

Acrylamide legislation

Information on the measures concerning acrylamide levels in food, guidance for food business operators and benchmark levels for monitoring acrylamide levels in different food categories.

All food businesses operators (FBOs) are required to put in place simple practical steps to manage acrylamide within their food safety management systems. This ensures that acrylamide levels are as low as reasonably achievable in their food.

Best practice, mitigation measures and benchmark levels for the reduction of the presence of acrylamide in food have been established as set out in:

- [retained EU Regulation 2017/2158](#) for England and Wales
- [EU Regulation 2017/2158](#) for Northern Ireland

Businesses are expected to do the following:

- be aware of acrylamide as a food safety hazard and have a general understanding of how acrylamide is formed in the food they produce;
- take the necessary steps to mitigate acrylamide formation in the food they produce - adopting the relevant measures as part of their food safety management procedures
- undertake representative sampling and analysis where appropriate, to monitor the levels of acrylamide in their products as part of their assessment of the mitigation measures
- keep appropriate records of the mitigation measures undertaken, together with sampling plans and results of any testing

The measures are proportionate to the nature and size of the business, to ensure that small and micro-businesses are not burdened. The legislation applies to all FBOs that produce or place on the market the foods listed below:

- french fries, other cut (deep fried) products and sliced potato crisps from fresh potatoes
- potato crisps, snacks, crackers and other potato products from potato dough
- bread
- breakfast cereals (excluding porridge)
- fine bakery wares: cookies, biscuits, rusks, cereal bars, scones, cornets, wafers, crumpets and gingerbread, as well as crackers, crisp breads and bread substitutes
- coffee: (i) roast coffee; (ii) instant (soluble) coffee
- coffee substitutes
- baby food and processed cereal-based food intended for infants and young children

Different requirements apply to local and independent FBOs selling food directly to the consumer or directly into local retail. For example, independent cafes, fish and chip shops and restaurants.

For larger centrally controlled and supplied chains with standardised menus and operating procedures the legislation reflects that the controls of acrylamide can be managed from the centre. This would apply to for example, large restaurants, hotels and café chains.

Mitigation measures

The mitigation measures relevant to food businesses are set out in the Annexes to the legislation. The content of these have been drawn from the various codes of practice which have been developed by various sector specific trade bodies who have investigated how to reduce acrylamide in different foods. The application of the relevant acrylamide mitigation measures is not intended to lead to any significant changes in the quality and properties of foods.

Benchmark levels

The benchmark levels (BMLs) are set out in an Annex of the legislation. BMLs are generic performance indicators for the food categories covered by the Regulation. They are not maximum limits and are not intended to be used for enforcement purposes. BMLs are to be used by FBOs to gauge the success of the mitigation measures.

Guidance

We have developed [guidelines to assist local authorities in the implementation and enforcement of the new legislation](#). [UKHospitality](#) and other key trade associations have worked with us and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) to develop guidance for FBOs in the catering and food service industry.

Industry guidance on acrylamide mitigation has also been developed by various food sectors at national and international level including the [acrylamide tool box](#) maintained by Food Drink Europe.

IMPORTANT

EU references in FSA guidance documents

The FSA is updating all EU references, to accurately reflect the law now in force, in all new or amended guidance published since the Transition Period ended at the end of 2020. In some circumstances it may not always be practicable for us to have all EU references updated at the point we publish new or amended guidance.

Other than in Northern Ireland, any references to EU Regulations in this guidance should be read as meaning retained EU law. You can access retained EU law via HM Government's [EU Exit Web Archive](#). This should be read alongside any EU Exit legislation that was made to ensure retained EU law operates correctly in a UK context. EU Exit legislation is on [legislation.gov.uk](#). In Northern Ireland, EU law will continue to apply in respect to the majority of food and feed hygiene and safety law, as listed in the [Northern Ireland Protocol](#), and retained EU law will not apply to Northern

Ireland in these circumstances.