



*Business Regulation Solutions*  
**Food & Safety**  
**Newsletter**

NEW  
INTERACTIVE  
EDITION!

***Welcome to the third newsletter from Business Regulation Solutions.***

This edition is devoted to Food Safety designed to support all food related businesses. The newsletter has been created with contributions from Environmental Health Officers across Greater Manchester and Blackburn with Darwen. We aim to keep businesses informed about the latest services, legal requirements, scams, helpful tips and guidance to comply with the law and other matters that may affect your business.

Please read on...don't wait to find out the hard way!



# Good Hygiene is Good for your Business



## New scheme for rating hygiene standards in food outlets

Greater Manchester councils will be introducing the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) in their local areas in 2011. This national scheme, developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in partnership with local authorities, provides information on hygiene standards in food outlets at the time they are inspected by the local authority food safety officer to help people to choose where to eat out or shop for food.

Restaurants, takeaways, cafés, sandwich shops, pubs and hotels, schools, hospitals and residential care homes, as well as food retailers such as supermarkets, bakeries, and delicatessens will be given a rating. This will be on a scale ranging from zero at the bottom (which means 'urgent improvement necessary') to a top rating of five ('very good').

This rating reflects the standards of hygiene that the local authority food safety officer finds when food premises are inspected. It takes account of:

- how hygienically the food is handled;
- the condition of the structure of the premises;

- and how food safety is managed and documented.

Any business, no matter how small, should be able to achieve the top rating and the scheme includes safeguards to make sure the rating is fair.

Ratings will be available for anyone to view on the FSA website at [food.gov.uk/ratings](http://food.gov.uk/ratings) and businesses will be given a sticker and certificate and encouraged to display these at the entrance to their premises. This means that customers can easily see them and decide if they want to go in.

The scheme recognises businesses with good hygiene standards, providing a positive advertisement to customers - "good hygiene is good for your business."

For more information see:

[www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)

and contact the environmental health team at your Local Authority for details of when the scheme will be rolled out in your area.



# Good Hygiene Practices in the Workplace

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## Exclusion of food handlers from work

People who have diarrhoea or vomiting can pass their infection on to others, either directly or by contaminating food or drink they prepare or handle for other people. Food businesses have a duty to protect customers from food poisoning by ensuring that staff who may pose a risk to other staff or to customers are excluded from work.

Anyone who has diarrhoea or vomiting, whether or not they handle food at work, should stay away from work until they have had no diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 48 hours. People with severe or prolonged diarrhoea should seek advice from their family doctor, and provide a specimen for testing if asked to do so.

For most infections (such as salmonella, campylobacter, cryptosporidium and giardia) no further specimens are needed and the staff member can return to work when they have been well for 48 hours.

For some infections, food handlers who have been ill, or who have been in close contact with someone who has been ill, may be asked to stay off work until they have had satisfactory test results on faeces specimens. This advice will come from an Environmental Health Officer or from the Health Protection Agency. Examples of infections where staff may not be allowed to handle food until there are satisfactory laboratory results include typhoid, paratyphoid, E coli O157 and some kinds of dysentery.

In some businesses it may be possible to offer alternative work to food handlers who do not have symptoms but who have not yet had the necessary satisfactory test results. This must be discussed with an Environmental Health Officer before the member of staff is allowed back to work to ensure that there is no significant risk of infection to others.

## Cross contamination

Cross contamination is one of the most common causes of food poisoning. Foods such as raw meats and unwashed raw vegetables can contain harmful bacteria. Raw foods can be made safe by thorough cooking which kills bacteria. However, the harmful bacteria on these foods can be spread to high risk foods such as cooked / ready-to-eat foods, either by direct contact or indirectly via people and objects.

Direct contamination occurs by the source of bacteria touching the high-risk food. For example when cooked meats touch raw meats whilst on display or when raw meat is stored above ready to eat foods in a refrigerator and the juices from the raw meat drip onto the food stored below.

