

Food allergen labelling and information requirements technical guidance: Glossary of terms used

A glossary of terms used throughout the guidance

Coeliac Disease: This is an autoimmune disease caused by an adverse reaction to eating gluten, a protein in cereals namely wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, Kamut or their hybridised strains. Adherence to the gluten free diet is the complete medical treatment and having coeliac disease therefore requires significant dietary modification.

Distance selling: This refers to the selling and buying of goods or services (for purposes of these guidance notes prepacked, and non-prepacked foods) without the simultaneous physical presence of the consumer and supplier to complete the contract for sale; for example, selling food by internet (internet shopping, online takeaway aggregators etc.), mail order, telephone, or television.

Final consumer: This is defined in Article 3 (18) of Regulation (EC) No.178/2002 as ‘the ultimate consumer of a foodstuff who will not use the food as part of any business operation or activity’. The final consumer will generally be the individual who will be eating or drinking the food or drink provided by the food business.

Food allergen: This is the substance in a food that can cause an allergic reaction. Allergens are normally proteins, and, in some people, the immune system thinks allergens are foreign or dangerous. The immune response to these allergenic proteins is what leads to allergic reactions. Legislation focuses on 14 specific foods of public health importance (most potent and prevalent food allergens in Europe) which are listed in Annex II to the FIC.

Food allergy: An adverse reaction to a food that involves the immune system and can be a potentially life-threatening condition. Symptoms can appear within minutes, or up to several hours after a person has eaten a food they are allergic to. There is no cure for food allergy. An allergic individual must avoid the food which makes them ill.

Food business operator (FBO): This is defined in Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 (Article 3(3)) (General Food Law) as ‘the natural or legal persons responsible for ensuring that the requirements of food law are met within the food business under their control’.

Food business: This is defined in Regulation (EC) 178/2002 (Article 3(2)) (General Food Law) as ‘any undertaking, whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out any of the activities related to any stage of production, processing and distribution of food’.

Food intolerance: Most food intolerances do not involve the immune system and are generally not life-threatening. However, they can make someone feel very ill or affect their long-term health. Examples of food intolerance include lactose and gluten intolerance.

Mass caterer: This is defined in Article 2(2)(d) of the FIC as ‘any establishment (including a vehicle or a fixed or mobile stall), such as restaurants, canteens, schools, hospitals and catering

enterprises in which, in the course of a business, food is prepared to be ready for consumption by the final consumer’.

Non-prepacked food: Any food presented to the final consumer or mass caterer that does not fall within the definition of ‘prepacked food’ for any reason including food not within any packaging and food packaged at the consumers’ request.

- In a physical retail environment this is likely to apply to foods which are sold loose from a delicatessen counter (e.g., cold meats, cheeses, quiches, pies, and dips), fresh pizza, salad bars, bread or pastries sold without wrapping in bakery shops or via bakery counters, meat from butchers, etc.
- In a catering environment this is likely to apply to foods which are not sold prepacked, for example food from a takeaway, or meals served in a canteen or a restaurant.

Prepacked food: This is defined in the FIC (Article 2(2)(e)) as ‘any single item for presentation as such to the final consumer and to mass caterers, consisting of a food and the packaging into which it was put before being offered for sale, whether such packaging encloses the food completely or only partially, but in any event in such a way that the contents cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging; ‘prepacked food’ does not cover foods packed on the sales premises at the consumer’s request or prepacked for direct sale.’

Food is considered prepacked when it is put into packaging prior to before being offered for sale and:

- is either fully or partly enclosed by the packaging; and
- cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging; and
- is ready for sale to the final consumer or to a mass caterer

Prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) food: Food that is packed before being offered for sale by the same food business to the final consumer:

- i) on the same premises; or
- ii) on the same site ([footnote 1](#)) ; or
- iii) on other premises if the food is offered for sale from a moveable and/or temporary premises (such as marquees, market stalls, mobile sales vehicles) if the food is offered for sale by the same food business who packed it.

PPDS food does not include food packed at a consumer’s request, food not in packaging or food in packaging that can be altered without opening or changing the packaging.

1. In this instance ‘site’ refers to a building complex such as a shopping centre or airport terminal in which the same food business operates from more than one unit within the building complex.