

Guidance on new food safety legislation

Do the 'write' thing - document your food safety system

The law requires all food businesses to have a documented food safety management system. You need to say what you do to make sure that the food you sell is safe to eat, and have this written down. The amount of records that you need to keep will relate to the type of food that you sell and the risks presented by your business.

Following extensive consultation with the catering industry, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) developed the 'Safer Food, Better Business' system as an aid to help businesses comply.

Don't panic! Safer Food, Better Business is here to help you...

Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB) is a simple fact sheet system that tells you how to make sure that the major potential hazards in your food business, ie cross-contamination, cleaning, chilling and cooking, (the '4 Cs') can be safely controlled.

A simple diary is also provided for appropriate record keeping. This includes a four-weekly review to ensure that the document is kept up-to-date and to allow common problems to be identified and sorted out. Replacement diary sheets are available once supplies in the pack have run out.

The law requires you to have a documented food safety management system. It doesn't have to be SFBB, but any alternative may involve a lot of work for you if you do not already have such a system in place.

What's in it for me?

SFBB provides you with a documented food safety management system that will enable you to comply with the requirements of the law. It can easily be tailored to your business. It will help ensure that you produce safe food, and may result in fewer visits by your Environmental Health Officer/Food Safety Officer. **Above all, it's free!**



Your questions answered overleaf...

Your questions answered

How do I get a SFBB pack?

There are two different SFBB packs - one for small catering businesses and one for small retail businesses (which is also suitable for bed and breakfast premises). You can order a copy of the relevant pack by phoning **0845 606 0667** or can download them from the FSA's website - go to either www.food.gov.uk/catering or www.food.gov.uk/retail.

Is the SFBB pack available in other languages and for different cuisines?

There are catering packs for a range of cuisines, including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan and Chinese. The Chinese version of the pack is available in English and traditional Chinese. You can order these packs by phoning the FSA on the number below, or can download them from the FSA website - go to www.food.gov.uk and type 'cuisines' in the search box.

What happens once I have implemented the system?

You then need to ensure that it is followed by you and your employees. You should also review your diary every four weeks and when anything changes, such as the introduction of different equipment or a new menu/product range.

Won't this take up a lot of time, and require me to keep lots of records?

With SFBB, filling out the diary is the only daily record that you need to complete and this should only take a couple of minutes each day. Once you have worked through the 'Safe Method' fact sheets, you will have a record of what your business does to make sure that the food you sell is safe. This will only need to be reviewed and amended if anything changes.

I write down the temperature of fridges daily - do I need to keep doing this?

Keeping a written record of fridge temperatures is good practice, and helps highlight any problems. SFBB still requires you to monitor fridge temperatures, but you only need to record problems and what you have done to correct them. If you want to continue writing down fridge temperatures and cooking temperatures daily, then you can.

I already have a system in place. Do I have to change to SFBB?

No. Some businesses already have a documented food safety system in place. If you already have a written system, then you will probably comply with the legislation without having to make any changes. You can check your system against the SFBB pack on the FSA's website and the inspector will assess it on your next routine inspection.

What happens if I don't implement SFBB?

These regulations require you to implement a documented food safety system. SFBB has been developed to assist food businesses to comply with this requirement. If you do not implement and maintain a suitable system, the council may take legal action in line with its Enforcement Policy. We hope that such legal action will not be necessary.

If you have any queries about food hygiene legislation, please contact the Food Safety Team on 01273 292161, e-mail us at ehl.food@brighton-hove.gov.uk or see our website at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/foodsafety.

If you have a specific query about your food business, please contact your Food Safety Officer.