



Somerset
Council

HSG05

Food Safety Guidance.

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Food Safety Guidance
Author	Pam Price
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Purpose of this Guidance

The aim of this document is to confirm Somerset Council's commitment to maintaining the highest standard of food safety and to give guidance and instruction to all relevant personnel on the Council's requirements to satisfy both the applicable legislation and good industry practice.

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1 Contacts for food safety advice

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2 Transporting food in containers

Regulation 852/2004, Annex II, Chapter IV specifies requirements for conveyances and/or containers used for transporting foodstuffs namely:

- a) Conveyances and/or containers used for transporting food stuffs must be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition to protect foodstuffs from contamination and are, where necessary, designed and constructed to permit adequate cleaning and/or disinfection.
- b) Receptacles in vehicles and/or containers are not to be used for transporting anything other than foodstuffs where this may result in contamination.
- c) Where conveyances and/or containers are used for transporting anything in addition to foodstuffs or for transporting different foodstuffs at the same time, there is, where necessary, to be effective separation of products.
- d) Where conveyances and/or containers have been used for transporting anything else other than foodstuffs or for transporting different foodstuffs, there is to be effective cleaning between loads to avoid risk of contamination.
- e) Foodstuffs in conveyances and/or containers are to be so placed and protected as to minimise the risk of contamination.
- f) Where necessary, conveyances and/or containers are used for transporting foodstuffs are to be capable of maintaining foodstuffs at appropriate temperatures and allow those temperatures to be monitored.

3 Maintenance of premises and equipment

Article 4(2) Regulation 852/2004, Annex II, Chapter I

General requirements for food premises:

1. Food premises are to be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition.
2. The layout, design, construction, siting, and size of food premises are to:
 - a. permit adequate maintenance, cleaning and/or disinfection, avoid or minimise airborne

contamination, and provide adequate working space to allow for hygienic performance of all operations,

- b. be such as to protect against the accumulation of dirt, contact with toxic materials, the shedding of particles into food and the formation of condensation or undesirable mould on surfaces,
- c. permit good food hygiene practices, including protection against contamination and, in particular, pest control; and,
- d. where necessary, provide suitable temperature-controlled handling and storage conditions of sufficient capacity for maintaining foodstuffs at appropriate temperatures and designed to allow those temperatures to be monitored and, where necessary, recorded.

3. An adequate number of flush lavatories are to be available and connected to an effective drainage system. Lavatories are not to open directly into rooms in which food is handled.

4. An adequate number of washbasins is to be available, suitably located for cleaning hands. Washbasins for cleaning hands are to be provided with hot and cold running water, materials for cleaning hands and for hygienic drying. Where necessary, the facilities for washing food are to be separate from the handwashing facility.

5. There is to be suitable and sufficient means of natural or artificial ventilation. Mechanical airflow from a contaminated area to a clean area is to be avoided. Ventilation systems are to be constructed as to enable filters and other parts requiring cleaning or replacement to be readily accessible.

6. Sanitary conveniences are to have adequate natural or mechanical ventilation.

7. Food premises are to have adequate natural and/or artificial lighting.

8. Drainage facilities are to be adequate for the purpose intended. They are to be designed and constructed to avoid the risk of contamination. Where drainage channels are fully or partially open, they are to be so designed as to ensure that waste does not flow from a contaminated area towards or into a clean area, in particular an area where foods likely to present a high risk to the final consumer are handled.

9. Where necessary, adequate changing facilities for personnel are to be provided.

10. Cleaning agents and disinfectants are not to be stored in areas where food is handled.

Article 4(2) Regulation 852/2004, Annex II, Chapter II

Specific requirements in rooms where foodstuffs are prepared treated or processed (excluding dining areas and movable and/or temporary premises).

1. In rooms where food is prepared, treated, or processed the design and layout are to permit good food hygiene practices, including protection against contamination between and during operations. In particular:

- a) floor surfaces are to be maintained in a sound condition and be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect. This will require the use of impervious non-absorbent; washable and non-toxic materials unless food business operators can satisfy the competent authority that other materials used are appropriate. Where appropriate, floors are to allow adequate surface drainage,

