

Food and cooking oil waste

Rules on food waste, leftovers and waste cooking oil from catering facilities.

Throwing away food

You must remove [food waste](#) and other rubbish from rooms where food is present as quickly as possible, to avoid them building up.

Food waste and other rubbish should be put into sealable containers. You can use other types of containers or systems to throw out your food waste if your local authority is satisfied with it.

These containers must be:

- solid and strong
- kept in sound condition
- easy to clean and to disinfect

The waste must not be a direct or indirect source of contamination. This includes touching surfaces that food is prepared on or attracting pests.

How rubbish is stored

You must have adequate facilities for storing and disposing of food waste and other rubbish. Stores for waste must be designed and managed in a way that enables them to be kept clean and free of pests.

You must get rid of all waste in a hygienic and environmentally friendly way, in accordance with legislation. You can contact your local authority to find out more information about the different ways that specific foods need to be handled.

Leftovers

Instead of throwing away leftovers as waste, you can keep them and reuse them if it's done safely and correctly.

Cool any leftovers at room temperature, then cover them and ensure that they go in the fridge or freezer within one-two hours.

If you have a lot of one type of food, splitting it into smaller portions will help it to cool quickly. It also means you can freeze and defrost only what you need for future dishes.

Leftovers should be eaten or frozen within two days - one day for rice dishes.

Take a look at [Love Food Hate Waste](#) for more information on freezing leftovers.

We have more specific information on leftover meat on our page about [preparing Christmas food](#)

Waste cooking oil from catering premises

If you produce waste cooking oil as part of your catering business, then you must ensure that it is stored properly. No oil is allowed to spill and it has to be collected by an authorised collector.

They will take your waste to an authorised site for recovery or disposal.

Waste cooking oil must not be poured down drains or sewers because this causes:

- blockages
- bad smell
- vermin problems
- polluted watercourses leading to problems for wildlife

If waste cooking oil is poured down drains or sewers, it can result in potential prosecution.

Cooking oil cannot be thrown-out with the rest of the catering or kitchen waste. This is because it can cause spillages leading to:

- bad smell
- pollution problems
- waste contractors refusing to remove the waste

Waste cooking oil cannot be taken to household recycling centres for disposal in engine oil banks.

These centres are also known as Civic Amenity sites. They are not for commercial waste. Placing cooking oil into an oil bank will render the entire contents of the skips unsuitable for recycling.

Northern Ireland

The responsibility for enforcement of waste disposal of cooking oil is split between the District Council environmental health departments and Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Anyone using scraps and catering waste, including waste cooking oil from catering premises commits an offence if it is used as:

- animal-feed
- an ingredient in animal-feed
- part of animal feed operations.

This is to safeguard animal health and the subsequent food chain under the Animal by-products (enforcement) regulation. England, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own specific requirements.

England

[The Animal By-Products \(Enforcement\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)

Wales

[The Animal By-Products \(Enforcement\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2014](#)

Northern Ireland

[The Animal By-Products \(Enforcement\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#)