types of checks that must be made to confirm that everything is being done correctly.
 - You are equally welcome to devise your own food safety management system. It doesn't have to be fancy, but must include all of the elements described.
 - If you have any doubts as to whether your food safety management system is adequate, please contact us for further advice and assistance.

All of the above food safety management systems are equally acceptable, provided they are RELEVANT TO YOUR FOOD BUSINESS, have taken account of all significant food safety risks, are correctly implemented and recorded.

What Should my Food Safety Management System Include?

Your system should be based on the principles of HACCP (which stands for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). To avoid the use of technical language, this broadly means that you must include the following, in order for you to comply fully with the legislative requirements:

- Firstly you need to identify different stages of your business. These are all the jobs or activities that you carry out when handling or preparing food.
- For each stage you must decide what food safety risks or 'dangers' are likely to exist at each different stage. These are things such as dirty equipment or food being left out at room temperature that may result in it becoming contaminated or unsafe to eat.
- Take a look at each of the dangers you have identified and determine which of them are absolutely essential or "critical" to the safety of the food.
- You must then decide what good hygiene practices you can use to stop each danger occurring and implement them. If something can be measured, (e.g. temperatures) you must specify what these should be (e.g. fridge temperature must be 0-5°C).
- Regular checks must be done to ensure that everything is OK, including the measurements you detailed above. Where possible these checks should be recorded as proof that they have been done.
- A manager or supervisor will need to ensure that staff have been doing the checks correctly and as often as required. This can be done by looking at records they have written down and visually watching how they are preparing and handling food.



- If anything goes wrong at any stage, or the checks show that the measurements are wrong, the staff must understand what they have to do to avoid food becoming unsafe. You should encourage staff to always write down the things that go wrong and what they/you have done about them.

Understanding The Stages Of Your Business

Food businesses are often very complicated, involving a large and wide range of food ingredients, dishes, menus, staff and customer requirements. To simplify all of this, a flow diagram can be constructed to provide a “picture” of the various tasks you regularly perform when preparing a particular type of food.

The flow diagram is built up of boxes, each representing a separate task or activity, linked together by arrows, which show the order in which these are performed. If that sounds complicated, DON'T PANIC! Let's start with a simple example, like boiling an egg.

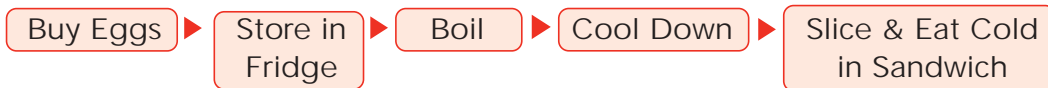
Example

Your eggs are bought at the local supermarket and placed in the fridge to store them on your return home. When you are ready to cook them, you place the egg in a pan of boiling water, for about 5-8 minutes. Finally you eat the boiled egg whilst it is still hot.

So, putting these stages together to construct a flow diagram for a boiled egg, we get:



Alternatively if we had chosen to cool the egg down and slice it up for a sandwich, the flow diagram would look like this:



The first stage in any flow diagram will always involve buying food or its ingredients - this is commonly referred to as "PURCHASE". Other typical stages may include "STORAGE", "PREPARATION", "COOKING", "COOLING", "REHEATING" and "HOT HOLDING".

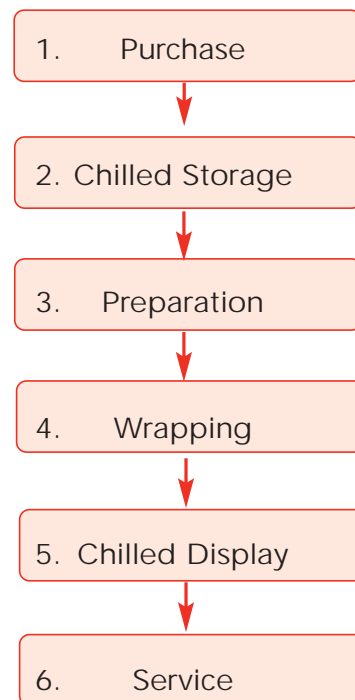
The last stage will always relate to the food being eaten - in a restaurant or take-away. This is commonly referred to as "SERVICE" because the person who prepared it usually serves it to a customer, rather than eating it themselves.

And that's our flow diagram! You will usually see a flow diagram running down the page and not across it, just because it allows more space, but it is exactly the same! Take a look at the example opposite and then have a go yourself.