- b) wall surfaces are to be maintained in a sound condition and be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect. This will require the use of impervious, non-absorbent; washable and non-toxic materials and require a smooth surface up to a height appropriate for the operations unless food business operators can satisfy the competent authority that other materials used are appropriate,
- c) ceilings (or where there are no ceilings, the interior surface of the roof) and overhead fixtures are to be constructed and finished so as to prevent the accumulation of dirt and to reduce condensation, the growth of undesirable mould and the shedding of particles,
- d) windows and other openings are to be constructed to prevent the accumulation of dirt. Those which can be opened to the outside environment are, where necessary, to be fitted with insect-proof screens which can be easily removed for cleaning. Where open windows would result in contamination, windows are to remain closed and fixed during production,
- e) doors are to be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect. This will require the use of smooth and non-absorbent surfaces unless food business operators can satisfy the competent authority that other materials used are appropriate; and
- f) surfaces (including surfaces of equipment) in areas where foods are handled and in particular those in contact with food are to be maintained in a sound condition and be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect. This will require the use of smooth, washable corrosion-resistant and non-toxic materials, unless food business operators can satisfy the competent authority that other materials used are appropriate.

2. Adequate facilities are to be provided, where necessary, for the cleaning, disinfecting and storage of working utensils and equipment. These facilities are to be constructed of corrosion-resistant materials, be easy to clean and have an adequate supply of hot and cold water.

3. Adequate provision is to be made, where necessary for washing food. Every sink or other such facility provided for the washing of food is to have an adequate supply of hot and/or cold potable water and be kept clean and, where necessary, disinfected.

Article 4(2) Regulation 852/2004, Annex II, Chapter II

Requirements for movable and/or temporary premises (such as marquees, market stalls, mobile sales vehicles), premises used primarily as a private dwelling house but where foods are regularly prepared for placing on the market and vending machines.

1. Premises and vending machines are, as far as is reasonably practicable, to be so sited, designed, constructed, and kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition as to avoid the risk of contamination, in particular by animals and pests.
2. In particular, where necessary:
 - a) appropriate facilities are to be available to maintain adequate personal hygiene (including facilities for the hygienic washing and drying of hands, hygienic sanitary arrangements and changing facilities),
 - b) surfaces in contact with food are to be in a sound condition and be easy to clean and, where necessary, to disinfect. This will require the use of smooth, washable, corrosion-resistant and non-toxic materials, unless food business operators can satisfy the competent authority that other materials used are appropriate,
 - c) adequate provision is to be made for the cleaning and, where necessary, disinfecting of working utensils and equipment,
 - d) where foodstuffs are cleaned as part of the food business' operations, adequate provision is to be made for this to be undertaken hygienically,

- e) an adequate supply of hot and/or cold potable water is to be available,
- f) adequate arrangements and/or facilities for the hygienic storage and disposal of hazardous and/or inedible substances and waste (whether liquid or solid) are to be available,
- g) adequate facilities and/or arrangements for maintaining and monitoring suitable food temperature conditions are to be available,
- h) foodstuffs are to be so placed as to avoid the risk of contamination as far as is reasonably practicable.

4 E. coli cross-contamination factsheet

Cross-contamination is one of the most common causes of food poisoning, help to prevent it by following this advice.

Harmful bacteria such as E. coli O157, Campylobacter and Salmonella can easily spread to ready-to-eat (RTE) foods, such as salads and cooked foods, through direct contact with raw foods or indirectly by staff, equipment, contaminated surfaces, or cleaning materials.

Contaminated food can make your customers seriously ill and can even kill. This factsheet, if followed correctly, will help you control the risk of cross-contamination within your business.

Avoid **CROSS-CONTAMINATION** by making sure that there is:

1. adequate **SEPARATION** between raw and RTE foods
2. effective **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION** practices
3. good **PERSONAL HYGIENE**, particularly washing hands thoroughly and handling food hygienically; and
4. effective and appropriate **MANAGEMENT CONTROLS AND STAFF TRAINING** in place.

1. SEPARATION

Your food premises must be designed in such a way to permit good food hygiene practices. If possible, you should have separate staff, equipment, utensils and areas for preparing and storing raw and RTE foods. If this is not possible you must consider and put in place the following measures:

- Work areas can be used for both raw and RTE foods, but only if separated by time. Surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before being used for RTE foods. As an additional safety measure, you should not use work surfaces directly to prepare food and instead use a suitable barrier, for example a chopping board or a container, as the food contact surface.
- Staff can handle and prepare both raw and RTE foods, but they must be adequately trained and observe strict hygiene controls, for example they could reduce hand contact by using separate dedicated utensils to touch food. If handling food staff must wash hands between handling raw and RTE foods. It is best practice to use disposable gloves and/or aprons for raw food preparation.
- Storage facilities should be of suitable size so that there is sufficient separation between raw and RTE food to avoid cross-contamination. It is advisable to store raw meat below RTE foods to avoid juices dripping onto RTE food or its packaging. Using sealed containers can also reduce the risk of contamination.

