

Guidance for local authorities on adapting Safer food, better business

Introduction

Safer food, better business (SFBB) was developed by the Food Standards Agency to assist small food businesses in complying with the requirements for documented HACCP-based procedures, effective from 1 January 2006. The Agency has produced a range of SFBB packs for small caterers and retailers and an interactive DVD guide with voiceovers in 16 languages.

SFBB for caterers and SFBB for retailers were designed to work in most small catering and food retail businesses (excluding specialist retailers such as butchers, fishmongers and bakers). The food business operator completes the 'safe methods' in the pack and tailors them to become specific to their particular business.

The use of a common pack across a wide range of businesses has enormous benefits for businesses, their staff and enforcement officers. However, a number of local authorities (LAs) have already produced adaptations of SFBB or additional safe methods. This guidance aims to provide assistance to those LAs who are considering developing adaptations. It details guidelines on issues such as branding, logos and copyright and aims to ensure the quality of any product produced.

Thinking of producing an adaptation of SFBB?

Before making any changes or adding additional information to the SFBB pack, please consider whether the change is really necessary or whether it could be achieved by the business tailoring the existing safe methods (by completing the 'How do you do this?' column) or by adding safe methods from another pack.

For instance, SFBB for retailers has a section on Cooking and preparation, developed with the industry to reflect the most common foods cooked or prepared in the small retail sector. It was not intended to cover the complete range of possible foods being prepared. If small retailers are cooking or preparing foods that are not covered, then they could use selected safe methods from SFBB for caterers, where appropriate.

For some businesses, the language used in the pack may not be familiar e.g. home caterers, but with support, these businesses may be able to use the existing packs successfully.

What about copyright?

All of the material in the SFBB packs is subject to Crown copyright protection.

You may re-use the SFBB material free of charge in any format for non-commercial research, private study or for internal circulation within your organisation. This is subject to the material being reproduced accurately and

not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the source identified as the Food Standards Agency.

For any other form of re-use, including the production of adapted safe methods or new safe methods or adaptation for other sectors or countries, and/or including commercial publication, please apply for a free Click-Use PSI Licence from the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), formerly known as HMSO at: www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/system/online/pRegister.asp.

In these circumstances, the Food Standards Agency logo should not be used and it should be clear that it was not produced by the Food Standards Agency.

The statement:

Produced by (insert name of LA/organisation), based on the Food Standards Agency's Safer food, better business (SFBB) format

should appear in the footer of each new page produced in a minimum font size of 12 points.

If you have already produced an adaptation of SFBB you should apply for a PSI licence as outlined in the previous paragraph.

Further information about the PSI Licence can be found at: www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/psi-licence-information/index.

Alternatively, you can write to the OPSI Information Policy Team at:

Office of Public Sector Information
Kew
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 4DU

email: licensing@opsi.gsi.gov.uk

The permission to reproduce Crown protected material does not extend to any material in the SFBB packs which is the copyright of a third party.

Authorisation to reproduce such material must be obtained from the copyright holders concerned. Some of the images in the SFBB packs are third party copyright and so permission cannot be given to re-use them – please contact us for further advice at email: HACCPTeam@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

What about the format of any new materials?

Any changes made should add complete safe methods. It is not appropriate to partially re-write a safe method, because each of the existing safe methods have been validated by the Food Standards Agency.

As SFBB is now a well established brand, you should not change the style, including the icons, layout of the pages and the colours used.

Any new material which is based on the SFBB pack should clearly indicate who has produced it. It should also be clear that it was not produced by the Food Standards Agency.

The statement (as previously stated in the copyright section):

Produced by (insert name of LA/organisation), based on the Food Standards Agency's Safer food, better business (SFBB) format

should appear in the footer of each new page produced in a minimum font size of 12 points.

What about the content?

SFBB is designed to be a simple system that does not impose undue burdens on businesses. It is very important that any new methods retain this simplicity. In particular, proposed changes should:

- Retain options for using sensory information (e.g. colour changes or food steaming) as an indicator of critical controls, and not insist on temperature monitoring through the use of probe thermometers.
- Retain the 'reporting by exception' approach of the diary.

SFBB is designed to take account of the seven principles of HACCP, but in a way that hides the complexity of HACCP from the end user. Any adaptations must retain this approach. No systems analysis or flow-charts should be included. Any new material should be developed within the 4 Cs / Management framework of the pack.

Any additional material developed should retain the SFBB approach, identifying:

- The overall purpose of the method – included below the name of the safe method
- Brief simple safety points
- A description of why each safety point is important
- The key step/steps that make the food safe – for example, cooking for a certain time or until thoroughly cooked
- Space to allow the business to confirm if they follow the advice in the safe method or describe their own procedures to control the hazard
- What to do if things go wrong – the corrective action
- How to manage the hazards in the business
- A reminder to make a note of any problems in their diary

You will need to validate any new safe methods that you produce.

What about translations?

In accordance with the Agency's statutory Welsh Language Scheme, the Safer food, better business packs are available in Welsh, and are entitled Bwyd mwy diogel, busnes gwell. They've recently been updated and amended using familiar and consistent terminology to ensure that they are easy to understand and use.

The Agency's research identified the need to translate the Chinese cuisine pack into Chinese. However, this research showed that translation of the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan cuisines pack was not necessary.

If you intend to translate the pack, we would urge you to consider the rationale for this. The pack is intended for use by food business managers and many catering workers may not be able to read the language(s) they speak. The business may find it more helpful to use the SFBB DVD, which has voiceovers in 16 languages and can be found at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2008/jun/sfbbonline> .

How can I find out about other SFBB-based support materials already produced by LAs?

We are keen to share any SFBB-based support materials that are developed by LAs and we will include a link to the relevant LA site within a dedicated area of the Agency's website. If you wish to share any SFBB adaptations you have developed, please send us details to:

HACCPTeam@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk .

Is it OK for food businesses to adapt SFBB themselves?

Food business operators are responsible for demonstrating that they produce safe food and comply with the requirements for documented food safety management. This may be achieved in many ways – SFBB is just one example of a HACCP-based system.

Businesses may use the SFBB packs as the basis for their food safety management procedures, adding material or merging existing guidance to suit their own circumstances. Where this is done, it is recommended that the SFBB pack is used to check against, to ensure that any changes made, or material added, at least covers the same ground as the SFBB materials. Any new safe methods, developed by a business, will need to be validated, following the 'Prove it' safe method in the Management section of the pack and documented in the 'Prove it: records' sheet in the diary, where relevant.

Businesses should be aware that the level of record keeping required by SFBB is suggested as the minimum required to comply with the legislation. Businesses may add further records if they find this helpful or to provide further evidence of due diligence. However, the additional burden that this places on the business is their own responsibility.

As a private consultant, can I adapt SFBB?

As a private consultant, working for a specific business and adapting the pack for that business, you should follow the guidelines for food businesses in the section above.

If you are adapting the pack for any other purpose you should follow the guidelines on formatting, content and translations and pay particular attention to the information on copyright.