Flow Diagram

Premises: High Street Sandwich Bar
Food Type: Tuna Mayonnaise Sandwich

The sandwich ingredients are purchased from a local supermarket and stored within the fridge until ready for use. To prepare the sandwich, the bread is buttered, the tuna mixed with mayonnaise and then spread onto the bread. The sandwich is cut and wrapped in cling film and then placed into the chilled display cabinet until sold.





What Are The Dangers?

Just think about dangers in the same way as you do in your everyday life. If something is likely to harm you, then it is a danger. So, for example, when crossing the road, a passing car is a danger because it could knock you down and harm you. In much the same way, when you think about dangers to food, try to think about all of the things that may be present within that food or those things that could contaminate food to make it harmful. For example:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| BACTERIA | Harmful bacteria may be present in foods or their ingredients and, if given adequate time and temperature, can grow to dangerous numbers. Other sources of harmful bacteria include pests such as mice, flies or cockroaches; dirt and dust from the environment; and food handlers who are sick with an infectious disease, or who simply have not bothered to wash their hands before preparing food! |
| CHEMICALS | Chemicals (such as bleach) stored near open food or harmful residues left on surfaces and equipment after cleaning may end up contaminating food. |
| PHYSICAL | Foreign bodies/materials, such as hair, jewellery, chips from bowls, wood, flakes of paint, nuts & bolts, pieces of plastic, fragments of glass etc. may fall into food. |

Go back to the stages of your flow diagram and think about the possible dangers involved during each of these tasks. Ask yourself the simple question "What Can Go Wrong?" and remember to consider the following:

- Are there likely to be BACTERIA in the various foods that you handle? If so, there will always be dangers with bacteria growing and



contaminating other food and surfaces;

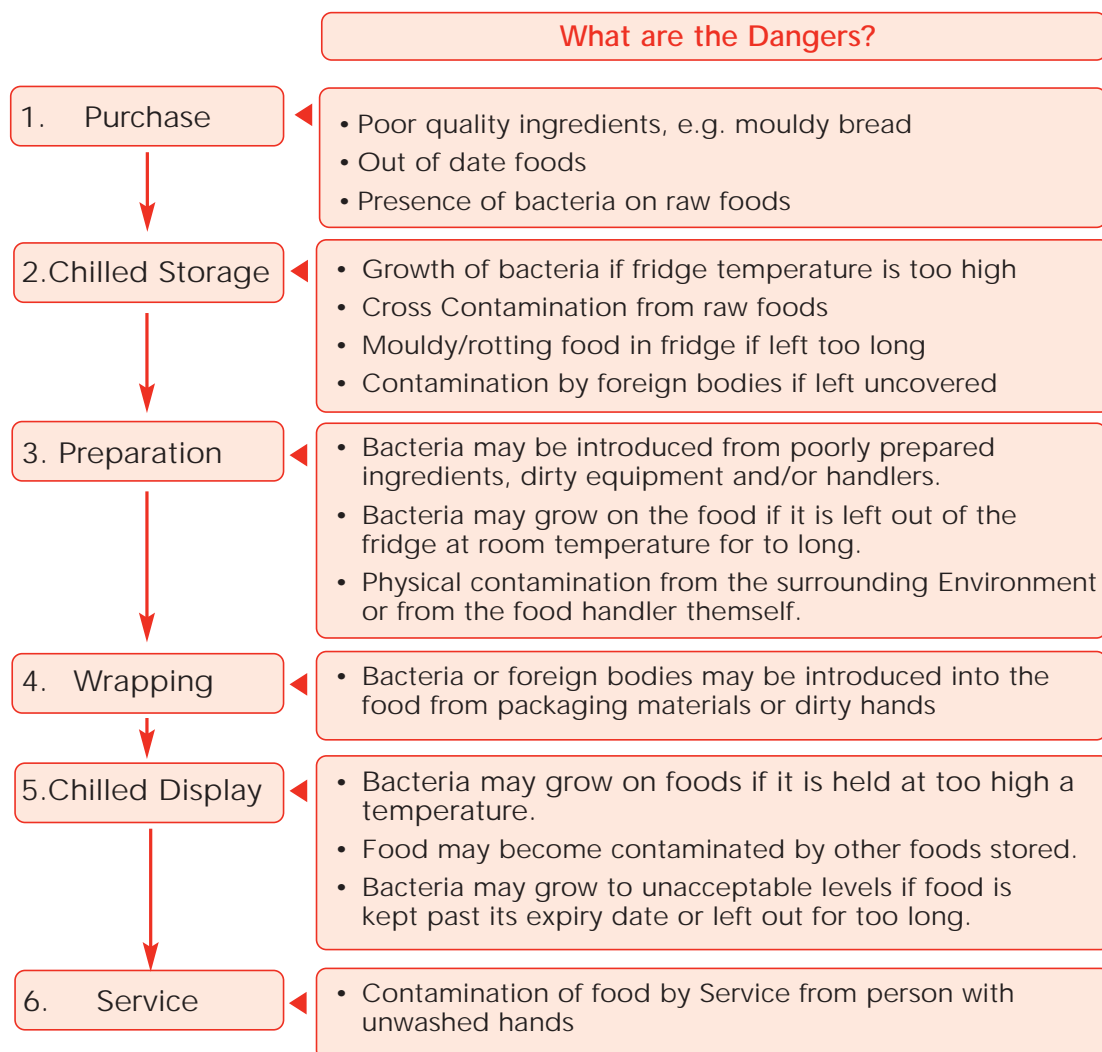
- and/or surviving;
- Are CHEMICALS used to clean food preparation surfaces & equipment? If so, there will always be a danger of them contaminating food;
- Are there bits of FOREIGN MATERIAL close to food? If so, there will always be a danger of them contaminating food;
- Are FOOD HANDLERS involved? If so there will always be a danger of them contaminating food by poor personal hygiene or if they handle food when ill.

