

HOW TO USE THIS PACK

Welcome to Safer Food Better Business for caterers

IS THIS PACK FOR ME?



This pack is for small catering businesses such as restaurants, cafés and takeaways that have registered with the local authority as a food business.

It has been developed by the Food Standards Agency, working with catering businesses, to be practical and easy to use.

Other Safer Food Better Business packs are available for:

- Retailers
- Indian cuisine
- Chinese cuisine
- Childminders
- Residential care homes (supplement)

These are available via the [Safer Food Better Business web page](#).

REGISTRATION

If you haven't already, you must register your food business with the Environmental Health Team at your local council. This should be done at least 28 days before you start food operations.

If you have bought an existing food business from someone else, you need to register as the new owner. You must also tell your local authority about any significant changes to your business.

For more information, visit [Guidance on how to register a new and existing food business](#).

HOW DOES THIS PACK HELP ME COMPLY WITH THE LAW?

Food safety and hygiene regulations say that you must be able to show what you do to make and sell food that is safe to eat and have this written down. The pack helps you do this.

This pack is based on the principles of HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control point), but you will not find words such as 'HACCP' or 'hazard' in the pack because we have cut out all the jargon.

HOW DOES THE PACK WORK?

The pack contains sheets for you to work through and complete. These are called 'safe methods'.

It also contains a diary for you to fill in every day and write down anything different that happens, including anything that goes wrong.

WHO SHOULD TAKE CHARGE OF THE PACK?

The operator of the business has overall responsibility for ensuring the food served to customers is safe to eat.

All food handlers are responsible for following the safe methods within this pack and reporting any problems to the food business operator immediately.

The person who takes charge of the pack needs to make sure other staff know how to use the pack and the diary is completed when they are not at work.

They also need to make sure the pack is reviewed regularly and updated where needed.



DATE PACK FIRST COMPLETED:

REVIEW DATE:	REVIEWED BY (NAME):

HOW TO USE THE SAFE METHODS

Front

The 'Safety point' column highlights things that are important to make food safely.

The 'Why' column tells you why the safety point is important.

The 'How do you do this?' column is for you to write down what you do.
In some places you only need to tick a box and in other places write a small amount.

Pictures help to illustrate the safety points.

SAFE METHOD:
DEFROSTING

Harmful bacteria can grow in food that is not defrosted properly.

SAFETY POINT	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
Food should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking (unless the manufacturer's instructions tell you to cook from frozen or you have a proven safe method).	If food is still frozen or partially frozen, it will take longer to cook. The outside of the food could be cooked, but the centre might not be, which means it could contain harmful bacteria.	Do you check food is thoroughly defrosted before cooking? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If not, what do you do?
OPTIONS FOR DEFROSTING FOOD		
1. Ideally, plan ahead to leave enough time and space to defrost small amounts of food in the fridge.	Putting food in the fridge will keep it at a safe temperature while it is defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> How much time do you allow for defrosting?
2. If you cannot defrost food in the fridge, you could put it in a container and then place it under cold running water.	Cold water will help to speed up defrosting without allowing the outside of the food to get too warm.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?
3. Raw meat and poultry (including large joints and whole birds) should not be defrosted under cold running water unless they are in a sealed container. For more information visit the FSA website	Harmful bacteria could be spread contaminating sinks, taps and surfaces.	How do you defrost raw meat and poultry?
4. If you use the sink to defrost some foods, make sure the sink is clean and empty. The sink should be cleaned and then disinfected after being used for defrosting.	Cold running water will help speed up defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?

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Back

Some safe methods have a 'Check it' section, which tells you what to look for to make sure your method has worked.

The 'What to do if things go wrong' column gives practical tips on how to tackle problems.

The 'How to stop this happening again' column tells you how you can prevent problems.

If things go wrong, write down what happened and what you did in your diary. Each safe method reminds you to do this.