Indirect contamination occurs where the bacteria are passed from the source to the cooked /ready to eat foods via something else such as a worktop, hands, equipment such as chopping boards, meat slicers and cloths.

Regardless of the method, it is important to stop the spread of bacteria, to help prevent food poisoning.

## Measures to prevent cross contamination

There are simple measures food businesses can put in place to prevent cross contamination and ensure that the food they make or sell from their premises is safe to eat. These include:

- Keep raw and cooked / ready to eat foods separate. Store raw food in one refrigerator and cooked food in another. If this is impossible, make sure the cooked / ready to eat food is stored above raw food.
- Keep food covered to stop it being contaminated by people and pests such as insects and rodents.
- Do not use the same equipment or surfaces for cutting or preparing raw food then cooked / ready to eat food. If this is not possible, make sure that equipment and surfaces used for raw food are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before cooked / ready to eat food is prepared on them.
- Humans can be a source of harmful bacteria so always wash hands before preparing food and after doing anything that could contaminate them, such as visiting the toilet, after handling raw food or rubbish.

The Food Standards Agency has issued guidance for food businesses to clarify the steps that they need to take to control cross contamination and what businesses should be doing to protect their customers. See:

[www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes](http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes)

# Campylobacter - A Major Cause of Food Poisoning

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Campylobacter infection continues to be the most common cause of gastrointestinal disease in the UK and elsewhere, with a marked increase of 17% in the number of cases between 2008 and 2009. Eating inadequately cooked meat, and drinking untreated water or un-pasteurised milk can all be factors associated with Campylobacter infection.

## What is the most common cause of infection?

The handling of raw chicken and eating undercooked chicken is the most common cause with over 60% of raw poultry meat being contaminated. For this reason reducing the contamination of chicken by Campylobacter is a priority for the Food Standards Agency (FSA) over the coming years.

In recent years the consumption of poultry livers, in particular poultry liver pâté has specifically been identified as a risk factor for, not least due to the culinary trend of serving or preparing foods using livers which are “pink” which means that Campylobacter organisms are not destroyed by the cooking process.

FSA Guidance on Cooking Offal Liver, kidneys, and other types of offal should be handled hygienically to avoid cross-contamination and cooked thoroughly until they are steaming hot all the way through, reaching a core temperature of 70°C for two minutes or equivalent. The equivalent heat treatments are:

- 65°C: 10 minutes
- 70°C: 2 minutes
- 75°C: 30 seconds
- 80°C: 6 seconds

## Tackling contamination of raw poultry

Improving kitchen hygiene would be one way of reducing Campylobacter infections, but it is likely to be far more effective to tackle the Campylobacter organisms on chicken carcasses at source.

The FSA has made a number of recommendations regarding the hygienic handling of raw poultry including the effective cooking and more secure packaging of raw poultry.

It has also recognised the need to work with industry to reduce the levels of contamination of raw poultry during the production process to spread “good farming” practices and biosecurity measures which are critical to bring about effective intervention.



# New Health Schemes - Healthy Start & ASK Campaign



Healthy Start is a national scheme run by the Department of Health to help pregnant women and children under four in low income families eat more healthily.

Women who are eligible to join the scheme will receive vouchers to exchange at participating retailers for:-

- liquid cow`s milk
- fresh fruit
- fresh vegetables
- infant formula milk

They can also use the vouchers to obtain vitamin supplements at registered centres.

In Greater Manchester the Food Liason and Food Standards Groups in partnership with the Public Health Network are committed to promoting healthy eating across the region. In order to increase the number of retail outlets signed up to the Healthy Start Scheme, Officers in all the GM authorities have targeted 200 retailers by the end of February.

In order to find out more about the scheme visit the website [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk) or contact your local Environmental Health or Trading Standards Sections.

## Halt before you salt - ASK Campaign

Many people are trying hard to control what they eat and reducing the amount of salt they put in and on their food. Eating less salt can help to reduce raised blood pressure and the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Much of the salt in diets comes from processed foods, however, estimates suggest that the salt added in cooking or at the table accounts for 19% of the total amount eaten. On average adults in Greater Manchester eat 9g of salt every day, but should only eat a maximum of 6g. Children must have much less.

