

Food Safety Guidance for Farmers' Markets

Anyone selling food or drink from a market stall must comply with food hygiene legislation. Foods which are categorised as high risk include cooked meats, fish and dairy products and some unwrapped or ready-to-eat foods. These foods will require stricter controls to prevent food poisoning and contamination.

1. Registration of food premises

If you sell food, (which includes drink), five times or more in five consecutive weeks, you must register with the local authority where your business is based, ie where you produce, store or prepare the food, or where you keep a vehicle used in connection with the food business. This information must be available to the market organiser and the authorised officer who may inspect your food stall during market trading.

2. Transport of food

Vehicles and containers used to transport food must be kept clean and in good repair. Food must be wrapped, covered or placed in sealed washable containers, and kept separate from any other items being carried in the vehicle. Ready-to-eat foods must be kept separate from raw foods to prevent cross-contamination.

3. Water supply and washing facilities

There must be an adequate supply of potable water available for hand, equipment and food washing. This can be from a container which should hold a minimum of 9 litres per person working at the stall, unless it can be refilled from a potable water supply on site.

All food stalls must have access to suitable facilities for washing hands, utensils and cleaning equipment. Wash basins for cleaning hands must be provided with hot and cold (or appropriately mixed) running water, materials for cleaning hands and for hygienic drying. If services are not available at the stall/site, insulated containers of a suitable capacity and which can maintain the water at an adequate temperature may be used.

Communal wash facilities are only acceptable for stalls selling low risk foods.

4. Storage and display of food

All food must be protected from the risk of contamination. Potential sources of contamination would include people, animals and the weather. Food should be placed at a minimum height of 45cm off the ground. High risk foods must be kept separate from raw products.

5. Temperature control

High risk food must be transported, stored and displayed at a temperature of 8°C or below. It is good practice to aim for a target food temperature of 5°C. Foods may be displayed unrefrigerated for a one-off period of 4 hours. Hot food on display must be kept above 63°C if it is hot held for more than 2 hours. Suitable thermometers should be available and it is good practice to check the temperature of the food throughout the day.

6. Design and cleanliness

Internal surfaces must be constructed of washable materials and kept in a good state of repair to enable effective cleaning and minimise the risk of contamination to food. The stall must be cleaned down prior to handling foods and regularly thereafter to remove visible dirt and debris. Surfaces which come into contact with open high risk food must be disinfected prior to starting work and during use.

7. Personal hygiene

Every person working in a food handling area shall maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and shall wear suitable clean and, where appropriate, protective clothing. Hand washing is important, smoking is unacceptable when handling open foods, and cuts must be covered with a waterproof dressing. If you have an illness which could be transmitted through food, you should not be working in a food-handling environment.

8. Waste storage

Food waste and other refuse must be contained in a suitable receptacle and stored in a way which will not attract pests.

9. Training

All food handlers must be supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters to an appropriate level depending on the type of food handled. Information on the level of training or instruction required and details on suitable courses can be obtained from the local authority.

10. Trading laws

10.1 Food labelling

Food must be marked with:-

- a) the name of the food;
- b) a list of ingredients;
- c) an appropriate durability indication – either a “use by” date or a “best before” date;
- d) any special storage conditions or conditions of use;
- e) the name and address of the manufacturer or packer;
- f) particulars of the place or origin or provenance of the food, if failure to state this could mislead a purchaser;
- g) instructions for use if necessary.

Although there are exemptions to these requirements, you should provide as much of this information as possible to prospective purchasers of your products.

Allergen labelling. If the food contains any of the following allergens, the allergen must be stated: peanuts; nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts); eggs; milk; crustaceans (including prawns, crabs and lobsters); fish; sesame seeds; cereals containing gluten (including wheat, rye, barley and oats); soya; celery; mustard; sulphur dioxide and sulphites (preservatives used in some

foods and drinks) at levels above 10mg per kg or per litre, molluscs or lupin.

Health Claims. When making a voluntary health or nutrition claim you must comply with the requirements of European Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made in food. Claims must comply with the general requirements of the Regulation as specified in Article 3, which include not being false, ambiguous or misleading, not encouraging or condoning excess consumption of a food and not implying that a balanced diet cannot provide necessary nutrients.

- If a claim is made Article 7 makes it obligatory to provide nutrition labelling. However, a non-prepacked foodstuff put up for sale to the final consumer or to mass caterers, a foodstuff packed at point of sale at the request of the purchaser or pre-packed with a view to immediate sale, does not have to provide nutrition labelling.
- Article 8 means that only nutrition claims listed in the Annex to the Regulation can be made on food and only if the product meets with the specific conditions of use for that claim. For example, “low fat” can only be made on products containing no more than 3g of fat per 100g for solids.
- Claims must not be made on alcoholic beverages containing more than 1.2% by volume of alcohol, with limited exceptions for reduced energy or reduced alcohol and low alcohol content claims (Article 4).
- Health claims which suggest that health could be affected by not consuming the food cannot be made on food (Article 12).
- Health claims which make reference to the rate or amount of weight loss cannot be made on food (Article 12).
- Health claims which make reference to recommendations of individual doctors or health professionals cannot be made on food (Article 12).

10.2 Pricing

All goods sold must be marked with an indication of their selling price. This price must be unambiguous, easily identifiable as referring to the goods in question and clearly legible.

For goods sold from bulk i.e. loose goods - the selling price may be indicated by any of the following methods:-

- a) A unit of measurement – e.g. kg, metre;

- b) A single item – e.g. oranges – 20p each;
- c) A specified quantity of the product – e.g. 5 oranges for £1.

Certain goods must also be marked with unit price. This can be the price per kilogram or the price per 100g for food items. The following categories of product should be marked with a unit price:-

- a) Goods sold from bulk – e.g. cheese cut for the purchaser from a whole cheese and meat sliced from a large piece.
- b) “Catchweight products” – those which are not all prepacked in the same quantity.

10.3 Weights and measures

Most products must be sold with an indication of their weight. For pre-packed goods, this weight should be marked on the packaging.

If you are selling goods loose from bulk, as in the case of fruit and vegetables or meat and cheese, you should indicate to the consumer the exact weight of the produce when weighed. You should also use weighing equipment that has been certified as being accurate and suitable for trade use.

Certain fruit and vegetables, such as apples, garlic, tomatoes and citrus fruits, may also be sold by number as well as by weight.

REMEMBER

Your market stall may be visited to ensure that you are following the requirements laid out in this guidance. Serious breaches of these hygiene rules may prevent you from attending future market events.

This leaflet has been prepared for the assistance of traders by the Food Safety Team of Brighton and Hove City Council. It is not an authoritative interpretation of the law and is intended only for guidance. For further information, please see the Industry Guide to Good Hygiene Practice: Markets and Fairs Guide, ISBN 1-902423-00-3.

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