Look at the following chart where the dangers have been included for your tuna mayonnaise sandwich.

Flow Diagram & Dangers

Premises: High Street Sandwich Bar

Food Type: Tuna Mayonnaise Sandwich





Stopping The Dangers

The next bit is simple. Wherever you have spotted dangers, you will need to take action to control them so as to prevent food from becoming unsafe and, perhaps, making someone ill. There are different options available to you, but the main aim is to put good working practices into place and to regularly check that they are working.

For each of the stages that you have identified, follow these simple rules:

PURCHASE

- Use reputable suppliers
- Check all incoming deliveries for dates, damage and temperature.

STORAGE

- Ensure that your fridges and chilled display cabinets are working at or below 8°C by checking regularly using an independent thermometer
- Prevent cross contamination by storing cooked and ready-to-eat food above raw food and keeping all food covered
- Practise good stock rotation and dispose of any out of date food
- Keep shelf life of prepared foods or packaged food that has been opened a maximum of 3 days
- Regularly check dry stores for pest infestation

PREPARATION

- Make sure food handlers wash their hands regularly
- Watch how food handlers are preparing foods in the kitchen. Are they following good practises?
- Check that equipment and cleaning cloths are clean and

disinfected

- Ensure adequate separation between raw and cooked foods through the use of dedicated/colour-coded equipment.

COOKING AND REHEATING

- Cook all food thoroughly to at least 75°C, checking the temperature with a probe thermometer
- Cook meat/poultry until all juices run clear and no blood is visible
- Stir soups/gravies/stews/custard and other liquid based foods to distribute the heat throughout
- Make sure that frozen food is fully defrosted before you cook it

COOLING

- Cool food as quickly as possible, ideally within 90 minutes
- Transfer hot foods from cooking vessels into cold shallow trays and split bulk cooked foods into lots of smaller portions for faster cooling
- Do not cook large joints of meat, as these take too long to cool – maximum joint size should be 2kg (4.5lb) – if you need more, cook two or more smaller joints instead
- Once cooled to room temperature, transfer food immediately into chilled storage

HOT HOLDING

- Make sure that all hot food is kept at 63°C or above.
- Always pre-heat your hot holding unit well in advance of use and place food into it immediately after cooking or reheating
- Where possible, stir foods, to keep heat evenly distributed



- Limit the hot holding of food to a maximum of two hours

Checking For Dangers

Provided you follow all of these rules, your food should be safe to eat. To be sure that this is actually the case, you must check that the danger is no longer present. Going back to the boiled egg, for example, one of the dangers in this example was not cooking the egg enough to kill off the dangerous bacteria present when it is raw. Cooking the egg thoroughly, and checking that the centre is solid before either eating it or using it in your sandwich, can avoid this danger.

In principle there are two main checks that you can do. These are:

1. Temperatures checks

Using a thermometer to check that the temperature of a hot or cold food is sufficient to keep it safe. Just remember the following temperatures:

Chilled food	legally 8°C but preferably 5°C or below
Cooked & reheated food	75°C or above
Holding food hot	63°C or above

2. Visual Checks

Looking to see that things are as they should be. These do not involve actually taking measurements, but are still important for ensuring food safety. Visual checks will include seeing whether:

- ✓ Raw food is stored below cooked food in the fridge
- ✓ Food is kept covered to protect it from contamination
- ✓ Equipment and utensils are being cleaned properly



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- ✓ Food handlers are washing their hands frequently
 - ✓ The electric fly killer is working and turned on
 - ✓ Stock rotation is adequate
 - ✓ Raw food is handled and prepared separately to cooked/ready to eat foods.
 - ✓ All out of date foods have been thrown away
 - ✓ Signs of rodent or insect activity are not present

Whatever type of check you do, it is very important that you react quickly to situations where dangers are still present.

