



## **Food Safety Advice for Home Caterers: Cakes, Bread, Confectionery etc.**

This guidance is intended for anyone who plans to run a food business from home making cakes, bread, confectionery etc.

This might include preparing food to sell in shops, at a market, or selling to other businesses or consumers.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has also produced guidance which can be viewed at [Starting a food business | Food Standards Agency](#) and which can be read in conjunction with this advice.

### **STARTING OUT**

**Before you get started make sure you have considered the following:**

#### **1. REGISTRATION**

Unless you're preparing food on an occasional and small-scale basis, your home will need to be registered with the Council as a food business at least 28 days before you start trading. This is free, and there is only one simple form to fill in, but it is a legal requirement, and you can be prosecuted if you do not register before starting.

Please visit [Register a food business - Exeter City Council](#) to complete the online registration form.

#### **2. PLANNING PERMISSION**

You may need planning permission to run a business from home, so take advice from Exeter City Council's Planning team on 01392 265223 or [planning@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:planning@exeter.gov.uk).

#### **3. BUSINESS RATES**

You may have to pay increased rates if you use part of your property for a business. Contact the Valuations Agency Office - [Contact VOA - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) if you have any queries.

#### **4. INSURANCE**

Just in case things go wrong, we strongly recommend you take out insurance to cover claims against you (third party insurance) in the same way as any other business. Unfortunately, this can be quite expensive. You should consult your solicitor or insurance agent about this.

#### **5. RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS**

Especially in older properties, you may find that the deeds contain clauses that prevent you from carrying out certain activities and running a food business may be one of them. You should consult your own solicitor about this.

## 6. MORTGAGE RESTRICTIONS

If you have a mortgage on your property, you must contact your lender and talk to them about your intentions.

## 7. WEIGHTS & MEASURES

For certain products such as bread etc., there are weights and measures requirements that may apply, and you should contact [Trading Standards](#) for advice.

## 8. FOOD SAFETY LAW

The laws on food safety apply in the same way to a business run from home as they do to all other commercial premises. This also applies if you use a kitchen somewhere else to prepare food for example, a village or community hall kitchen. You will be liable to regular inspections by officers from the Council's environmental health service, and you may face legal action if you are found to be breaking the food hygiene laws.

In addition, you must also meet the requirements of the Food Information Regulations 2014. These Regulations state that all pre-packed foods must be labelled with certain information relating to ingredients, name of producer, use by dates, allergens etc. Further advice on these requirements can be found on the FSA website - [Packaging and labelling | Food Standards Agency](#) and from Trading Standards.

## THE INSPECTION

Catering from home falls under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and Retained Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004. These Regulations lay down the requirements relating to persons engaged in the handling of food, the methods and practices used in food businesses and structural matters in food premises.

This is broken down into three areas: **Management, Hygiene and Structure.**

The standards you will have to meet depend upon a number of factors such as the type and quantity of food you intend to prepare, and what else the kitchen is used for. However, the following has been produced as a guide on what is expected in most cases to meet the requirements of food law.

### FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

This is a national scheme which rates a business based on compliance with the three areas stated above. You will receive a rating following your inspection which will be published on a website at [Food Hygiene Ratings | Food Standards Agency](#).

Your address will not be published.

## MANAGEMENT

### FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

As a food business operator, you are required to think about how you will prevent the

food that you prepare from being contaminated and ensure it is safe to eat.

Contamination falls into three categories: Chemical; Physical and Microbiological.

Hazard	Example
<b>Chemical Contamination</b>	Using cleaning materials that are not 'food safe' / storing chemicals around food
<b>Microbiological Contamination</b>	Not cooking food properly / leaving high risk food (such as fresh cream) out at room temperature / storing baked goods below raw foods causing cross contamination
<b>Physical Contamination</b>	Items falling into bakes (hair/nail varnish) / poor structure of the kitchen (peeling paint/damaged sink seals) / pest control

You are required to have a simple written system in place which shows how you will control these problems. The Food Safety team have produced a short document, '**Food Safety Plan for Home Caterers**', which you can use to meet this requirement. Complete the blanks in this document to form a food safety management system.