SAFE METHOD:
DEFROSTING

SAFETY POINTS	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
5. Or you could defrost food in the microwave on the 'defrost' setting.	This is a fast way to defrost food.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?
6. If necessary you could defrost food at room temperature. Follow the manufacturer's defrosting instructions. Food should be left out at room temperature for the shortest time possible. Ideally, defrost these foods in the fridge.	Foods will defrost quite quickly at room temperature, but harmful bacteria could grow in food if it gets too warm while defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?
7. If you have another method of defrosting, write the details here:		Which foods do you defrost in this way?
THINK TWICE!		
Keep meat/poultry separate from other food when it is defrosting, to prevent cross-contamination. Once food has been defrosted you should use it immediately (within one day).		
CHECK IT	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
When you think food has defrosted, it is important to check to make sure.	The outside may look defrosted but the inside could still be frozen.	Check for ice crystals in the food using your hand or a skewer. Do you use this check? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> With birds, check the joints are flexible. Do you use this check? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If you use another check, write the details here:
WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG		HOW TO STOP THIS HAPPENING AGAIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If food has not fully defrosted, continue to defrost the food until no ice crystals are left. Test again before cooking or reheating. Speed up the defrosting process e.g. by using cold water or a microwave (see the front of this sheet). Use an alternative menu item. If you do not have time to defrost for longer, replace the dish with a similar dish that is ready to serve. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change your defrosting method and make it safer, e.g. defrost smaller amounts. Make sure you allow enough time to defrost. Train staff again on this safe method. Improve staff supervision. If you defrost lots of food in your business you may wish to consider creating extra fridge space or using a special defrosting cabinet.

Write down what went wrong and what you did about it in your diary.

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Sometimes the pictures are marked with one of these symbols:



HOW TO USE THE DIARY



The diary should be filled in every day by the person responsible for running the business. There is also a 4-weekly review so you can look back at previous weeks and identify any persistent problems.

Fill in the date at the start of the week.

Each day, tick here to say you have completed your Opening checks and your Closing checks – see the Management section for more information on these.

If anything different happens or something goes wrong, make a note of it under the appropriate day.

Each day, write your name and sign to say that all the safe methods have been followed.

If you do any Extra checks, (e.g. something you don't do every day such as maintenance of equipment or cleaning the freezer) make a note in the section at the end of the week – see the Management section for more information on these.

Week commencing: _____

Monday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?
Opening checks Closing checks
Name _____ Signed _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Friday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?
Opening checks Closing checks
Name _____ Signed _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Tuesday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?
Opening checks Closing checks
Name _____ Signed _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Saturday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?
Opening checks Closing checks
Name _____ Signed _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Wednesday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?
Opening checks Closing checks
Name _____ Signed _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Sunday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?
Opening checks Closing checks
Name _____ Signed _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Thursday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?
Opening checks Closing checks
Name _____ Signed _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Extra checks
Any problems or changes – what did you do?
Name _____ Signed _____

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QUESTIONS

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Work through the pack one section at a time and complete all the safe methods that are relevant to your business. It will take you about one hour to complete a section. We suggest you do one section at a time, for example one a week so that it is just one hour of your time to get started.

When you have worked through all the sections, make sure you and your staff:

- follow the safe methods all the time
- fill in the diary every day

HOW DO I USE THE 'WORKING WITH FOOD?' FACTSHEET

Use the 'Working with food?' factsheet to train your staff on good personal hygiene on their first day at work. It has been designed to help overcome language difficulties. Food Safety Coaching videos are available on the [FSA YouTube channel](#).

HOW WILL I BENEFIT FROM USING THIS PACK?

Using the pack in your business will help you to:

- comply with food hygiene regulations
- show what you do to make food safely
- train staff
- protect your business's reputation
- improve your business, e.g. by wasting less food
- improve your Food Hygiene Rating

DO I NEED TO KEEP LOTS OF DAILY RECORDS?

No, you do not need lots of daily records. Once you have worked through the pack and completed all the relevant safe methods, you only need to fill in the diary each day.

It is a legal requirement to keep a record of what food products you have bought, who you bought them from, the quantity, the date and allergen information. Usually the easiest way to do this is to keep all your invoices and receipts.

DO I NEED TO USE A TEMPERATURE PROBE?

You can use this pack in your business without using a temperature probe. However, use of a probe is the best way to provide reassurance what you are doing is safe when cooking, reheating, hot holding or chilling. See the 'Prove it' safe method in the Management section.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

For more information on food safety, visit [the FSA website](#).

If unsure about any of the guidance in this pack, you can contact the Environmental Health Team at your local council.

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FOOD HYGIENE RATINGS

INTRODUCTION TO FOOD HYGIENE RATINGS



Following a food safety inspection from your local council, your business will receive a Food Hygiene Rating as part of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Food Hygiene Ratings help customers choose where to eat or buy food – high ratings are good for business.

