

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 have suppliers that you can trust to 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 supply fully referenced invoices? Do they have any certification or quality assurance? Ask other businesses for recommendations.
Choose contractors carefully.	Services such as pest control can be valuable in helping you to make food safely. It is important to have contractors you can trust to deliver these services effectively.	
Make sure that your raw ingredients have been handled safely.	The starting point for making food safely is to be confident about the safety of your raw ingredients and any ready-made 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. 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.
Keep all the invoices and receipts for foods. These should include details of the products including the supplier, quantity and the date.	This is a legal requirement and is so that you or an enforcement officer can check back to see where a food came from.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep invoices, receipts etc. in a way that makes it easy for you or an enforcement officer to check them. Write details of your suppliers (names, addresses etc.) in the diary.
Choose equipment carefully.	To allow you to make food safely, it is very important for equipment to work effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy equipment from reputable dealers. Make sure it has a guarantee/warranty.

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, contact your supplier immediately and write the details in the diary. If you have repeated problems, you can do the following things:

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: Stock control

Effective stock control is an important part of managing food safety.



What to do	Why?	How do you do this?
Go through your menu and estimate how much of each ingredient you will need.	Working through the menu allows you to plan for your specific needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your menu regularly and how it affects your needs for stock. Discuss your needs with your supplier.
Plan ahead to make sure you have the right amount of stock and order carefully.	Not having too much stock is best for food safety – and your profits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan the stock you need for each shift. Make sure staff know the stock requirements for each shift. Use a supplier who understands your business needs and supplies stock on time. Do a stock check before placing an order.
Check all stock when it is delivered to make sure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is within its 'use by' date it has been kept cold enough it has not gone off the stock is clean and not damaged, e.g. throw away any punctured vacuum packs, swollen packs or badly dented cans and check that tops are secure on bottles and jars and seals are unbroken 	These checks are all to make sure that food is safe for you to use. Damaged packaging could mean that food will not be safe to use. Swollen or 'blown' packs can be a sign that bacteria have grown in food or drinks. If bottles or jars have been opened, or if seals have been broken, the food or drink might not be safe to use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train your staff in what to look for when checking deliveries. Have a written agreement with your supplier about your delivery requirements. Carry out spot checks on the deliveries yourself. Use the diary to record any issues or problems with deliveries. If you move food from its original packaging to another container, make sure you make a note of the name of the food, the ingredients and the 'use by' or 'best before' date.
Carry out regular stock checks and throw away any food that has passed its 'use by' date.	You should never use food that has passed its 'use by' date, because it might not be safe to eat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the 'first in, first out' system of stock rotation, so that older stock is used first. This helps to avoid waste. Train your staff in stock control and make sure they know in what order to use foods. Check regularly that stock control is being carried out effectively. Record stock checks in the diary.

What to do if things go wrong

- If you find that you have more food in stock than you need and you do not think you will use it all before the 'use by' date, you could freeze some of it to be used in the future.
- If you find that food that has passed its 'use by' date has not been thrown away, throw it away immediately.
- If you do not think that a food delivery has been handled safely, reject the delivery if possible. Do not use the food and contact your supplier immediately.

How to stop this happening again

- Review your ordering process.
- Review your stock rotation system.
- Review your agreement with your supplier.
- Train staff again on this safe method.
- Improve staff supervision.