A lot of work is going on to reduce salt in everyday foods. It's also easy to cut down by not adding salt to food which is already salted.



Directors of Public Health across Greater Manchester Authorities are supporting the national salt reduction campaign ASK. Environmental Health Officers are visiting restaurants and cafes to provide advice about the ASK salt reduction initiative and how businesses can encourage customers to ask for salt by taking it off their tables.

Signage and information will be provided to encourage customers to ask for salt if they really require it.

Consumers will need to allow time to adjust as it may take 2 - 4 weeks for taste buds to adapt to a lower salt diet. After this, people find that foods with a strong salty flavour taste unpleasant because their salt receptors are more sensitive to the taste of salt. Better still, the taste of natural flavours will become more apparent, more enjoyable and food can be tasted as the cook intended!

Look out for posters and stickers in libraries, sports centres and lots of public buildings. If you would like a pack for your business or further information about the ASK campaign, please contact your local council's food team.

# Food Allergies - What Caterers Need to Know

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In the UK at least ten people die every year from an allergic reaction to food and many more end up in hospital due to complications. The ingredients most commonly associated with severe reactions are peanuts; tree nuts (such as almonds), fish and shellfish; seeds (such as sesame), milk and egg. Extremely small amounts can trigger extreme allergic reactions in sensitive people.

## Looking after your customers

If someone with a food allergy asks you whether a dish contains a certain food, you should never guess the answer. Find out further information from the customer by discussing the ingredients included within the dish and whether you can safely prepare the dish.

## Top Tips

1. Ensure there is always a nominated person on duty who knows, or can find out, all of the ingredients in all of the dishes on your menu.
2. Ask your suppliers to provide you with accurate written details about all ingredients, including any planned changes.

3. Try to avoid the indiscriminate use of nuts, e.g. chopped nuts as a garnish, unless this is an essential part of the recipe.
4. If a dish is meant to contain certain ingredients, why not make sure this is reflected in the name: e.g. nut and carrot salad, and apply this consistently.
5. Include a prominent statement on the menu encouraging customers with severe allergies to question staff. For example, this could state: "Some of our dishes contain nuts. If you are allergic to nuts, please ask what dishes would be suitable for you to eat."
6. Organise a staff training session on allergies. Make sure that all new staff members (including part-time and casual staff) are aware of serious allergies and know how to handle a customer enquiry.

For further details on BRS's Allergy Awareness course, please click here or go to:

[www.business-regulation-solutions.co.uk/services/488](http://www.business-regulation-solutions.co.uk/services/488)

The Food Standards Agency has lots of information on food allergy and intolerance, including research, labelling, advice to caterers, guidance notes and on-line training. See:

[www.food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/](http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/)



# Waste disposal



All businesses are required to have proper arrangements for the collection of their trade refuse. Collection can only be carried out by a person legally authorised to do so - a registered waste carrier.

The Environment Agency operates an On-line **Public Register** where you can check to find a registered waste carrier or check the validity of someone claiming to be a registered Waste Carrier.

You should keep records eg transfer notes and receipts, to identify what the collector had taken, where it was sent, the quantity, the date of collection and the collector. These records must be kept for 2 years.

## Waste in Food Rooms

- Food waste should be placed in containers and removed frequently from food handling areas where it is produced.
- Sufficient containers should be provided and placed conveniently where the waste occurs.

