

[Registering and managing a food business](#)

Registering

You must [register your food business](#) with the local authority at least 28 days before trading or before the food operations start. The registration form requires basic details of your food business including the address and the food activities involved. Registration is free.

If you are already trading and have not registered you need to do so as soon as possible.

You must:

- make sure your local authority always has up-to-date information about your premises
- tell your local authority if you are planning to make any significant changes to your business

If you operate more than one premises, you need to register each of them with the local authority in which they are located.

If you handle products of animal origin, like meat, and you supply other food businesses, you might [need to be approved](#). Speak to your local authority for information.

Companies involved with food distribution or food supply that operate from an office should also register as food businesses. This applies even if no food is kept at the premises.

You also need to be registered if you operate a website that arranges food deliveries.

Once registered you may be inspected by an authorised officer from your local authority.

[Register your food business](#)

In some local situations in England a single registration can cover more than one premises.

Registering as a childminder

If you provide food with your childminding business, the details you provide to Ofsted will also be used to register you as a food business.

Your registration details will be available to your local authority and you will not have to register separately as a food business with your local authority. This allows you to have their premises registered with the environmental health service of their local authority, which is a legal requirement.

You can have a food safety inspection after being registered as a food business. This would be carried out by your business's local authority. If your childminder business does need an inspection, a food safety officer will contact you to arrange a suitable time to visit.

The officer will talk about food hygiene and food safety to help make sure the food you give to any children is prepared, [stored and handled safely](#).

Nurseries, care homes and schools

Nurseries, care homes and schools are non-domestic premises and that means that Ofsted will not share registration details with the local authority. They will contact you directly.

[Register as a childminder or childcare provider](#)

Food hygiene certificate

In the UK, food handlers don't have to hold a food hygiene certificate to prepare or sell food. Many food businesses will prefer that you do.

Food hygiene certificates don't have an expiry date. A refresher course is available for those who need one.

Volunteers and charity organisations

You do not need a food hygiene certificate to [make and sell food for charity events](#).

Training

If you are responsible for developing and maintaining a business's food safety management procedures, you are legally required to have had training on food safety and hygiene to do this.

Skills can be learned by training while working, self-study or relevant previous experience.

Get in touch with [your local authority](#) about food hygiene courses.

[Allergen training](#) for businesses.

Food safety coaching videos

Our 10 short videos provide best practice guidance on a number of potential food safety issues. They demonstrate these and other food hygiene practices:

- effective handwashing
- chilling foods down as quickly as possible
- checking that foods are cooked thoroughly
- effective cleaning
- what to do if a member of staff is ill at work
- keeping pests out of your business, what to look for and the action to take

Inspections and your food business

Local authorities are responsible for enforcing food hygiene laws.

Authorised officers will visit your premises to check if your business is complying with food law and producing food that is safe to eat. To do this, they will look at:

- your premises
- how you work
- your food safety management system

- the types of food you make and prepare

Authorised officers may visit your premises for a number of different reasons, including but not limited to:

- food hygiene and food standards inspections
- sampling
- complaint follow-up
- advisory visits

They have the right to enter and inspect your premises at any reasonable time. Authorised officers will usually arrive without making an appointment.

[About the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme](#)

Enforcement action

Officers can take 'enforcement action' to protect the public. This can include:

- seizing foods suspected to be unfit for human consumption
- writing you a letter following an inspection or outlining non-compliances and asking you to correct these
- serving a formal legal notice that sets out certain things you must do, or forbidding you from using certain processes, premises or equipment
- recommending a prosecution in serious cases

Officers will allow you enough time to make changes unless there is an immediate risk to public health.

You can appeal if you do not agree with the actions they have taken.

[Food Hygiene and safety regulations](#)

[Food Hygiene Regulations 2006](#)

[Food Hygiene Regulations 2006 in Welsh](#)

[General Food Regulations for Wales](#)

[Food Hygiene Regulations 2006 for Northern Ireland](#)

[General food regulations for Northern Ireland](#)

Licences

You will need a premises licence if you want to:

- sell or supply alcohol
- sell hot food and drinks between 11pm and 5am
- provide entertainment, such as theatre, cinema or live music performances
- sell food from a stall or van on the street

Contact your [local authority](#) for further information on how to register and licence your food business.

Legal requirements

You must make sure that the food you place on the market is completely safe. The food you provide must not be harmful to people's health or unfit for people to eat.

Customers must be able to make informed and safe choices and must not be misled.

The most important food hygiene and labelling regulations for your business that apply across the UK are:

- [Regulation 178/2002 on general food safety](#)
- [Regulation 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs](#)
- [Regulation 1169/2009 on the provision of food information to consumers](#)

These documents include all basic hygiene requirements for the premises, facilities and personal hygiene of your staff

and provision of food information.

[Food and feed law guide](#) (1.16 MB)

Food safety management procedures

All 'food safety management procedures' follow the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). HACCP is a system that helps you look at how to handle food and introduce procedures to make sure the food produced is safe to eat.

You must also:

- keep up-to-date documents and records relating to your procedures
- review your procedures if you change what you produce or how you work

The procedures can be applied flexibly for different types and sizes of food businesses. Your records must include any procedures in place to make sure food is safe to eat.

[More about HACCP](#)

[Safer food, better business](#)

Product withdrawal and recall

Withdrawal

When food you have supplied is harmful to health or unfit for people to eat, you will need to withdraw it from sale.

You must immediately tell the environmental health service at your local council and the FSA.

Recall

The product will be recalled if it has already reached customers.

Customers should be informed to return or dispose of the product.

You must immediately tell the environmental health service at your local council and the FSA.

[More about food incidents](#)

[Report a food incident to the FSA](#)

Keeping records of the movement of food for traceability

Traceability rules help keep track of food in the supply chain and ensure accurate withdrawals of foods from the market can be made in the event of any food safety problems.

Records will be checked if there is a safety problem with food you have sold. When the food has a long shelf life you will need to keep the records for longer.

All your records need to be kept up-to-date and be available for inspections at all times.

[Traceability e-learning course](#)

You must keep records of:

- all the suppliers that provide you with food or any food ingredients
- and those businesses which you supply with food or food ingredients

The records should include:

- name and address of supplier
- name and address of business you are supplying
- type of and quantity of products
- dates of transaction and of delivery

You can also record:

- batch number
- invoices
- receipts of food products purchased

Often this information will be on the invoice but you should make sure.

In addition to these regulations you also need to comply with certain parts of the national laws.

[The Food Safety and Hygiene \(England\) Regulations 2013, in England](#)

[The Food Information Regulations 2014, in England, Wales](#)

[The Food Information Regulations 2014 in Northern Ireland](#)

[The General Food Regulations 2004, in Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

[The Food Hygiene Regulations 2006, in Wales and Northern Ireland](#)