

Applying for approval of a meat or food establishment

How to apply for approval of a meat or food establishment

Where you need to apply for approval of a food or meat establishment depending on the type of your establishment and your location.

Some meat and food establishments require approval before they can start operating. Depending on what activities you carry out and where you are based, you may need to apply for an approval from either the Food Standards Agency or your local authority.

Establishments approved by the Food Standards Agency

The following establishments must be approved by us before they start trading:

England and Wales

- slaughterhouses
- cutting plants
- game handling establishments
- wholesale meat market

Northern Ireland

- slaughterhouses
- cutting plants
- game handling establishments
- wholesale meat market
- collection centres of raw milk
- processing plants of liquid milk
- packing centres - packing and grading of eggs by quality and weight

You cannot start trading before receiving an approval. You must not commence any business activity which requires approval unless you have received conditional or full approval for your proposed activity from the FSA. If you start trading without approval, it is an offence which may lead to prosecution.

Establishments approved by local authorities

England and Wales

General establishments

- cold stores
- re-wrapping and re-packaging establishments

Meat establishments

- minced meat establishments
- meat preparations establishments
- mechanically separated meat establishments
- meat products processing plants
- rendered animal fats and greaves processing plants
- treated stomachs, bladders and intestines processing plants
- gelatine processing plants
- collagen processing plants

Fish and shellfish establishments

- live bivalve molluscs (LBMs) establishments including dispatch centres and purification centres
- establishments working with fishery products using factory and freezing vessels, processing plants, fresh fishery products, auction halls, wholesale markets

Dairy establishments

- collection centres of raw milk where it is cooled and filtered
- processing plants treating, processing and/or wrapping of dairy products (milk or any milk-based product)

Egg and egg product establishments

- packing centres - packing and grading of eggs by quality and weight
- processing plants - processing of egg products
- liquid egg plants - handling of unprocessed egg contents after removal of shell

Northern Ireland

General establishments

- cold stores
- re-wrapping and re-packaging establishments

Meat establishments

- minced meat establishments
- meat preparations establishments

- mechanically separated meat establishments
- meat products processing plants
- rendered animal fats and greaves processing plants
- treated stomachs, bladders and intestines processing plants
- gelatine processing plants
- collagen processing plants

Fish and shellfish establishments

- live bivalve molluscs (LBMs) establishments including dispatch centres and purification centres
- establishments working with fishery products using factory and freezing vessels, processing plants, fresh fishery products, auction halls, wholesale markets

Dairy establishments

- processing plants treating, processing and/or wrapping of milk-based products

Egg and egg product establishments

- processing plants - processing of egg products
- liquid egg plants - handling of unprocessed egg contents after removal of shell

Applying for approval of a meat or food establishment by the FSA

How to apply for approval by the Food Standards Agency, approval assessment and right of appeal.

[List of establishments approved by the FSA.](#)

Application for a new establishment

Use our [approvals service](#) to apply for approval of your establishment by the FSA. You will need to create an account to use this service.

When we receive your application one of our veterinary officials will contact you within two weeks to arrange a visit to conduct an assessment.

PDF

[View Step by step guide for meat approvals application as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (559.42 KB)

Application for additional activities

Use our [approvals service](#), if you are already approved as a meat establishment and want to apply for approval of additional activities or species.

[Apply for approval by the FSA](#)

Managing your application

Once you've submitted your application, you will be able to manage and track it in our approvals applications service.

England and Wales

Advisory visits

If you want to obtain approval for your establishment you may request an advisory visit. Advisory visits aim to help you identify the welfare and hygiene requirements which may apply to your proposed approval activities. Areas of advice include building structure, equipment and facilities, operational hygiene considerations and HACCP, good practices, record management and standard operating procedures as well as animal welfare.

Advisory visits will be charged at a set fee which is payable before the visit is scheduled to take place. This fee for the financial year 1 April 2022 to March 2023 is £370.80 inclusive of VAT. This fee is strictly non-refundable.

You can request an advisory visit, when you submit your application form using our approvals service.

England and Wales

PDF

[View Advisory Visits Guidance as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (274.89 KB)

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.

Approval assessment

As part of the approval process, we will assess:

- the equipment and infrastructure of your establishment
- your food safety management system, as part of the approval process.

You are not permitted to operate until a conditional approval has been granted.

After approval, one of our officials will return within three months to assess production and your [compliance with all the hygiene requirements](#) in:

- [retained EU Regulation 852/2004](#) and [retained EU Regulation 853/2004](#) for England and Wales
- [Regulation 852/2004](#) and [Regulation 853/2004](#) for Northern Ireland

Once approved, details of the premises together with information relating to types of foods produced are added to the [lists of approved establishments](#).

Right of appeal

You have a right to [appeal our decision](#) if your premises is refused approval under food law.

You can submit an appeal one month from the date when you were notified of the decision.

Operational policy

The Operational policy explains the application and decision-making process involved in giving approval to your businesses. It also explains the circumstances in which we would remove your approval.

This document is for food business operators of existing approved food businesses and potential:

- slaughterhouses
- cutting plants
- game handling establishments
- wholesale markets

PDF

[View Operational Policy for the approval of meat establishments undertaken by the FSA as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (637.27 KB)

[Approval of food establishments in Northern Ireland: governance arrangements and approvals policy](#)

List of approved food establishments

- [Approved establishments in England & Wales](#)
- [Approved establishments in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Approved establishments in Scotland](#)
- [Approved establishments in the EU](#)

Team Contacts

Approvals team: approvals@food.gov.uk

Applying for approval of a food or meat establishment by a local authority

How to apply for approval by a local authority, approval process and right to appeal.

[List of establishments approved by a local authority.](#)

If you think you may need approval, please [contact your local authority](#) before applying.

When you don't need to apply for approval

There are some exemptions from the requirement to be approved by a local authority, including:

- you only sell direct to the public
- you are a retail business supplying products of animal origin to other businesses (including caterers) on a marginalised, localised and restricted basis

Additionally, there may be an exemption available depending on the extent to which you wish to supply food of animal origin to other businesses. You should [contact your local authority](#) to determine whether you could claim such an exemption from the need for approval.

If a food business is exempted from the requirement to be approved, you must [register your food business](#) with the local authority at least 28 days before opening. If you are already trading and have not registered, you need to do so as soon as possible.

You must still follow the rules for controlling the temperature and storage of any food you transport.

Apply for approval by a local authority

England

[Food premises approval \(England\)](#)

Wales

[Food premises approval \(Wales\)](#)

Northern Ireland

[Food premises approval \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

Approval assessment

To obtain approval, establishments will have to meet all of the relevant requirements of:

- [retained EU Regulation 852/2004](#) and [retained EU Regulation 853/2004](#) for England and Wales
- [Regulation 852/2004](#) and [Regulation 853/2004](#) for Northern Ireland and other requirements of food law relevant to the type of food business in Northern Ireland

You cannot start trading before receiving approval. You must not commence any business activity which requires approval unless you have received conditional or full approval for your proposed activity from the local authority. If you start trading without approval, it is an offence which may lead to prosecution.

Once approved, details of the premises together with information relating to types of foods produced are added to the list of approved establishments.

Right of appeal

You have a right to appeal a decision made by the local authority that has refused to grant an approval.

You can appeal against that decision to the relevant court and must submit an appeal one month from the date when you were notified of the decision.

List of approved food establishments

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- [Approved establishments in Scotland](#)
- [Approved establishments in the EU](#)

[Back to top](#)