

How to use this pack

Welcome to Safer food, better business for caterers

Is this pack for me?



How does this pack help me comply with the law?

This pack is for small catering businesses such as restaurants, cafés and takeaways.

It has been developed by the Food Standards Agency, working with catering businesses, to be practical and easy to use.

Food safety and hygiene regulations say that you must be able to show what you do to sell food that is safe to eat and have this written down. The pack helps you do this.

This pack is based on the principles of HACCP (hazard analysis critical control point), but you will not find words such as 'HACCP' or 'hazard' in the pack because we have cut out all the jargon.

Who should take charge of the pack?



The person who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the business is the best person to work through the pack.

It is a good idea to involve other staff to help the pack work in your business.

How does the pack work?

The pack contains sheets for you to work through and complete. These are called 'safe methods'.

It also contains a diary for you to fill in every day and write down anything different that happens, including anything that goes wrong.



How to use the safe methods

Front

The 'Safety point' column highlights things that are important to make food safely.

The 'Why?' column tells you why the safety point is important.

The 'How do you do this?' column is for you to write down what you do.

In some places you only need to tick a box and in other places write a small amount.

Pictures help to illustrate the safety points.

Safe method:
Defrosting

Harmful bacteria can grow in food that is not defrosted properly.

Safety point	Why?	How do you do this?
Food should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking (unless the manufacturer's instructions tell you to cook from frozen or you have a proven safe method).	If food is still frozen or partially frozen, it will take longer to cook. The outside of the food could be cooked, but the centre might not be, which means it could contain harmful bacteria.	Do you check food is thoroughly defrosted before cooking? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If not, what do you do?
Options for defrosting food		
1. Ideally, plan ahead to leave enough time and space to defrost small amounts of food in the fridge.	Putting food in the fridge will keep it at a safe temperature while it is defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> How much time do you allow for defrosting?
2. If you cannot defrost food in the fridge, you could put it in a container with a lid and then place it under cold running water.	Cold water will help to speed up defrosting without allowing the outside of the food to get too warm.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?
3. Or you could defrost food in the microwave on the 'defrost' setting.	This is a fast way to defrost food.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?

Sometimes the pictures are marked with one of these symbols: = right = wrong

Back

Some safe methods have a 'Check it' section, which tells you what to look for to make sure your method has worked.

The 'What to do if things go wrong' column gives practical tips on how to tackle problems.

The 'How to stop this happening again' column tells you how you can prevent problems.

If things go wrong, write down what happened and what you did in your diary. Each safe method reminds you to do this.

Safety point	Why?	How do you do this?
4. You could also defrost food at room temperature. For ready-to-eat foods (foods that will not be cooked or reheated after defrosting), e.g. cheesecake, follow the manufacturer's defrosting instructions. If you are defrosting foods that you have prepared yourself, leave them out at room temperature for the shortest time possible. Ideally, defrost these foods in the fridge.	Foods will defrost quite quickly at room temperature, but harmful bacteria could grow in food if it gets too warm while defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?
5. If you have another method of defrosting, write the details here:		
Think twice!		
Keep meat/poultry separate from other food when it is defrosting, to prevent cross-contamination. Once food has been defrosted you should use it immediately (within one day).		
Check it	Why?	How do you do this?
When you think food has defrosted, it is important to check to make sure.	The outside may look defrosted but the inside could still be frozen.	1. Check for ice crystals in the food using your hand or a skewer. Do you use this check? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 2. With birds, check the joints are flexible. Do you use this check? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 3. If you use another check, write the details here:
What to do if things go wrong	How to stop this happening again	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If food has not fully defrosted, continue to defrost the food until no ice crystals are left. Test again before cooking or reheating. Speed up the defrosting process e.g. by using cold water or a microwave (see the front of this sheet). Use an alternative menu item. If you do not have time to defrost for longer, replace the dish with a similar dish that is ready to serve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change your defrosting method and make it safer, e.g. defrost smaller amounts. Make sure you allow enough time to defrost. Train staff again on this safe method. Improve staff supervision. If you defrost lots of food in your business you may wish to consider creating extra fridge space or using a special defrosting cabinet. 	
Write down what went wrong and what you did about it in your diary.		

