

[Key regulations](#)

Food Standards Act 1999

The main purpose of the Food Standards Act 1999 is to establish us as the Food Standards Agency.

It is there to provide us with functions and powers and to transfer certain functions in relation to food safety and standards.

The Act was introduced in the House of Commons in 1999.

It sets out our main goal to protect public health in relation to food. It gives us the power to act in the consumer's interest at any stage in the food production and supply chain.

[Food Standards Act 1999 legislation](#)

Food Safety Act 1990

The Food Safety Act 1990 (as amended) provides the framework for all food legislation in the England, Wales and Scotland.

The main responsibilities for all food businesses under the Act are to ensure that:

- businesses do not include anything in food, remove anything from food or treat food in any way which means it would be damaging to the health of people eating it
- the food businesses serve or sell is of the nature, substance or quality which consumers would expect
- the food is labelled, advertised and presented in a way that is not false or misleading

[Food Safety Act 1990 legislation](#)

England and Wales

[Food Safety Act 1990 - a guide for food businesses](#) (531.99 KB)

The Food Safety Order 1991

Our guide for businesses sets out the roles and responsibilities under the Order, as well as details of its enforcement.

Managers of large and medium-sized businesses are to read the guide in detail. Staff will need to know the main responsibilities outlined in the introduction.

Small businesses should also be aware of these responsibilities and can use the rest of the guide for reference about the Order.

[The Food Safety Order 1991 legislation](#)

Northern Ireland

[Northern Ireland Food Safety Order 1991 business guide](#) (301.5 KB)

General Food Law

Whether you work in a food business or you are a consumer interested in food law, there are general requirements which you need to be aware of.

This overview covers the main European Commission (EC) and domestic legislation on the following areas:

- food imports and exports
- safety
- traceability
- labelling
- product withdrawals and recalls

[General Food Law](#)

Codes of Practice

[Browse codes of practice for food and animal feed](#)

Food Information Regulation

The EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on the 25 October 2011.

The Food Information Regulations 2014 came into force on the 14th July 2014 and enables local authorities to enforce the European Food Information to Consumers Regulation No 1169/2011. Under these regulations, a change to the existing enforcement regime has been taken forward with a move away from the across-the-board use of frontline criminal offences to a more proportionate and targeted regime using improvement notices.

Northern Ireland and Wales

[Food Information Regulation guidance](#) (273.32 KB)

A backstop criminal offence will be in place where there is failure to comply with an improvement notice, with an offender being liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 5. Criminal offences will continue for the contravention of certain provisions, namely mislabelling of foods containing allergens because a failure to comply with the allergen provisions may result in a risk to consumer health and safety.

The regulations also revoke the majority of the provisions of the Food Labelling Regulations 1996. The compositional standards for cream and traditional UK cheeses will be retained until 2018 as will certain alcohol related terms including 'low alcohol', 'dealcoholised' etc.

The regulations take up certain derogations and national flexibilities permitted by the FIC namely:

- derogation from the need to give mandatory information for milk and milk products in glass bottles intended for reuse. Taking up this derogation maintains the current exemption.
- derogation from minced meat composition standards on fat and collagen to meat protein ratios in the FIC. Taking up this derogation allows businesses to continue to supply the UK market with traditional minced meat provided it is sold under a national mark.
- to retain the requirement for the name of the food to be given for foods sold non-prepacked.
- to retain the requirement for a quantitative indication of the meat content for meat products sold non-prepacked.
- to introduce the specific means by which allergen information provided on a mandatory basis for non-prepacked food has to be given.
- update other food labelling and standards legislation to reflect the FIC Regulation and the introduction of the Food Information Regulations 2014.

Separate but similar regulations have also been made in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.