- Utensils including chopping boards, tongs, containers etc. should, where possible, be dedicated for either raw or RTE food and colour coded to help staff identify their use. Where this is not possible, they should be put through a dishwasher between uses. Make sure that dishwashers are properly maintained, loaded correctly, run on a full cycle, and not interrupted once started.
- Sinks: a single sink may be used for washing raw and RTE foods and for washing utensils, but this needs to be managed properly, for example washing RTE foods/utensils before raw food/ utensils. The sink will also need to be effectively cleaned before being used for RTE products. The use of a bowl or colander to wash food is best practice.

Complex equipment:

Vacuum packers, slicers and mincers should not be used for both raw and RTE foods unless you are able to fully dismantle and thoroughly clean all surfaces that could be contaminated. It is unlikely this will be possible during a normal working day, as it will require time being set aside to do this effectively.

For vacuum packers it is unlikely to be practical for a business to regularly change their use as a competent engineer would need to undertake what is a complicated dismantling and reassembling process.

Other types of complex equipment, such as weighing scales, mixers or temperature probes may be used for both raw and RTE foods, if you put in place effective control measures, and take account of:

- The complexity of the machine. For example, some mixers/food processors are more complex and more difficult to clean than simple tabletop varieties,
- The use of the machine. Will it be used for both raw and RTE foods throughout the day, and if so, have you allowed sufficient time between use for cleaning and disinfection; and
- The required control measures, such as how cleaning and disinfection will be undertaken between raw and RTE food. This cleaning and disinfection can be undertaken using the two-stage process described below.

2. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Effective cleaning and disinfection are critical in any food business.

The FSA strongly advises the use of either a dishwasher; a sterilising sink; or a steam cleaner to clean and disinfect equipment.

Chemical disinfection may be appropriate where a dishwasher or heat disinfection is not possible. For example, it may be appropriate to chemically clean a temperature probe that cannot be put through a dishwasher or a work surface that cannot be heat disinfected.

To effectively disinfect areas used for both raw and RTE foods, a two-stage cleaning process must be followed:

Stage 1: use a detergent to clean and remove any visible dirt followed by rinsing with clean water.

Stage 2: disinfect using a disinfectant at the correct dilution and contact time recommended by the chemical manufacturer.

Sanitisers can be used as both a detergent and a disinfectant. When using sanitisers, the two-stage cleaning and disinfection process, as described above, must still be carried out. You should apply the sanitiser first to provide a clean surface and then again to disinfect.

Disinfection will not work on visibly dirty surfaces.

Disinfectants and sanitisers must at least meet the requirements of one of the following standards: BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697; or other standards that meet the same conditions and requirements.

The FSA recommends that you use disposable single-use cloths when cleaning. If this is not possible, make sure you use separate designated cleaning equipment for raw and RTE areas, for example colour coded cloths.

3. PERSONAL HYGIENE

It is essential that staff follow good personal hygiene practices.

Staff should wash and dry their hands thoroughly using a recognised technique, such as the one in the E. coli guidance or in the manuals listed at the end of this factsheet.

It is important that you and your staff wash hands before handling RTE foods, after going to the toilet, after touching raw meat/unwashed raw vegetables or touching surfaces that have come into contact with raw food.

You need to make sure that you have a separate basin that is dedicated for handwashing and is supplied with hot and cold running water, cleaning materials and a hygienic means of drying hands.

Anti-bacterial hand gels should not be used instead of handwashing. They can be used afterwards as an extra level of protection.

You need to make sure that staff wear clean protective clothing and if this becomes soiled it is changed before handling RTE foods. In a catering environment where staff may be preparing raw and RTE foods consecutively, such as during the cooking process, protective clothing may not need to be changed, but care should be taken to ensure clothing does not pose a risk of cross-contamination for RTE foods. For example, if you undertake and raw food preparation that results in food being splashed then the protective clothing should be changed before handling RTE foods.

