



Food Law Guidance for Home Caterers

This advice note is intended to provide an overview of general food safety guidance to businesses that operate from a domestic setting.

Registration

You require to register your business with us. There is no charge for this service. The Food Business Registration Form should be completed and returned at least 28 days before you start trading. The form is available [online](#) and can be returned to commercial@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Once you have completed and submitted the form you may start trading before an inspection occurs.

General Information

Following registration, an Officer will arrange to visit and carry out the food law inspection to ensure your kitchen complies with food law.

Areas to consider:

- Is the kitchen kept in good repair and in a clean condition?
- Is there enough space for ingredients and finished products? Ideally, there should be separate storage for all ingredients for business use.
- Is there a sink which has cold and hot water for washing equipment? Ideally, there should be a dishwasher to keep the washing of food items separate from cleaning.
- Is there enough equipment that can be designated for business use?
- Is there a toilet leading directly onto a food room? If yes, this would need a corridor before entry into the kitchen and both doors kept closed.
- Any windows and external doors should be kept closed to prevent pest access. If you wish to have these open when carrying out business procedures these should have pest control measures in place.
- Are there plants in the kitchen? These should be removed as they introduce a risk of pests.
- Is the washing machine in the kitchen? If yes, this must **never** be used when carrying out business practices.
- Do you have toddlers, children or pets? They should be kept out the kitchen while making food for your business. You must ensure that pets do not climb or sit on your worktops and if they do a two stage clean must be carried out before the start of business practices.
- Is your water of drinking water quality? This should not be an issue if you use the mains (Scottish Water) supply.

Cross Contamination

Even if your business does not involve the handling of raw meats or unwashed vegetables, practices for controlling cross contamination of bacteria including E.coli O157 must be considered especially if these are handled when preparing family meals . Food Standards Scotland's Cross Contamination guidance can be found [here](#).

This Guidance details information regarding separate areas for preparation, two stage cleaning and more.

Hand wash basin requirements

All hand wash basins must have an adequate supply of hot and cold running water, liquid soap and materials for drying hands (usually paper towels). Depending on the food you produce you may have to install a separate designated hand wash basin. This may be plumbed in or a portable hand wash basin with a heating element and electrical supply.

Guidance on this is provided below:

Type of food produced at home	Sink and half or double wash-up sink (half bowl or second bowl designated for hand washing)	Portable wash hand basin	Plumbed in sink separate from wash-up sink
Full meals, fermented products (eg, curry, steak pies, rice dishes, noodles, sauerkraut kombucha)	Unsuitable	√	√
Home bakes, tray bakes, candy	√	√	√
Drinks (eg. boba tea, coffee, tea)	√	√	√

Before purchasing a portable hand wash basin for use in your home catering business, you should contact us at: commercial@aberdeencity.gov.uk for guidance on if it is suitable. We **will not** accept the use of tabletop fold-down portable wash-hand basins.

Training

It is a requirement that all food handlers are trained in food hygiene. To meet this requirement, you may wish to complete the Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland (REHIS) Elementary Food Hygiene training course. You can find trainers in the North East [here](#).

Food Handlers

People working with food are required to maintain a high degree of personal hygiene. They must regularly wash their hands, wear suitable protective clothing and cover any cuts on their hands using blue plasters. Food handlers suffering from vomiting, diarrhoea, have infected wounds, skin conditions or are carrying a disease likely to be transmitted through food must not handle open food until they are symptom free for 48 hours. Please find Food Standards Scotland's Guidance on fitness to work [here](#).

Food Safety Management System

All food businesses are required to put in place, implement and maintain food safety management procedures based on the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). Food Standards Scotland's manual known as 'Cooksafe', is available to view and download [here](#) and can be used to assist.

Cooksafe may contain more information than required, depending on the type of foods being produced. There are however many options available and some businesses prefer to create their own system from the sections of Cooksafe that apply.

Allergens

Controls must be in place for the 14 major allergens to ensure products are produced safely. There are different things that can be done to prevent cross contamination with allergens, including:

- Having separate work surfaces and equipment for foods prepared free from one or several allergens,
- Cleaning utensils before each use, especially if they were used to prepare meals containing allergens,
- Storing ingredients and prepared foods separately in closed and labelled containers,
- Keeping ingredients that contain allergens separate from other ingredients,
- Washing hands thoroughly between preparing dishes with and without certain allergens.

There is free online training available from the [Food Standards Scotland website](#)

If you cannot avoid cross contamination, you must not label or sell your product as allergen-free.

Labelling

Where a product is pre-packaged for sale labelling is required on the item. The requirements are for:

- Name of food item,
- Full list of ingredients,
- Allergens identified.

Further guidance can be found on [the Food Standards Scotland website](#)

If the food is sold to retail shops or other intermediate businesses, it will require to have further labelling. If you are doing this, you must contact us at commercial@aberdeencity.gov.uk for guidance.

Allergen information for distance selling

If food is sold e.g. through the internet or over the phone, allergen information must be provided at two stages:

- Before the purchase of the food is completed – this could be in writing (for example on a website, catalogue, or menu) or orally (for example by phone)

- When the food is delivered – this could be in writing (for example on allergen stickers on food or enclosed hard copy of menu) or orally (for example by phone)

The allergen information should be available to a customer in a written form at some point between a customer placing the order and taking delivery of it.

For any queries or if you require further food law information about setting up your own food business, please contact the Commercial Team:

Email: commercial@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Phone: 03000 200 292

Commercial Team, Protective Services, Operations, Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 15, Third Floor South, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen,
AB10 1AB

Other considerations

Other things to consider include whether Public Liability Insurance will be required. Homeowners should check home insurance, title deeds and mortgage conditions. Tenants should check tenancy agreements or speak to their landlord before starting a business from home.

Trading Standards

Your business may also be subject to compliance with associated Trading Standards legislation. The Chartered Trading Standards Institute, in partnership with the UK government, has produced a series of guides on Trading Standards law that are available [here](#).

Distance Selling

If you sell your goods at a distance (online, mail order, telephone) there are specific requirements around providing information to consumers, cancellation rights, and e-commerce.

Quantity Marking

Certain products will require you to provide the net quantity. When indicating a net quantity, it is important that any weighing or measuring equipment used is legal for trade use and has the appropriate markings. There are also rules on the size of the weight/volume indication and on the correct units and abbreviations.

Further information can be sought from Trading Standards:

Email: tradingstandards@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Phone: 03000 200 292

Planning and Building Standards

Depending on the nature of your business you may require [planning permission](#). If you are unsure contact Planning and Building Standards:

Email: pi@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Phone: 01224 523470

Business Waste

Business waste may have to be separated from domestic waste. Businesses can choose which registered waste disposal company you use. Aberdeen City Council's Business Waste and Recycling Team can be contacted for more information:

Email: businesswaste@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Phone: 03000 200 292