## Food Waste Awaiting Collection

- Refuse containers used for the storage of waste should have a close fitting lid to prevent access to flies and reduce unwanted smells. The containers must be made of a durable material which is easy to clean and disinfect.
- Other waste such as clean cardboard and paper need not be placed in a sealed container but must be kept separate from food and must be stored in such a way as to not pose a risk of contamination to food.
- Refuse stores must be designed and managed in such a way as to enable them to be kept clean, and protected against access by pests. Refuse stores should, ideally, be located away from food storage and handling areas and must not give rise to the risk of contamination of food or drinking water

## Waste oil

- Waste cooking oil must be stored properly so that none is allowed to spill and that it is collected by an authorised collector.
- The oil must not be poured down drains or sewers because this leads to blockages and odour or vermin problems and may also cause pollution of watercourses. Such action could also result in potential prosecution.
- Waste cooking oil should NOT be disposed of with the rest of the catering or kitchen waste because it may cause spillages leading to odour or pollution problems or waste contractors may refuse to remove it.
- Waste cooking oil should NOT be taken to household recycling centres (also known as Civic Amenity sites or CA sites) for disposal in engine oil banks. CA sites are not for commercial waste and placing cooking oil into an oil bank will render the entire contents of the drums unsuitable for recycling.

# Keeping your Food Business Pest-Free



Preventing pest infestations is an important part of running any food business. Not only do pests contaminate food stuffs they can also spread disease, and can cause damage to food supplies, equipment and buildings.

The most important part of pest control is maintaining your premises ensuring they are clean and in good repair, so as not to provide food and shelter for pests.

There are a number of simple precautions you can take in order to prevent an infestation:

## Good Housekeeping

- Keep your premises clean and tidy. Food spillages and waste items to be cleared up straight away.
- Ensure regular cleaning is carried out especially beneath equipment such as cookers, fridges and toasters etc.
- Refuse bins external and internal should be fitted with self closing lids, be rodent proof and be emptied regularly.
- Store foods appropriately, where practicable Keep open foods in airtight storage containers and rotate stock.
- Remove miscellaneous waste items and ensure rooms remain free of clutter.

## Pest Proofing

- Deny pests access into your premises by checking the condition of the structure of the building. Seal any gaps surrounding doors, windows, pipes, ventilation equipment and other entry points.
- Gaps around pipes and cables including sink waste pipes etc where they enter the building should be sealed using sand and cement.
- Fit bristle strips to the bottom of doors where there is a gap greater than a pencil width.
- Ensure food rooms are in good repair. Replace any broken tiles and cracked and damaged work tops etc.
- Keep windows and doors closed when not in use or fit insect proof screens to them.

## Regular monitoring

Early intervention will greatly assist in controlling and reducing the risk of contamination.

- Monitor both your food and premises (particularly stock and store rooms) for signs of pest activity such as droppings, dead bodies, damaged packets of food and packaging materials. Pay attention to areas which are assessed infrequently such as the under-stairs cupboard or ceiling voids.

- Keep foods off the floor in store rooms and maintain a gap between the walls, so as to monitor behind.
- Install electric insect killers (Insectocutors).
- If you notice any signs of pests, deal with them immediately by contacting a reputable pest control company such as your local authority's pest control service. They will be able to advise you of the most appropriate treatment, undertake the work and monitor its effectiveness.
- Consider taking out an annual pest control contract with a reputable pest control company even if you don't have a pest problem.

If you want further advice on a particular pest problem or would like to find out about a monitoring contract then you should contact your local authority pest control service.

You can also visit the British Pest Control Association website [www.bpca.org.uk](http://www.bpca.org.uk) for pest information, or to find a reputable private pest control company.

# Slips in Kitchens

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According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), slips and trips are the most common of workplace hazards and make up over a third of all major injuries. Over 10,000 workers suffered serious injury because of a slip or trip last year.

Slip accidents in kitchens are very common. Simple measures can be taken to ensure that slip accidents in kitchens are reduced. The HSE have developed the following tips to help stop slips in kitchens:-

- **Stop spillages** - Maintain equipment to prevent leaks, fit drip trays, supply lids and review the way people work.
- **Carry out effective floor cleaning** - Check you have the right system in place, carry it out at the right time, in the right way.
- **Get the most from your team** - inform them of procedures which stop slips, provide training and good supervision
- **Choose an appropriate floor** - when changing your kitchen floor, choose one that can cope with water and grease and still be non-slip
- **Keep food off the floor** - Don't overfill containers, don't push food on the floor, use lids, use trays.