4. MANAGEMENT CONTROLS AND TRAINING

Make sure that your food safety management systems are up to date, are effective to control the risk of cross-contamination and are being implemented. Staff must be supervised and instructed and/or adequately trained in the procedures / safe methods that are relevant to their job.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The FSA has produced the following manual to help small caterers with the requirements of setting up a food safety management system which include the messages in this factsheet:

- Safer food better business: [Safer food, better business for caterers Food Standards Agency](#)

CONTACTS

Food Standards Agency Helpline: 0330 3327149

E. coli O157 Cross-contamination Factsheet - Caterers December 2014 Issue 3

5 Food allergens

The following information is taken from the FSA's publication; "**Allergen guidance for food businesses,**" published June 2022. All managers should click on the link for the complete information, follow the guidance, print off the leaflet and put a copy into the facility's food safety file.

[Allergen guidance for food businesses | Food Standards Agency](#)

Introduction

Food business operators in the retail and catering sector are required to provide allergen information and follow labelling rules as set out in [Food law](#).

This means that food business operators must:

- provide allergen information to the consumer for both prepacked and non-prepacked food and drink.
- handle and manage food allergens effectively in food preparation.

Food businesses must make sure that staff receive training on allergens. Staff and managers can complete and share the:

- [free food allergy training](#)
- [allergen checklist for food businesses](#)

14 Allergens

Food businesses need to tell customers if any food they provide contain any of the listed allergens as an ingredient.

Consumers may be allergic or have intolerance to other ingredients, but only the 14 allergens are required to be declared as allergens by food law.

The 14 allergens are: **celery, cereals containing gluten** (such as wheat, barley and oats), **crustaceans** (such as prawns, crabs and lobsters), **eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs** (such as mussels and oysters), **mustard, peanuts, sesame, soybeans, sulphur dioxide and sulphites** (if the sulphur dioxide and sulphites are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million) and **tree nuts** (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts).

This also applies to additives, processing aids and any other substances which are present in the final product.

Allergen labelling for different types of food

There are a number of ways in which allergen information can be provided to your customers. You will need to choose the method which is best for your business and the type of food you serve.

Prepacked foods refer to any food put into packaging before being placed on sale, while non-prepacked food (loose food) is unpackaged food. Different allergen labelling rules apply depending on how the food is provided.

The [technical guidance](#) provides a detailed explanation of the labelling requirements for each food type.

Prepacked

Prepacked products refer to any food put into packaging before being placed on sale. Food is prepacked when it:

- is either fully or partly enclosed by the packaging
- cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging
- is ready for sale.

Prepacked food must have an ingredients list present on the packaging. Allergens present in the product must be emphasised each time they appear in the ingredients list.

Prepacked for direct sale

Prepacked for direct sale products are foods that have been packed on the same premises from which they are being sold.

Common foods that can fall into this category include sandwiches, salads and pies made and sold from the premises in which they are made.

[Prepacked for Direct Sale \(PPDS\)](#) foods need to have a label with a full ingredients list with allergenic ingredients emphasised within it.

These changes will provide essential information to help people with a food allergy or intolerance make safe food choices.

Non-prepacked (loose) foods

If you provide non-prepacked foods, you must supply allergen information for every item that contains any of the 14 allergens.

Non-prepacked (loose) foods include:

- foods sold loose in retail outlets.
- foods which are not sold prepacked.

Non-prepacked allergen information requirements can apply to loose items sold at a delicatessen counter, a bakery, a butcher's, as well as meals served in a restaurant, and food from a takeaway.

Free-from, gluten-free and vegan claims

Making free-from claims for foods requires strict controls of ingredients, how they are handled and how they are prepared. A free-from claim is a guarantee that the food is suitable for all with an allergy or intolerance.

For example, if you are handling wheat flour in a kitchen and you cannot remove the risk of cross-contamination through segregation by time and space, you should let the customer know. You should not make any gluten-free or wheat-free claims.

The Food and Drink Federation provides specific information and guidance on [free-from and gluten-free claims](#).

Customers sometimes assume that vegan meals are free-from animal-based allergens (egg, fish, crustaceans, molluscs, milk). This is not always the case as low-level cross-contamination from these ingredients can occur during the production process. You need to be clear about this risk in the food you provide.

The Food and Drink Federation provides specific information and guidance on [allergen-free and vegan claims](#).

Allergen information for different types of food businesses

How you provide allergen information to customers will depend on the type of food business. Food business staff can learn more about providing allergen information by completing the free [food allergy training](#) and by using the [allergen checklist](#).