How to use the diary

The diary should be filled in every day by the person responsible for running the business. There is also a 4-weekly review so you can look back at previous weeks and identify any persistent problems.

Fill in the date at the start of the week.

Each day, tick here to say you have completed your Opening checks and your Closing checks – see the Management section for more information on these.

If anything different happens or something goes wrong, make a note of it under the appropriate day.

Each day, write your name and sign to say that all the safe methods have been followed.

If you do any Extra checks, make a note in the section at the end of the week – see the Management section for more information on these.

Week commencing:

MONDAY

Any problems or changes – what did you do? Opening checks Closing checks

Notes

Name _____ Signed _____

Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

TUESDAY

Any problems or changes – what did you do? Opening checks Closing checks

Notes

Name _____ Signed _____

Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

WEDNESDAY

Any problems or changes – what did you do? Opening checks Closing checks

Notes

Name _____ Signed _____

Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

THURSDAY

Any problems or changes – what did you do? Opening checks Closing checks

Notes

Name _____ Signed _____

Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

FRIDAY

Any problems or changes – what did you do? Opening checks Closing checks

Notes

Name _____ Signed _____

Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

SATURDAY

Any problems or changes – what did you do? Opening checks Closing checks

Notes

Name _____ Signed _____

Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

SUNDAY

Any problems or changes – what did you do? Opening checks Closing checks

Notes

Name _____ Signed _____

Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

EXTRA CHECKS

We have performed the following extra checks this week. Opening checks Closing checks

Notes

Name _____ Signed _____

Questions

What do I do next?

Work through the pack one section at a time and complete all the safe methods that are relevant to your business. It will take you about one hour to complete a section. We suggest you do one section at a time, for example one a week. So that is just one hour of your time to get started.

When you have worked through all the sections, make sure you and your staff:

- follow the safe methods all the time
- fill in the diary every day

How do I use the 'Working with food?' factsheet and the DVD with the pack?

Use the 'Working with food?' factsheet to train your staff on good personal hygiene on their first day at work. It has been designed to help overcome language difficulties.

The DVD will help you use the pack and train your staff on it and there are 16 languages for you to choose from. You do not have to work through the DVD to use the pack in your business, but it will help you do this.

If you would like to keep a record of any staff training using the DVD, you can make a note of it on the 'Staff training record' in the diary.

How will I benefit from using this pack?

Using the pack in your business will help you to:

- comply with food hygiene regulations
- show what you do to make food safely
- train staff
- protect your business's reputation
- improve your business, e.g. by wasting less food

Do I need to keep lots of daily records?

No, you do not need lots of daily records. Once you have worked through the pack and completed all the relevant safe methods, you only need to fill in the diary each day.

This should take just one minute, unless you have something special to write down.

It is a legal requirement to keep a record of what food products you have bought, who you bought them from, the quantity and the date. Usually the easiest way to do this is to keep all your invoices and receipts.

Questions

Do I need to use a temperature probe?

You can use this pack in your business without using a temperature probe. However, if you use methods or checks for cooking, reheating, hot holding or chilling that are different to what is recommended in the pack, you will need to use a probe to prove that what you do is safe. You may also like to use a probe for extra reassurance that your methods are safe. See the 'Prove it' safe method in the Management section.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on food safety, talk to the environmental health service at your local authority or visit food.gov.uk/catering/foodindustry/regulation/foodlaw

For details of Food Standards Agency publications, visit food.gov.uk or call 0845 606 0667.

About this guidance

This guidance follows the Government Code of Practice on Guidance. If you believe this guidance breaches the Code for any reason, or if you have any comments on the guidance, please contact us at HACCPTeam@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

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