

Hygiene requirements for your business

Every person working in a food-handling area must maintain a high level of personal hygiene.

Staff must wear clothing that is:

- suitable
- clean
- protective

When staff are preparing or handling food they should:

- keep hair tied back and wear a suitable head covering, e.g. hat or hair net
- not wear watches or jewellery (except a wedding band)
- not touch their face and hair, smoke, spit, sneeze, eat or chew gum

Handwashing

Washing is important to help prevent harmful bacteria from spreading from peoples' hands. All staff that work with food must wash their hands:

- when in the kitchen or preparation area
- before preparing food
- after touching raw food
- after handling food waste or emptying a bin
- after cleaning
- after blowing their nose
- after touching phones, light switches, door handles and cash registers

Staff should dry their hands on a disposable towel. This is because harmful bacteria can spread on wet or damp hands.

Use a disposable towel to turn off the tap.

Fitness for work

You must not allow anyone to handle food or enter a food handling area if they:

- are suffering from, or carrying, a disease likely to be transmitted through food
- have infected wounds, skin infections or sores
- have diarrhoea

If any of these apply to a member of staff who is likely to come into contact with food, they must tell their manager about it immediately. If possible, identify what has caused it.

Staff with diarrhoea or vomiting should not return to work until they have had no symptoms for 48 hours.

[Fitness for work guidance](#) (125.32 KB)

Training

Food businesses must make sure that any staff handling food:

- are supervised, instructed and trained in food hygiene
- have relevant training for the job

Those responsible for developing and maintaining the food business's food safety management procedures must have received adequate training to enable them to do this.

The skills taught in official training programmes can also be learned by:

- training on-the-job
- self-study

- relevant prior experience

Health and safety requirements

The health and safety of your employees and customers is very important.

If you have five or more employees, you must have a written health and safety policy that describes the arrangements in place.

Fire safety

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 [fire safety advice](#) from your local authority.

[Gov.uk](#) and [Health and Safety Executive](#) have more information on fire safety.

Food industry guides

For more information of hygiene for your business, you can purchase and read our guides from The Stationery Office's website.

Making and selling sandwiches

- [Food Industry Guide to Good Hygiene Practice: Sandwich Bars and Similar Food Service Outlets](#)
- [Industry Guide to Good Hygiene Practice: Sandwich Manufacturing](#)

Retail business

- [Food Industry Guide to Good Hygiene Practice: Retail](#)
- [Best Practice Guidelines for the Production of Chilled Foods - Fourth Edition](#)

Other industry guides to aid your business

- [catering](#)
- [wholesale distributors](#)
- [whitefish processors](#)
- [vending and dispensing](#)
- [bottled water](#)
- [mail order food](#)
- [drinks and alcohol](#)
- [watercress](#)