Food businesses

You must provide allergen information in writing if you sell or provide food to your customers directly. This could be either:

- full allergen information on a menu, chalkboard or in an information pack
- a written notice placed in a clearly visible position explaining how your customers can obtain this information.

When allergen information is provided as part of a conversation with a customer, this can be backed up by written information. This would ensure that it is accurate and consistent.

You can display this [allergy and intolerance sign](#) to tell customers how they can find allergy information, or create your own.

Allergen ingredient recording

You need to make sure that you know what is in the food you provide. You can do this by recording allergen ingredient information in a written format. Allergen ingredients information should be:

- recorded on product specification sheets,
- included on ingredients labels and ingredients should be kept in original or labelled containers,
- included in recipes or explanations of the dishes provided – you need to consider the impact when recipes change,
- up to date.

[Allergen ingredient templates](#) and other training resources may be useful in allergen planning your menu.

Avoiding allergen cross-contamination

It is important for food businesses to take steps to avoid cross-contamination in food preparation to protect customers with a food allergy.

There are a number of actions you can take to prevent cross-contamination with allergens. These include:

- cleaning utensils before each usage, especially if they were used to prepare meals containing allergens,
- washing hands thoroughly between preparing dishes with and without certain allergens
- storing ingredients and prepared foods separately in closed and labelled containers
- keeping ingredients that contain allergens separate from other ingredients,
- allergen cross-contamination can also happen through using the same cooking oil. To cook gluten-free chips, you cannot use the same oil which has been previously used for cooking battered fish.

If you cannot avoid cross-contamination in food preparation, you should inform customers that you can't provide an allergen-free dish.

The Food and Drink Federation provides specific information and guidance on [free-from and gluten-free claims](#).

Dealing with severe allergic reaction

When someone has an allergic reaction to a food it is important that all staff should know what to do. If someone is having an allergic reaction, this is what you should do:

- Do not move the customer, because this could make them worse.
- Call 999 immediately and describe what is happening; explain that you think the customer may be having a serious allergic reaction or anaphylaxis (pronounced anna-fill-axis). It is important to mention the word anaphylaxis to ensure that the urgency of the situation is communicated, and that appropriate medication will be available.
- Ask the customer if they carry an adrenaline pen and, if necessary, help them retrieve it. If a staff member or first aider is trained in administering adrenaline and the customer is struggling to self-administer, then offer to assist them.
- Send someone outside to wait for the ambulance while you stay with your customer until help arrives.

Dealing with allergen information: A quick checklist

1. When someone asks you if a food contains a particular ingredient, always check every time – never guess.
2. If you are selling a food that contains one or more allergenic ingredients, list them on the card, label, chart or menu – and make sure the information is kept up to date and is accurate.
3. Keep up-to-date ingredients information for any ready-made foods that you use (for example, ready-made sandwich filling). The ingredients are usually on the label or invoice.
4. When you are making food, keep a record of all the ingredients (and what they contain), including cooking oils, dressings, toppings, sauces and garnishes.
5. If you change the ingredients of a food, make sure you update your ingredients information and tell your staff about the change.
6. If someone asks you to make food that does not contain a particular ingredient, don't say yes unless you can be absolutely sure that none of that ingredient will be in the food.

7. If you are making food for someone with an allergy, make sure work surfaces and equipment have been thoroughly cleaned. And wash your hands thoroughly before preparing that food. Control the risks.

Enforcement and penalties

Apart from the possibility of making a customer seriously ill, you could also face the risk of financial and reputational damage to your food business if you fail to comply with allergen information requirements. Local authorities enforce allergen information regulations. Failure to comply can result in action from the local authority.

If you fail to act on advice given by the local authority, an improvement notice may be issued. If you do not meet the requirements of this notice, you will be issued with a penalty.

Useful resources

[Allergens chef recipe cards](#)

[Food Standards Agency food allergy online training](#)

[Allergen guidance for food businesses](#)

[Coeliac UK for gluten information](#)

6 More information

Free online allergen training:

<http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/>

For information and advice about food allergies and intolerances, visit the Food Standards Agency website:

www.food.gov.uk/allergy

For information on the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation 1169/2011 visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/proposed_legislation_en.htm

For information on gluten, visit the Coeliac UK website: www.coeliac.org.uk

For the Department of Education school food standards practical guide:

[School food standards: resources for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Allergen advice, training and posters in other languages from Trading Standards: [Food allergen resources](#)

Review and Revision

This Guidance will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 36 months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision

Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date