- **Deal with Spillages** - Clean them up, then dry the floor, don't leave them
- **Floor Cleaning** - Don't cut corners, follow instructions, use the right equipment and leave floors dry
- **Keep on your feet** - Wear shoes with good grip, that will stay firmly on your feet and keep the soles clean
- **To stop slips in kitchens** - See it, sort it.

For further information on slips and trips, go to the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk/slips/kitchens/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/kitchens/) where you will find lots of useful advice on the causes of slips and how to prevent them and training resources to help you make your staff aware of the risks.

Or contact your local Environmental Health Department.



# Gas Safety & Your Business

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It is important to get your gas appliances regularly serviced to make sure that they are working efficiently and safely.

Regulation 35 of Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 requires all employers to ensure that gas appliances, flues, pipe work and safety devices are maintained in a safe condition.

## How often should inspections be carried out?

Gas appliances should be inspected at regular intervals by a competent person in accordance with current industry practice.

The periods between inspections may vary depending on the equipment and its use and should follow manufacturer's recommendations, but generally appliances should be inspected once a year as a minimum.

## What about residential landlords?

Residential landlords must have all appliances and flues checked every 12 months by a Gas Safe registered contractor, and are required to provide tenants with a copy of the report (landlord's gas safety record) within 28 days.

This requirement applies to all residential accommodation (whether rented or occupied under a license) including hotels, guest houses, bedsits, communal kitchens, tied accommodation, holiday boats, caravans and staff accommodation.

## What should a service include?

A service should include:

- A thorough clean of the appliance
- Checking the flue or chimney to make sure the fumes are being safely removed to outside
- Checking there is an adequate supply of fresh air so that the gas burns properly
- Checking the appliance is burning the gas properly
- Checking that all safety devices are working properly and will shut off the appliance, if a fault occurs

## How do I ensure a contractor is competent to carry out work on gas appliances?

To make sure that a contractor is competent and is qualified to work safely and legally with gas you should always employ a Gas Safe registered (formerly CORGI) engineer. You can find a Gas Safe registered engineer in your area or check that they are qualified to work on

commercial appliances by calling 0800 408 5500 or by logging on to the Gas Safe Register website at: [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

Every engineer will carry a Gas Safe Register ID card with their own unique license number, showing the type of gas work they are qualified to do.

Before any gas work is carried out, always make sure you ask to see their Gas Safe Register ID card. You can also contact your local Environmental Health department for further advice.



# Registration of Food Businesses

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If you are a Food Business Operator, it is a legal requirement (in most cases) to register your food business establishment with the local authority in whose area the business is situated.

Registration is simple to do and does not cost anything. You can request an application for registration of a food business establishment from the relevant local authority or download it from their website.

## Starting a new food business

If you are planning to start a new food business, you must ensure that you:

- Complete and return the registration form at least 28 days before starting to trade.
- Discuss your plans with your local environmental health department to ensure you do not require a product specific approval for the type of food you are intending to produce.

Further information on starting up a food business is also available on the Food Standards Agency website at:

[www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)

## Taking over an existing business

You must also register if you take over an existing business as a new food business operator.

## I only sell drinks do I need to register?

Yes - it is important to remember that the definition of food includes drinks so if, for example, you run a pub which only sells drinks, your business is still classed as a food business and the requirement to register applies.

## I only have a small business do I need to register?

Yes - it is not dependent on size. Mobile catering trailers, markets and people running food businesses from home are all required to register. (Mobile units may trade in different areas but the operator should register them with the local authority in whose area the unit is kept or garaged overnight).

## Who is exempt from registration?

There are some activities which do not need to be registered and these include the occasional handling of food by private persons at events such as church, school or village fairs. However, a regular event such as a weekly church lunch club would be a food business and need to be registered.