For anyone handling, preparing and cooking with high-risk foods such as raw meat, fish etc., please refer to the [Safer Food Better Business](#) packs that have been produced by the FSA which may be more suitable to use in these cases.

### **TRACEABILITY**

You need to make sure that you can show where all your ingredients have come from and, if you sell your food to someone who is not the final consumer (to a retailer, for example), you'll need to record this information too. Keep hold of all receipts for ingredients bought and keep a record of your sales when not to the final consumer.

### **TRAINING**

The law requires you to have suitable and sufficient knowledge to ensure that you prepare food safely. You may wish to undertake a food hygiene training course to help achieve this. Courses can be done online or in person. *It is recommended that food handlers undertake training to a level equivalent to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Award in Food Safety.*

You can find out more about the training courses offered by Exeter City Council at [Environmental health training - Level 2 award in food safety and hygiene - Exeter City Council](#)

### **USE BY/BEST BEFORE DATES**

Cakes and biscuits sold in supermarkets are often full of preservatives and may have been specially packed to allow the products to have an extended shelf life. Best before/use by dates can only be established by microbiological testing of a product.

As this is something which is costly, we suggest a short shelf-life erring on the side of caution. Whilst this is a low-risk product, there could be mould growth and loss of

product quality. You may wish to do some trials (taste and quality) which will help you to confirm this, although you must bear in mind the fact that you cannot see bacteria. As a general rule, we would recommend that products are given a shelf life of day of production +2 days.

## **LABELLING**

If you pre-pack food, please contact [Trading Standards](#) for labelling advice. However, if you do not pre-pack, or pre-pack for direct sale you need to provide allergen information. The 14 ingredients or products capable of causing allergies or intolerances are: cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut), crustaceans, molluscs, eggs, fish, peanuts, soybeans, milk (including lactose), nuts, celery, mustard, sesame seeds, lupin, sulphur dioxide and sulphites (at concentrations of more than 10mg/kg). Food allergy training is available online at [Food Allergy Training | Food Standards Agency](#).

**NATASHA'S LAW** - A food allergen labelling requirement from 1 October 2021. The new labelling requirements for food which is "Pre-packed for Direct Sale" (PPDS) will help protect your customers by providing potentially life-saving allergen information on packaging.

### **What is Pre-packed for Direct Sale (PPDS)?**

Pre-packed for Direct Sale (PPDS) is food which is packaged at the same place that it is offered or sold to consumers and is in this packaging before it is ordered or selected. If you wrap or pack your bakes, or you sell them elsewhere on a market stall or mobile site, these requirements will apply to you.

### **What is the requirement?**

Any business that produces PPDS food will be required to label it with the name of the food and a full ingredients list, with allergenic ingredients emphasised within the list.

### **Where can I find out more?**

The Food Standards Agency has produced an allergen and ingredients labelling tool. You can check if your business sells PPDS food and find out more about the different requirements for labelling, and what you need to do at [Allergen labelling | Food Standards Agency](#).

If you require more information or do not understand the requirements, please contact [Trading Standards](#).

## **HYGIENE**

### **SINKS AND HAND WASHING**

Most people do not have a separate wash hand basin in their kitchen. You must ensure that you do however have "adequate facilities for the cleaning of utensils and maintaining adequate personal hygiene".

If you are fortunate enough to be having a new kitchen or sink fitted, we recommend that you install a 1½ or double sink unit. One of these units can then be designated

solely for hand washing.

If you only have one sink, you need to consider how you can meet this requirement.

As you will be using your sink in your household's day to day activities, you must ensure that before you start undertaking any baking that you thoroughly clean and disinfect the sink, taps and surrounding area. It can then be used for hand washing whilst you bake.

If utensils are washed in the sink, you must ensure that, again, the procedure for cleaning and disinfecting the sink after use is implemented.

### **NOROVIRUS AND FITNESS TO WORK**

You do not want to be the cause of an outbreak of norovirus or food poisoning (sickness and diarrhoea illness) at a function you have prepared cakes for!

If you, or anyone in your household is suffering from sickness and/or diarrhoea you must ensure that you are symptom free (no sickness and/or diarrhoea) for 48 hours before you undertake any baking or cake preparation.

Take the time to consider now what you would do if you had a large order to fulfil and came down ill.