For example, if you check a piece of chicken with a thermometer to see that it is thoroughly cooked and it gives a reading of only 59°C, you know immediately that the food is not safe to eat. In this situation you will need to react to the danger by cooking the chicken further, until your temperature checks give a reading of 75°C. At this point you now know that the danger has been removed.

Management Checks and Records

It is now a legal requirement for you to keep records. As a manager you will need to look at these records on a regular basis so you know that your staff have done all of the necessary checks. Records are also of major importance if you ever need to defend yourself and your business in court. Quite simply, they may help to prove that you have been checking to ensure that food is safe to eat.

As well as records, you will also need to monitor your staff visually by watching them in the way they work and handle food. This will enable you to know that they are correctly implementing all the good hygiene



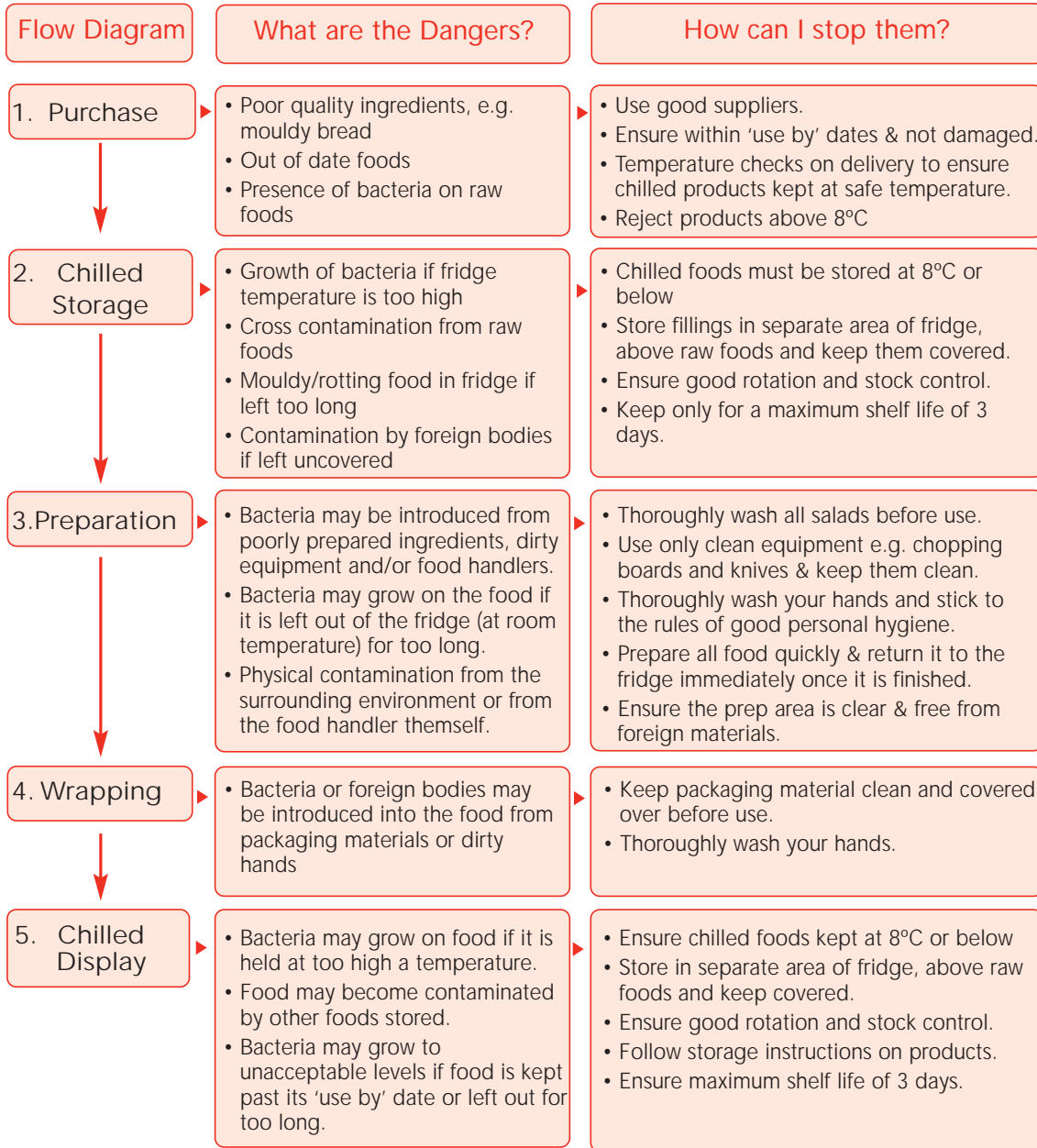
practices needed to avoid the food safety dangers. In essence you will be double checking that they are getting it right!

