

Food safety guidance for dairy distributors

Our Food and Occupational Safety team are responsible for enforcing Food Safety within the Harrogate district under the Food Safety Act 1990.

This type of business raises a number of key food safety issues that you must consider. This information helps new and existing businesses to comply with the law whilst running a safe and successful enterprise.

A 'dairy distributor' is classified as a business that collects milk products centrally from a dairy/depot and provides doorstep delivery to domestic and in some cases retail food businesses.

As well as milk products, dairy distributors may provide other foodstuffs such as eggs, fruit juice and potatoes. Although most of these products are considered low risk, as the owner of a food business you will still need to consider this information.

Registering your business

If you are an existing dairy distributor you may have already registered with our Food, Licensing and Occupational Safety team.

If you are a new business or have not yet registered, you will be required to do so 28 days before opening by completing a Food Premises registration form online at <https://my.harrogate.gov.uk>, or contact our Food, Licensing and Occupational Safety team on 01423 500600 or visit www.harrogate.gov.uk/food

Safer Food Better Business

'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 dairy distributor's operation. It is based on **the 4Cs**:



When you purchase your dairy products from your distributor they will already have been 'cooked safely' as they are pasteurised, therefore this control need not be considered by you any further.



Ensure that any foods requiring refrigeration are stored at a temperature no greater than 8°C. Ideally below 5°C.



Cross contamination of your dairy products is unlikely unless there is damage to cartons or bottles.



Ensure your vehicles and crates are kept in a clean condition.

A copy of the pack can be viewed and downloaded for free from the Food Standards Agency website at <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-for-retailers>

Storage

Q. What do I need to check when I pick dairy products up from the distribution depot?



A. The quality and safety of the dairy products that you are supplying to your customers can be affected by the conditions at the distribution depot.

You should check:

- **are the products cold enough?**

Check the wall thermometers are registering a temperature below 8°C. If not, bring this to the attention of the depot manager



- **is the product fresh enough?**

You need to check the date coding on all products



- **is the depot clean?**

If you are not happy with the cleanliness of the crates, bottles or premises in general you should report this to the depot manager



Q. If I have dairy products left at the end of my delivery round, can I keep them at my domestic premises?



A. Yes.

But this must be done in a controlled way. Any remaining dairy products should be removed from your vehicle and kept in a refrigerated environment at 8°C. This is because:

- it will help protect them from contamination from animals, birds and vermin
- it will help to maintain the quality of the product in the short term
- it enables you to comply with the food hygiene regulations.

Contamination

Q. What should I do if my customer complains of a foreign object in a milk bottle that I have delivered?



- A. In many cases the customer will complain directly to our Environmental Health team if they find foreign objects in their milk.

If a customer makes you aware of the problem you should replace the product and report it to the dairy or depot supplying the products.

Q. What common foreign objects can get into milk bottles?



- A. The following is a list of just some of the objects that have been found in milk bottles and reported to our Environmental Health team:

- slugs
- crisp packets
- bottle tops
- glass
- stones/grit
- mould
- leaves
- paper/notes for the milkman

Q. How can I prevent this happening?



- A. As the distributor you cannot prevent foreign objects getting into milk bottles during production and filling of the bottles.

You can ensure that you carry out a simple visual check on delivery and do not deliver bottles where the tops have fallen off or that have been damaged.

Q. Because the glass bottles are re-usable do I have to make any additional checks?



- A. Glass bottled milk is largely restricted to doorstep deliveries. Bottles can be reused 7-12 times so it is important that you keep a look out for signs of damage e.g. chips on the neck of the bottle or cracks.

If you find this type of damage return to your supplier.

Q. What should I do if the foil top of the bottle falls off or becomes damaged and dirty during transit or delivery?



- A. You must not replace the foil cap yourself as the milk may have been contaminated:

- by the environment
- by whatever damaged the cap in the first place
- by hands during production, transit or delivery.

Dispose of milk.

Q. Can I do anything else to protect the products I have delivered to my customer's doorstep?



A. Yes.

Plastic covers can be placed over the foil lids to prevent damage by birds. Birds pecking through lids have been known to cause cases of Campylobacter infection through transfer of bacteria from their beaks into the liquid milk.

Placing the products out of direct sunlight will also prolong the shelf life of the products you deliver.

Q I also sell eggs, fruit juice and potatoes, is there anything I need to be aware of?



A. Yes.

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 producer 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 inadvisable to re-use pre-printed egg cartons as the information may be inaccurate.

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

Storage of eggs

If you store eggs at home prior to sale, you need to be aware of the best before dates, and store them in a cool area where they cannot be contaminated e.g. a tidy pest-free area of a shaded garage.

Fruit juice and potatoes

If you sell UHT cartoned fruit juice or potatoes you must ensure that they are within their best before dates, the packaging is sound and, if stored at home, kept in a clean cool area.

For further information on food safety please contact:

Safer Communities

P.O. Box 787 Harrogate HG1 9RW

Telephone 01423 500600 ext 58515

Email: foodandoccupationalafety@harrogate.gov.uk