Ratings are a snapshot of the standards of food hygiene & safety found at the time of inspection, however it is the responsibility of the business to comply with food law at all times.

Your Food Hygiene Rating is based on:

- Hygienic handling of food including preparation, cooking, re-heating, cooling and storage
- Cleanliness and condition of facilities and building - including appropriate layout, ventilation, hand washing facilities and pest control
- Hygienic management of food safety including the system or checks in place to ensure food sold or served is safe to eat, and that food safety is always well managed and good standards maintained

UNDERSTANDING FOOD HYGIENE RATINGS



Following an inspection your business will be given a rating between 0 and 5:

5 – hygiene standards are very good

4 – hygiene standards are good

3 – hygiene standards are generally satisfactory

2 – some improvement is necessary

1 – major improvement is necessary

0 – urgent improvement is required

Using this pack properly, following the safe methods and completing the diary correctly will help ensure you are complying with the law and maximise your Food hygiene Rating.

If you run a food business in Wales or Northern Ireland you must display your Food Hygiene Rating sticker at each entrance where it can clearly be seen by customers. Food businesses in England are encouraged to do the same.

Following an inspection, businesses can appeal their rating, have a 'right to reply' and can request a re-visit from their local council.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The Environmental Health Team at your local council will be able to provide more advice on how to make sure you have a good food hygiene rating. Every business should be able to achieve a 5 - Very Good.

More information is available on [the FSA website](https://www.food.gov.uk).

If unsure about any of the guidance in this pack, you can contact the Environmental Health Team at your local council.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START

It is easy for you to spread bacteria and viruses to food without realising. These bacteria are invisible and could make customers ill. Your personal hygiene is important. This is what you need to do to keep food safe:

BEFORE YOU START WORKING WITH FOOD



Always wash your hands



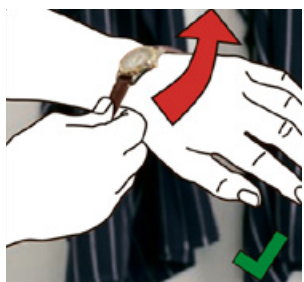
Wear clean clothes



Wear an apron if handling unwrapped food



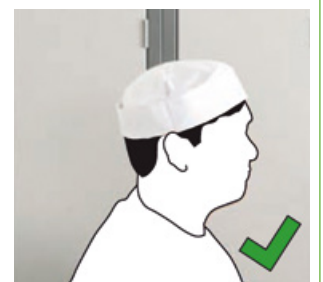
Tell your manager if you have vomiting or diarrhoea and do not work with food



Take off your watch and jewellery



It is a good idea to tie hair back and wear a hat or hairnet



WHEN YOU ARE WORKING WITH FOOD



No smoking



No eating or drinking



Avoid touching your face, coughing or sneezing over food



Cover cuts with a brightly coloured waterproof dressing

WASHING HANDS EFFECTIVELY



Step 1: Wet your hands thoroughly under warm running water and squirt liquid soap onto your palm



Step 2: Rub your hands together palm to palm to make a lather



Step 3: Rub the palm of one hand along the back of the other and along the fingers. Repeat with the other hand



Step 4: Put your palms together with fingers interlocked and rub in between each of the fingers thoroughly



Step 5: Rub around your thumbs on each hand and then rub the fingertips of each hand against your palms



Step 6: Rinse off the soap with clean running water and dry your hands thoroughly on a disposable towel. Turn off the tap with the towel and then throw the towel away

WHEN TO WASH HANDS



Before touching or handling any food, especially ready-to-eat food



After going to the toilet



After every break



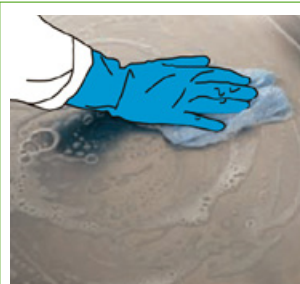
After touching raw meat, poultry, fish, eggs or unwashed vegetables



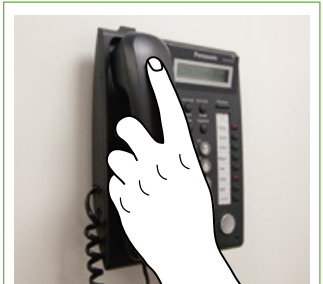
After touching a cut or changing a dressing



After touching or emptying bins



After any cleaning



After touching phones, light switches, door handles, cash registers and money