Finally, have a look at the completed flow diagram overleaf with both the dangers and ways of avoiding dangers added. Note at the bottom of the chart the types of check that the high street sandwich bar will need to carry out to ensure that their food is safe.

Premises: High Street Sandwich Bar

Date: 01/01/07

Food Type: Tuna Mayonnaise Sandwich



Summary of Checks:

STAGE	STAGE NAME	MONITORING METHOD
1	Purchase	Delivery checks – visual and temperature
2	Storage	Fridge temperature checks
3	Preparation	Visual checks
4	Wrapping	Visual checks
5	Chilled display	Fridge temperature checks – time and temperature



Pest Control

Premises should be made rodent and insect proof and regularly inspected for evidence of infestation by rats, mice, insects or birds.

It is recommended that a pest control contract be undertaken so that you receive regular inspections and advice.

All possible points of entry to the premises should be sealed or proofed, eg. holes around pipework through walls, gaps under and around doors, airbricks and ventilators (do not seal these, cover with insect proof mesh). Cover open ended soil stacks and ventilation pipes with wire guards to protect from entry by rodents.

Windows and doors used to regularly ventilate food rooms should be covered with fly screens.

The installation of an ultraviolet light flying insect killer, suitably sited away from positions over open food, is recommended. The unit should be regularly maintained and bulbs replaced at least every 12 months.



To avoid attracting pests to your premises, ensure that pest proofing is maintained and all parts of the premises and yard areas are kept clean.

Ensure refuse bins are emptied frequently and lids are secure. Clean and disinfect bins and yards regularly and never leave bags or boxes of waste outside unprotected.

Check foodstuffs on delivery for signs of infestation and rotate stock regularly. Store foods off the floor.

If you suspect there may be an infestation of any kind in your premises or in the near vicinity, report it immediately to the Food and Safety Team, as well as to your pest control company, if you have one. It is always best to report the problem immediately and take steps to ensure there is no risk to food.



Temperature Control

How Food Poisoning Bacteria Grow

Food poisoning bacteria need food, moisture, time and warmth to grow.

They multiply by splitting into two and if conditions are right, they will do this once every 10 to 20 minutes.

It may take only nine hours for one bacteria to become 100 million!

