

Food safety guidance for retail businesses

Harrogate Borough Council's Food and Occupational Safety Division is responsible for enforcing Food Safety within the Harrogate District, which includes retail food businesses.

This type of business raises a number of key food safety issues that you must consider. The information enclosed in this leaflet is designed to assist new and existing businesses to comply with the law whilst running a safe and successful enterprise.





For the purpose of this leaflet you would fall within the category of "retail business" if you sell food such as drinks, ice cream, crisps and snacks even if this is in very small quantities or as an addition to your main business. This may include post offices, newsagents, sweet shops, general stores, garage forecourt shops and chemists. Although most of these products are considered a low food safety risk, as the owner of a food business you will still need to consider the points in this booklet.

Note: In general if you handle any unwrapped high-risk food e.g. sandwiches, cooked meats or salads, then you need to contact this department for further advice.

Registering your business

If you are an existing retail premises you may have already registered with Harrogate Borough Council's Department of Community Services. If you are a new business or have not yet registered your business you will be required to register 28 days before opening by completing a '[Food Business Establishment Registration Application](#)' on the Harrogate Borough Council website www.harrogate.gov.uk

'**Safer Food Better Business**' is a pack produced by the Food Standards Agency which can help you with the management of food safety in your retail premises. It is based on the **4Cs**

Cooking 	If you are cooking food as part of your business you need to contact this department for further advice as this leaflet will not give sufficient guidance.
Chilling 	Ensure that any foods requiring refrigeration are stored at a temperature no greater than 8 C. Ideally below 5 C
Cross-contamination 	Cross contamination of wrapped products is unlikely unless there is damage to packaging materials.
Cleaning 	Ensure your premises are kept in a clean condition

The symbols indicated in the information following will help you identify which of the 4Cs apply. A copy of the pack can be viewed or downloaded from the Food Standards Agency website at <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-for-retailers>

Purchase of Food (From Cash and Carry etc.)

Q Do I have to collect chilled and frozen food in a refrigerated vehicle?



A. No, but chilled food must be kept below 8°C and frozen food should not defrost therefore it is beneficial to transport such foods in a cool box/bag.

Q Is it acceptable to use my own vehicle?



A Yes, so long as your vehicle is kept clean and there is no risk of food becoming contaminated by anything else that is or has been transported in the same vehicle.

Q Are there any other checks I should be making prior to purchase?



A. Yes.

- Legible date coding, if applicable, to enable effective stock rotation
- Sufficient shelf life left on the product
- Packaging in a sound and clean condition
- Chilled and frozen foods are being stored at an appropriate temperature

Purchase of Food (Deliveries)

Q My products are delivered directly to me from a supplier, can I leave the checks to them?



A. No, when you receive a delivery you need to carry out your own checks. These may include:

- Reject damaged or split packaging, if necessary
- Periodical checks of the temperature of chilled (8° C or below) and frozen (-18°C) food on delivery
- Visual checks for quality/date codes
- Checking the delivery vehicle and driver are clean and tidy

Display of Food Products

Q. None of the food I sell needs refrigeration, do I still need to carry out any checks?



A. Yes, you must ensure that the stock is rotated correctly so that “best before” dates are not exceeded and no damage to packaging has occurred which may result in contamination.

Q. Is it illegal to sell low risk foods such as biscuits, crisps, etc. past their “best before” date?



A. No, although if you do, it must still be fit to eat. It is good practice to ‘mark down’ items and bring the date to your customers’ attention.

Note: If you sell any products, which have a ‘use by’ date, you must never sell them once the date has expired, as this is illegal.

Q. How can I determine whether my refrigerators and freezers are working effectively?



A. Chilled foods should be stored at 8°C or below. In practice this usually means that if your refrigerator is operating at 5°C then it is likely that it will keep the food at the required temperature.

It is recommended that multi-purpose freezers operate at a temperature of –18°C. Freezers containing ice cream only, may operate at –11°C

If your refrigerator or freezer does not have an external display indicating the temperature then you will need to obtain a separate thermometer to put in the cabinets to monitor the temperature.

Sale of Food Products

Q. I also sell eggs, milk, penny sweets and ice cream. Is there anything I need to be aware of?



- **Loose sale of graded eggs on keyes trays**

You must provide the following information at the point of sale.

Packing Station Number, “best before date”, class and weight grade, storage advice and an explanation of the code on eggs. The eggs themselves must be stamped with the method of production (e.g. Free range) and producers registration number.

- **Pre- packed eggs**

These should include the above information plus the name and address of the business where packing was carried out. It is therefore unadvisable to re-use pre-printed egg cartons as the information may be inaccurate.

Cracked and/or dirty eggs should not be included for sale.

- **Milk**

Store under refrigerated conditions and ensure that the container in which it is sold is free from any surface contamination prior to putting in the refrigerator.

- **Pick’n Mix / penny sweets**

To reduce the risk of contamination open sweets should be displayed at a suitable height from the floor and kept in lidded containers. If scoops or tongs are used they must be washed at regular intervals or when dropped on the floor. You should also check that they have not become damaged. Young children should not be encouraged to serve themselves.

- **Scoop Ice cream**

It is essential that the cleanliness of the scoop is maintained. This can be done by adding a food grade sanitiser e.g. Milton, to the water in which the scoop is stored during service.

It is good practice to reduce hand contact by protecting the cone with paper, plastic or card wrapping. Alternatively the server may wear disposable gloves.

Q. I provide a microwave for my customers to reheat pies, pasties etc. Is this acceptable?



A. Yes, but you must ensure that you regularly clean and sanitise the microwave. This should include all interior surfaces and the door handle. It may be beneficial to display customer information on reheating times.

Q. What if my customers complain about a food item bought from my business?

A. In many cases the customer will complain directly to Environmental Health if they find foreign objects in their food. If a customer makes you aware of the problem you may wish to replace the product and you must carry out your own investigation and take the necessary corrective action to ensure it doesn't happen again. You may need to report it to your supplier. You should also report serious complaints of contamination to this department for investigation.

Cleaning and Hygiene

Q. As I do not sell open food in my business, do I need to provide a wash basin for hands?



A. Not in the sales area, but one must be provided near to the toilet. This must be supplied with hot and cold running water, soap and hand drying facilities.

Q. Do I need to provide any other washing facilities?



A. Yes, you need to be able to effectively clean shelves, equipment, fixtures and floors.

Refuse and Pests

Q. Do I need to have a pest control contract for my business?



A. It is usually sufficient for you to carry out your own checks for evidence of pest activity. This should be done on a frequent and regular basis. If you find evidence of pests you must obtain expert help and advice.

Q. How should I deal with any waste food produced by my business?



A. You should dispose of waste food products in an easily cleanable, lidded bin. This should be emptied on a regular (at least weekly) basis. It is important that you ensure there is no accumulation of debris in the bin area that would encourage pests. You have a 'Duty of Care' to ensure that waste produced by your business is disposed of correctly. Further information is available at www.harrogate.gov.uk/tradewaste

For further information on food safety legislation applicable to your business please contact:

Safer Communities
P.O. Box 787
Harrogate
HG1 9RW
Telephone 01423 500600 ext 58515

Email: foodandoccupationalafety@harrogate.gov.uk