

So you think you understand Food Hygiene and Safety Regulations

Do you fully comply?

**Completing this initial review check-list will tell you
where you are now**



Food Hygiene and Food Safety Regulations explained

Introduction

The Initial Review Check-list

Under Food regulations:

1. ***Primary responsibility for food safety rests with the food business operator.***
2. ***Food business operators shall provide the competent authority with evidence of their compliance in the manner that the competent authority requires, taking account of the nature and size of the food business***

The object of this initial review check-list is to enable you to identify strengths and weaknesses in your compliance with food regulations. ***This will give you the opportunity to improve areas of weakness ahead of any inspection by your local EHP.***

Not all of the issues listed apply equally to all businesses. If an issue within the check-list does not apply to your business, please pass on to the next.

Why is completing the check-list important?

Before you take a driving test you would read the Highway Code. This to ensure that you understand the rules of the road as well as the skills of making the car go.

When running a food business you need to know the rules of the trade as well as the skills of business. They are the things that will be looked at and assessed during your normal Council inspection visit.* The Check-list enables you to:

1. Identify areas of weakness.
2. Find out where to obtain further information.

**** A recent survey showed that only 17% of food businesses fully understood what they were assessed on.***

You will note that there is no section devoted to HACCP. This is deliberate as HACCP covers all the risks in your business. Environmental Health Officers tell us that the most frequent cause of criticism is that a business cannot demonstrate that it is doing all the things it says it does. HACCP is the discipline that looks at the risks at each stage. It identifies which risks could be serious and so a hazard. It then creates the habits of making each risk as small as possible.

Using the Check-list

The Check-list covers the subjects that you should be aware of when running a food operation.

Each subject is set out using the same format.

1. **Key points** – this tells you why the regulation is in place.
2. **The minimum legal requirement** - this tells you the minimum you have to do to comply with the regulation.
 - i. The blank row at the bottom of each table is for anything specific to your business, or something your Inspectors may suggest.
3. **Best practice** – tells you if there are issues that you should consider to demonstrate best practice. Best practice is counted as 80% law. If you fail to comply with best practice or industry codes of practice you are not demonstrating due diligence and would have no defence if an incident occurred.
4. **Things that can let you down** – tells you if there are little things that can be easily overlooked.
5. **Further help** – tells you about sources of help and information.

Before you complete the check-list we would recommend that you obtain a copy of:

Safer Food Better Business - The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has laid down criteria for good practice and has issued detailed guidance to the officials and to you through its publication *Safer Food, Better Business* (in Scotland it is called *CookSafe*. The Northern Ireland version is *Safe Catering*). **This tells you how to comply**.. For details of how to obtain a copy see *Further Information* in the appendix on page 29.

Food Solutions Handbook to Food Regulations - This handbook sets out the essential regulations with the official guidance. **This tells you what the law is**. It is available either as a book or on line. For details of how to obtain a copy see *Further Information* in the appendix on page 29.

When you have completed the check-list, you should refer to page 30 for suggestions on what to do next.

How to fill in the Check-list

Each subject has a table listing a series of questions. These questions are designed to enable you to identify areas where you may not be complying with regulations.

Each question has an answer column with 3 options:

Option 1 - if your answer is yes to the question tick the **Yes** box.

Option 2 - if your answer is no to the question tick the **No** box.

Option 3 - if you don't know or are not sure about the question tick the **Not Sure** box.

Example: *Subject: Traceability*

Minimum Requirement to comply with the Regulation	Answer		
	Yes	No	Not sure
If requested could you produce a record of your purchases?	✓		
If requested could you produce a record of your sales to other businesses?	✓		
If there were a problem, could you withdraw and recall goods?		✓	
My concern / Inspector suggested issue			

Step 1

Once you have answered all of the questions on the subject you may have identified areas of weakness.

Step 2

If there are areas of weakness you can now put in place a plan to correct.

Weaknesses	Action to be taken
No system for withdrawing or recalling goods	Do I need such a system? If yes, put in place a system. Get advice from local authority.

We would recommend that you contact your local Trading Standards Department or professional advisor if you have specific queries about your own business.