Temperature Control and the Growth of Bacteria

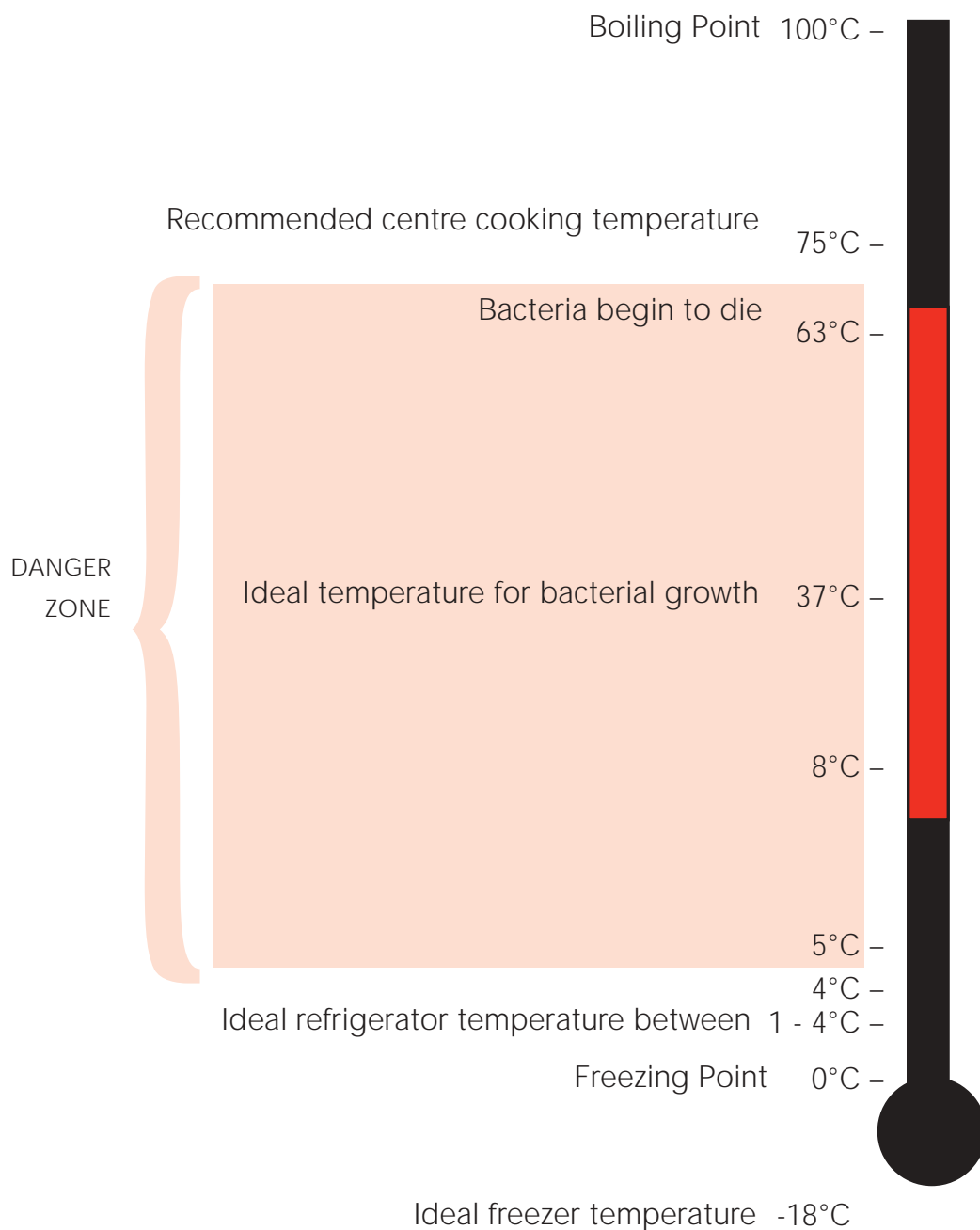
The temperature Danger Zone is between 5°C and 63°C. In this range bacteria can grow and multiply easily. If food is left in the danger zone for long enough then any food poisoning bacteria which are present can begin to multiply quickly and easily.

Important Food Hygiene Temperatures

Refrigerated Storage

Adequate provision should be made for the storage of perishable foods at or below 8°C (ideally below 5°C). Some foods will indicate on the label that they must be stored to 5°C or below and you must follow this. If possible, separate refrigerators should be provided for raw and cooked products. It is recommended that fan assisted commercial refrigerators are purchased, which are able to maintain temperatures more efficiently.

It is strongly recommended that you check the temperature of your refrigeration equipment using a separate digital thermometer. It is also recommended that written records are made at least twice a day. Blank





temperature control monitoring forms are available on request and can be freely copied to be used by your food business.

The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 require that high risk foods are either kept cold (at or below 8°C) or hot (63°C or above).

The following foods are high risk foods: -

- Dairy products, eg. soft and semi-hard cheeses, dairy based desserts – fromage frais, mousses, crème caramels, products containing cream – cream cakes.
- Cooked products containing meat, eggs, fish, substitutes for meat, soft or hard cheeses, cereals (rice and grains), pulses and vegetables
- Smoked or cured ready to eat meat or fish, eg. ham, smoked fish, some salamis
- Prepared ready to eat foods, eg. prepared vegetables, vegetable salads, coleslaw, sandwiches
- Uncooked or partly cooked pastry and dough products, eg. pizzas or fresh pasta containing meat, fish or vegetables.

There are certain exemptions to these regulations. You are allowed a single period of up to 4 hours in which to display unrefrigerated high risk foods for sale before throwing the food away. Further information can be obtained from the Food and Safety Team.

Freezer Storage

Adequate provision should also be made to enable frozen food to be stored at or below -18°C.



Safe Food Handling

Food handling must be carried out in a hygienic way. This is essential to prevent food poisoning.

Key Points

- Surfaces should be cleaned before being used to prepare food. Ideally wiped with a non tainting food sanitiser.
- Separate raw and cooked foods.
- Use separate utensils for raw and cooked foods, eg. knives, coloured cutting boards.
- Regular hand washing, including palms and back of hands, should be carried out
 - a) before starting food preparation
 - b) between handling raw and cooked food
 - c) after using the toilet
 - d) after breaks for eating, drinking, smoking
 - e) after handling refuse and waste materials
- Wounds should be covered with waterproof dressings (blue plasters).
- Tie back long hair and wear head coverings.
- Suitable protective clothing should be worn to prevent contamination of food.
- Foods should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking.
- Joints of meat should be thoroughly cooked. It is better to cook two or three small joints rather than one large one. (Maximum recommended



size of 2.5kg). Ensure the centre reaches a temperature of 75°C for 30 seconds. This should be checked with a probe thermometer. Make sure you disinfect the probe first.