If you need any advice on registration, contact the environmental health team at your local authority.



# Food Safety Training

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## Training of Food Handlers and Managers

Anyone working in a food business should have some kind of training in food safety. There are nationally recognised qualifications which meet the UK's National Occupational Standards. These qualifications cover Catering, Food Retailing, Food Manufacture and HACCP, and are assigned to a particular national learning level. Different levels of qualification will be appropriate for different food handlers and / or managers, bearing in mind the requirements of the legislation and the activities they undertake in the business:

**Level 1** - developed to raise awareness of key food safety issues and to provide employees with an induction to food hygiene, prior to undertaking the Level 2 Award in Food Safety. Level 1 provides an ideal solution to staff induction training. They are also well suited to individuals handling low risk or wrapped foods

**Level 2** - For anyone working in a catering, manufacturing or retail setting where food is prepared, cooked and handled.

**Level 3** - For Managers and supervisors in small, medium or large catering, manufacturing or retail businesses. Particularly relevant for those who have to develop or monitor HACCP based food safety management procedures and systems.

**Level 4** - For managers, supervisors and senior hygiene personnel including food business owners, trainers, production managers and hygiene auditors.

More details on these courses can be found on the Business Regulation Solutions Website at:

[www.business-regulation-solutions.co.uk](http://www.business-regulation-solutions.co.uk)

Or ring the team for further advice and assistance on **0161 233 2695**.



# Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB)

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Article 5 of EC Regulation 852 requires all food businesses to put in place, implement and maintain a permanent procedure or procedures based on HACCP principles. Except for the most simple activities this involves a written system.

To aid businesses to comply with the above requirement the Food Standards Agency has developed a pack for small catering businesses called Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB) which integrates good hygienic practices and HACCP in a practical way:

- There are a number of SFBB packs available that are designed to meet the specific needs of different food businesses.
- There are packs for small catering businesses, small retail businesses, and restaurants and takeaways that serve different cuisines, such as Chinese or Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan cuisines.
- There is also a pack for childminders and a supplement for care homes that is designed to be used with the pack for caterers.
- To accompany the SFBB packs an introduction to food hygiene 'Working with food? What you need to know before you start' and a DVD guide, available in 16 different languages, have been produced to help food businesses implement SFBB and train staff on SFBB.

- The guide can be viewed online at [www.food.gov.uk/sfbtraining](http://www.food.gov.uk/sfbtraining) or you can download a copy to your computer.

If you would like to order an SFBB pack or the DVD guide call Food Standards Agency Publications on 0845 606 0667 or email [foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk](mailto:foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk)

BRS run seminars on SFBB and provide one to one support for businesses assisting them to implement. They also provide on-line learning materials to support businesses with their food safety management systems. For more details contact 0161 233 2695 or email [info@business-regulation-solutions.co.uk](mailto:info@business-regulation-solutions.co.uk)



# Business Regulation Solutions

## Business Regulation Solutions

Business Regulation Solutions regularly run open courses across the Greater Manchester, Warrington and Blackburn areas in the following subjects:

- CIEH Food Safety Level 2, 3 & 4
- CIEH Health & Safety Level 2
- Level 2 Food Safety Refresher
- CIEH Level 2 Risk Assessment
- Fire Marshal
- Fire Risk Assessment
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- First Aid at Work
- IOSH courses

We also offer a range of bespoke training and consultancy services providing a regulatory audit for your business, undertaking or facilitating a health & safety/fire risk assessment, provision of Display Energy Certificates and Energy Performance Certificates service.

To find out more contact a member of the team on 0845 608 3388 or visit our website [www.business-regulation-solutions.co.uk](http://www.business-regulation-solutions.co.uk)

Business Regulation Solutions was established as a partnership between Manchester Solutions, Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service, the Greater Manchester Local Authorities and Warrington Council to provide training and consultancy support to businesses to help them with their compliance with a wide range of business regulations. These include fire safety, licensing, trading standards, environmental protection, food safety and health & safety.



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