

Safe method:
Suppliers and contractors
 How you handle suppliers and contractors is important to food safety.



What to do	Why?	How do you do this?
Choose suppliers carefully.	It is important to use suppliers that supply and handle food safely, as well as delivering on time etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you choose suppliers you can trust. • Ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Does the supplier store, transport and pack their goods in a hygienic way? – Does the supplier/contractor provide fully referenced invoices/receipts? – Do they have any certification or quality assurance? – How quickly do they respond to your concerns? • Ask other businesses for recommendations.
Choose contractors carefully.	Services such as pest control can be valuable to help you make sure food is safe to sell. It is important to have contractors you can trust to deliver these services effectively.	
Make sure that your goods have been handled safely.	The starting point for making sure food is safe is being confident about the safety of the products you buy in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that the supplier has a food safety management system. • Carry out regular delivery time, temperature and quality spot checks (see the 'Stock control' safe method). • Write the details of your suppliers in your diary. • If you buy goods from a cash and carry, make sure that the vehicle you use to transport them is clean and that you bring chilled and frozen food back as soon as possible and put it straight into a fridge or freezer.
Make sure your equipment works effectively.	To allow you to make sure food is safe to sell, it is very important that equipment, such as display fridges, works effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy equipment from reputable dealers. • Make sure it has a guarantee/warranty. • Ask for advice from other retailers or a trade association.

What to do if things go wrong

If you do not think that the food a supplier delivers has been handled safely (for example, if you think it has not been kept cold enough) reject the delivery, if possible, and contact your supplier immediately. If you have problems with any suppliers or contractors, record your concerns in the diary. If you have repeated problems, you can do the following things, depending on how serious the problem is and the response you get:

1. Contact the supplier/contractor by phone.
2. Write a formal letter of complaint.
3. Change supplier/contractor.
4. Contact your local authority.

Safe method:

Product withdrawal and recall

Responding quickly to any problems with products you sell is an important part of managing food safety in your business.



Sometimes there will be a problem with a food product that means it should not be sold. Then it might be 'withdrawn' (taken off the shelves) or 'recalled' (when customers are asked to return a product).

You may find out about a problem with a product from:

- the manufacturer of the product
- a supplier or wholesaler
- a notice in newspapers
- your local authority
- a trade association

If you hear about a problem with a product, you should stop selling the product straight away. You might also need to tell your customers.

There are a number of reasons that a product might be withdrawn or recalled. For example, it could have been found to:

- contain harmful bacteria
- be physically contaminated, e.g. with pieces of glass or metal
- be wrongly labelled, which could be a problem for people with food allergies

You or your staff may also notice a problem with a food product that means it may not be safe to eat. If this happens you should stop selling it straight away. You may need to tell your local authority and the Food Standards Agency about the product. If you are not sure whether to do this, talk to your local authority and the manufacturer of the product.

What to do

How?

Make sure you know the details of the problem.

If a manufacturer or supplier has issued a product withdrawal or recall, make sure you know which products and which batches are affected.

Take the product off the shelves as soon as you find out about a problem.

Make sure you remove all the affected products and label them clearly to show they should not be sold.

Make sure your staff know about the problem.

This is so your staff know what to do and do not put the products on sale again, by accident.

Decide if you need to inform your customers.

Some product recalls may require you to put up a notice in your shop to let customers know that the product has been recalled and why. This information will sometimes be supplied by the manufacturer or supplier. Sometimes you may need to put up your own notice to tell customers about a problem. If you are not sure what to do, ask your local authority.

Sometimes a manufacturer or supplier may ask customers to return affected products to them, or customers may return them to your shop. In this case, you should give the customer a refund and get in touch with the manufacturer or supplier of the product.

Think twice!

Remember that it is important to write the details of your suppliers (names, addresses etc.) in the diary. You should keep all the invoices and receipts for any food products you buy. These should include details of what products you have bought, the company you bought them from, the quantity and the date.

You should keep this information in a way that makes it easy for you or an enforcement officer to check back to see where a product came from. This is a legal requirement. See the 'Suppliers and contractors' safe method.