- A minimum quantity of food should be re-heated. Where this is necessary food must be heated above 75°C for at least 30 seconds.
- Keep food piping hot at 63°C or above or cold at 8°C or below. This reduces the risk of growth of food poisoning bacteria.
- Do not keep left over stock pots. They are ideal breeding grounds for bacteria.
- Check refrigerator and freezer temperatures. Record in a log book.

Protecting Food From Contamination

1. No raw materials or ingredients should be accepted by a food business if they are known to be so contaminated that even after normal hygiene procedures they would still be unfit for human consumption.
2. Raw materials and ingredients must be kept in appropriate conditions so as to prevent contamination or harmful deterioration.
3. Food should be protected against any contamination that is likely to render it unfit for human consumption or to be injurious to health.
4. Hazardous and/or inedible substances should be adequately labelled and stored in separate and secure containers.

Preventing Food Poisoning

The ten main reasons for food poisoning are: -

1. Food prepared too far in advance and stored at room temperature. Prepare food as near to it being eaten as possible and keep it in a

refrigerator in the meantime.

2. Cooling food too slowly and for too long before refrigerating it, especially large joints of meat, turkeys and bulky items cooked in advance. **Cool quickly and use small joints. Use shallow trays for cooling rice, etc.**
3. Undercooking food. **Cook to 75°C for 30 seconds.**
4. Not reheating food to a high enough temperature. **Reheat to 75°C for at least 30 seconds.**
5. The use of cooked foods contaminated with food poisoning bacteria, eg. not brought from reputable suppliers. **Check your supplier takes as much care as you do. Visit them. Your reputation relies on you having the confidence in the food they sell you.**
6. Cross contamination from raw food or ready to eat food in the kitchen during preparation or in the fridge during storage. **Separate raw food from cooked, use different utensils, sanitise surfaces and keep food covered.**
7. Inadequate thawing of frozen food before cooking, especially poultry. **Thaw in the bottom of the refrigerator for the time recommended on the label.**
8. Keeping food to be sold 'warm' below 63°C so allowing bacteria to grow in the food. **Remember the 'danger zone' for bacterial growth is between 5 and 63°C.**
9. Infected food handlers contaminating food. **Ensure your staff know what to do if they have a gastrointestinal illness.**
10. Use of shell eggs in recipes requiring only light cooking or no cooking at all. **Switch to pasteurised eggs or change the recipe. Always cook eggs well.**



Personal Hygiene

Good personal hygiene means having a high standard of personal cleanliness. This will be reflected in appearance, dress and behaviour. Poor cleanliness and bad habits present a risk of contaminating food. High standards of personal hygiene will help to prevent food poisoning and reduce the risk of contamination.

All food handlers should follow the key points listed below.

- They should wash their hands regularly
- They should cover cuts, sores and burns with clean waterproof dressings of a distinctive colour.
- They should wear clean, and where appropriate, protective clothing.
- They should keep fingernails short and clean and remove all nail polish.
- They should not wear jewellery other than a plain wedding ring.
- They should not wear strong smelling perfumes or aftershave.

The type of clean, washable overclothes will vary depending on the nature of the food business. Generally where open, high risk foods are prepared an overall should be worn which covers the clothes beneath (an apron is acceptable only if short sleeves are worn beneath) and head covering which encloses the hair.

Persons Suffering From Certain Medical Conditions

Any food handler suffering from food poisoning symptoms (especially vomiting and/or diarrhoea), a disease that may be transmitted through food or suffering from skin infections must notify their employer.

Appropriate action must be taken, which may involve excluding them from work or from certain jobs.



Current Department of Health advice is that food handlers suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting must be excluded from food handling until they have been symptom free for at least 48 hours.

All staff must be made aware of the need to report these illnesses to their supervisor.

More advice on food handlers and their fitness to work is available on request.



Cleaning and Disinfection

What is Cleaning?

The removal of visible dirt, food debris and grease. This then enables disinfection to be carried out.

What is Disinfection?

Reducing bacteria to a safe level, usually by the use of special disinfectants intended for food use. These are often known as sanitisers.

How Do I Ensure Cleaning is Carried Out Properly?

Cleaning will reduce contamination risks, minimise the danger of food poisoning, impress your customers and create a safer working environment.

