

Setting up your food business premises

This page provides information on how to choose the right premises and what facilities you need to provide in your food business. Please read all the pages in this guide to ensure you have the information you need to run your food business.

Choosing the right premises

The premises you choose for your business, whether commercial or in your home, must:

- comply with the necessary regulations
- allow you to prepare food safely

You must keep your premises clean, maintained and in good condition. Your premises must allow you to follow good [food hygiene practices](#), including protection against [contamination](#) and pest control.

Tips

When you are choosing new premises, or making changes to premises, it's a good idea to ask your [local authority](#) for advice.

The following rules apply to your whole premises, not just the areas used for preparing food.

Handwashing facilities and toilets

You must have enough washbasins for everyone working in the business to [wash their hands](#) with hot and cold running water and materials for cleaning hands and drying them hygienically.

Changing facilities

You must provide adequate facilities for anyone working in the business to change their clothes, where necessary.

Other requirements

Your premises must have adequate ventilation, lighting and drainage.

Food preparation areas

The following rules apply to rooms where food is prepared.

Floors and walls

Floors and walls must be:

- maintained in a good condition
- easy to clean

- disinfected
- smooth, hard-wearing, washable and in a good state of repair

Ceilings

Ceilings should be:

- in good condition
- easy to clean to prevent dirt from building up
- free from condensation and mould
- free from flaking paint or plaster

Windows and doors

Windows and any other openings (such as doors) must be constructed in a way that prevents dirt from building up. If they open to the outside, they must be fitted with insect-proof screens that can be easily removed for cleaning.

Doors must be easy to:

- clean
- disinfect

Surfaces

Surfaces (including surfaces of equipment) in areas where food is handled, particularly those that are touched by food, must be:

- maintained in a good condition
- easy to clean
- disinfected

Facilities for cleaning equipment

Your premises must have adequate facilities for cleaning, disinfecting and storing utensils, including equipment. The facilities must have an adequate supply of hot and cold water.

Facilities for washing food

Separate sinks must be provided, where necessary, for washing food and cleaning equipment in food preparation areas.

Every sink must have an adequate supply of hot and cold water for washing food and be of drinking quality. These facilities must be kept clean and be disinfected.

Equipment

All items, fittings and equipment that food touches must be:

- kept in good order, repair and condition
- cleaned effectively and be disinfected frequently enough to avoid any risk of [contamination](#)

You can find more information on maintenance in our [Safer food better business for caterers guide](#).

Food waste

All food businesses must [dispose of waste securely and properly](#).

To prevent your kitchen or any neighbouring properties from being flooded with [waste and sewage](#) you should put all food waste in the bin rather than down the sink and use commercial sink strainers to stop fat, oil and grease (FOG) and small bits of food waste entering the sewer network.

You should dry wipe plates and pans with kitchen roll before washing them and install grease management equipment such as a grease trap or a grease removal unit. This equipment must be maintained appropriately to remove any residual FOG going down the drain. More advice on grease management can be found in [this guide from the Foodservice Equipment Association](#).

Not only can blockages flood your premises, but you could also risk prosecution if your business disposes of FOG carelessly. Contact your Local Authority to check the correct way to dispose of waste responsibly.

You must also [remove food waste and other rubbish](#) from rooms containing food as quickly as possible to avoid it building up and attracting pests.

The three main groups of pests that are encountered in food businesses are:

- rodents - rats and mice
- insects - cockroaches, beetles, ants and flies
- birds - pigeons etc.

You can find more information on [pest control in our Safer food, better business for caterers pack](#).

What to look out for and what to do to keep pests out of your business.

Fire safety

You must carry out a fire risk assessment at your premises and take fire safety precautions to help protect you, your staff and customers.

The type of precautions you need to have will depend on the outcome of the fire risk assessment of the premises.

If you are planning to adapt your premises, it is a good idea to get fire safety advice before you start the work. You can get advice from your [local fire authority](#).

Food hygiene rating

The [Food Hygiene Rating Scheme](#) gives businesses a rating out of 5 so that consumers can make informed choices about where to buy and eat food.

The local authority will inspect your food business and [publish the rating](#).

All businesses should be able to achieve the top rating of 5. If you do not, the food safety officer will outline the improvements that you need to make and will advise on how to achieve a higher rating. For further information please see our ['How food hygiene ratings work'](#) page.

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme has variations between [England](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

Choosing the right premises checklist

Handwashing facilities and toilets

You must have enough washbasins for everyone working in the business to [wash their hands](#).

Changing facilities

You must provide adequate facilities for anyone working in the business to change their clothes, where necessary.

Other requirements

Your premises must have adequate ventilation, lighting and drainage.

Floors and walls in food preparation areas

Floors and walls must be in good condition, easy to clean, disinfected, smooth, hard wearing and washable.

Ceilings in food preparation areas

Ceilings should be easy to clean, in good condition, free from mould, condensation, flaking paint or plaster.

Windows and doors

Windows and doors must not allow dirt to build up. If they open to the outside, they must be fitted with insect-proof screens that can be easily cleaned.

Surfaces

Surfaces (including surfaces of equipment) in areas where food is handled must be maintained in a good condition, easy to clean and disinfected to avoid [contamination](#).

Facilities for cleaning equipment

Your premises must have adequate facilities for cleaning, disinfecting and storing utensils, including equipment to avoid [contamination](#).

Facilities for washing food

Separate sinks must be provided for washing food and cleaning equipment in food preparation areas.

Equipment

All items, fittings and equipment that food touches must be kept in good order, repair and condition and cleaned effectively to avoid any risk of contamination.

Food waste

You must [remove food waste and other rubbish](#) and have adequate facilities for storing and disposing of food.

Prevent pests

Find out more about [pest control in our Safer food better business guide](#).

Fire safety

You must carry out a fire risk assessment at your premises. You can get advice on this from your [local fire authority](#).

Get ready for your food hygiene inspection

The local authority will inspect your food business and [publish the rating](#). Additional information is available to help you [prepare for your first inspection](#).