Prepare a cleaning schedule which lists:

- every piece of equipment to be cleaned
- all parts of the structure to be cleaned
- the frequency of cleaning
- cleaning methods
- the equipment and chemicals to be used
- the person responsible for cleaning each item.

Have that person or a manager sign against that item to indicate it has been cleaned properly.



You will need to consider carefully what equipment and chemicals will be needed to clean each item thoroughly. Manufacturers' instructions should be followed.

It is essential that 'food grade' cleaning chemicals are used if there is a likelihood of contact with food.

Some cleaning substances are hazardous to health. Before you use any hazardous substance you must assess the risks and identify suitable control measures. This is known as a COSHH assessment. Advice on carrying out a COSHH assessment can be obtained from the Food and Safety Team.

CLEANING SCHEDULE (EXAMPLE)

Item to be cleaned	Product	Method of Use (always follow manufacturer's guidelines)	Protective Clothing	Frequency	To be Cleaned by
Floors	Heavy Duty Cleaner	Using Degreaser - prepare a hot solution (half cup full per bucket of water - 2oz/gal) using a clean mop cover approx 10-12 sq.ft. Allow a few moments for solution to act before mopping over with clean fresh water.	Wear rubber gloves and suitable footwear	Daily	Alan
Deep Fat Fryers	Heavy Duty Degreaser	Drain off fat when cold. Fill with water then add Degreaser (1 cup full per bucket of water 4oz/gal). Boil for up to 20 mins. Brush surrounds with solution. Empty, rinse with clean fresh water. Allow to air dry.	Wear rubber gloves and plastic apron	Every 7 days	Mary
Slicers, Mixers, Mincers, Peelers	Cleansing and Sanitising Powder	Use powder - prepare a hot solution (half cup full per bucket of water 2oz/gal). Place moveable parts in solution and soak for 2 mins. Brush or sponge all parts. Rinse with clean moist cloth and allow to air dry.	Wear rubber gloves and plastic apron	After each use	Mary
Food Preparation and Chopping Boards	Cleansing and Sanitising Powder	Use powder - fill shaker with powder, then sprinkle on to a moistened surface and scrub. Leave for a few moments for the powder to act. Wipe the surface with a clean moist cloth and allow to air dry.	Wear rubber gloves and plastic apron	After each use	Alan



Requirements for Mobile Food Traders

Basic Design

Vehicle floors should be smooth, durable and non-slip, it is best if they are of one piece construction, coved to the wall to allow easy cleaning.

Walls and ceilings should be smooth and capable of being easily cleaned.

Cupboards, shelves and work surfaces should be of either washable laminate/plastic finish or gloss painted and should be coved to the walls to allow easy cleaning.

Temperature Control

All cold meat, dairy, fish or egg products should be stored at 8°C or below.

All hot food products should be stored at 63°C or above.

Provision must be made for measuring temperatures of foods. The provision of a cold box for refrigeration purposes is not usually suitable.

All open food should be adequately protected from contamination.

Washing Facilities

A fixed wash hand basin with hot and cold water supply for personal hygiene must be provided.

Sufficient sinks or other facilities should be provided for washing food and equipment. Adequate supplies of hot and cold water should also be provided.

Waste water should be piped directly to a sealed container. Soap or a suitable detergent together with hand drying towels are also required.

NB Stalls selling only pre-wrapped food do not need washing facilities.



Home Based Catering

In principle there is no reason why a small scale food business cannot be operated hygienically from domestic premises. Before starting such a business however it is worth consulting the local authority's Planning Officers to make sure that you are not contravening planning regulations.

You must remember that the domestic kitchen then becomes a food room subject to the food hygiene legislation and inspection.

All surfaces in contact with food should be sound and easy to clean. Good quality kitchen worktops and kitchen equipment in a well maintained condition should meet this requirement.

Adequate provision (including a hot and cold water supply) should be made for cleaning equipment and food. A normal kitchen sink will usually suffice but certain activities may occasional require a double bowl sink so that food washing can be separated effectively from equipment cleaning.

There should be easy access to a wash basin. No toilet should open directly into the food room.

Food should be protected from risk of contamination. Windows and doors should be kept closed to prevent the entry of flies. Any domestic pets should be kept out of the kitchen whilst it is being used for the business. If there is a washing machine in the kitchen, it need not be removed but no dirty laundry should be brought into the area whilst it is being used for the business.



Adequate facilities should be provided for maintaining suitable food temperature conditions. Ideally, provision of a separate refrigerator for the business should be considered. The operating temperatures of all refrigerators and freezers should be checked regularly and a record kept.

Further advice on how these issues will apply to your specific circumstances should be obtained from the Food and Safety Team.