### **HIGH RISK BAKING**

Although most cakes and biscuits are classed as low risk products, some fillings and finishes are more high risk. Fresh cream, some cheesecakes and royal icing made from raw egg whites are all high risk and require extra thought to ensure they are prepared safely.

Cakes that require refrigeration must be always kept at or below 8°C with limited time out of temperature control (maximum 4 hours in total).

Royal icing is traditionally produced using raw egg whites. This method can still be used; however, we would recommend that lion marked eggs are used, and that these products are not given to vulnerable groups (the young, elderly, or pregnant). You can now purchase pasteurised dried egg whites or pasteurised royal icing mixes which remove this risk.

### **FRIDGE**

Any items being kept in the fridge must be stored in a way which does not cause contamination. Raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables must be stored below ready to eat foods, at all times.

You must ensure that your fridge is well organised and running at a temperature of 8°C or below. Use a fridge thermometer to check the temperature regularly. Don't overload your fridge. The efficiency of the fridge will suffer if the cooling air circulating within it cannot flow freely.

Keep the fridge door closed as much as possible. Leaving the fridge door open raises the

temperature. If you prepare a large amount of food that needs to be kept in the fridge you may need a separate fridge which is only used for your business.

### **CLEANING CHEMICALS**

You must ensure that you have appropriate cleaning chemicals to keep the kitchen clean and disinfect surfaces and equipment. Antibacterial sprays and sanitisers should meet a certain British Standard (BS EN: 1276 or 13697).

If you are unsure whether your current sprays meet this requirement you may wish to visit: [www.disinfectant-info.co.uk](http://www.disinfectant-info.co.uk)

Different types of disinfectants require different dilutions and contact times. These are specified and validated by the manufacturer, and you must ensure you follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and contact time to ensure the product is effective.

### **E. COLI**

Making cakes etc. is a low-risk activity, however if you prepare raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables in your home you could be causing an E. coli risk. You must take care when preparing your food at home to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

You must make sure that before you begin work that your kitchen is prepared to be your "working kitchen". This will generally mean removing anything not required in the kitchen and thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting the surfaces.

E. coli bacteria and other food poisoning bacteria can grow on the smallest food source on a dirty work surface. Proper cleaning and disinfecting should also remove all the bacteria from surfaces and equipment involved in food preparation.

## **STRUCTURE**

### **YOUR KITCHEN**

You must ensure that the structure of your kitchen is kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition as to avoid the risk of contamination.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Structure</b>
Walls	ideally of a smooth impervious finish (for example tiled or smooth plaster painted with a gloss or silk vinyl paint)
Floors	ideally of smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material (for example sealed lino or sealed floor tiles with water proof joints)
Ceiling	ideally of smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material

## **TOILETS**

Toilets should not open directly into your kitchen. However, in some houses the toilet leads straight from the kitchen and cannot be avoided. In these situations, you must ensure that the toilet is well ventilated and the door to the toilet kept shut. People should not use the toilet whilst you are baking/cooking.

## **VENTILATION**

You must ensure that you have adequate ventilation in place in the kitchen to prevent condensation, mould growth, and damage to decoration – but make sure open windows don't create a problem with flies and pests!

## **PEST CONTROL**

You must ensure that your kitchen is always pest free. This can be achieved with regular checking of the kitchen for evidence of pests (droppings/ nibbled food), making sure that no food is left out and that the kitchen is always kept in a clean condition.

Any signs of pest activity should be treated straight away. It is a good idea to record any problems you have and what you did about the problem.

## **STORAGE**

You need to ensure that at all stages of storage, production, and delivery the products that you produce are free from microbiological, chemical, and physical contamination.

Storage equipment, tins and ingredients should be kept separately from your day-to-day items wherever possible. Lidded containers are useful for preventing contaminants falling into tins/ equipment whilst it is being stored.

Food in the fridge should be wrapped/ covered to prevent items falling/ dripping on to others.

## **EQUIPMENT**

All equipment must be in good condition and not be a potential source of contamination due to its condition or cleanliness.

All equipment should be carefully cleaned, disinfected and stored. You must regularly check equipment and repair/replace anything damaged.

## **TRANSPORT**

When transporting food, it is important that it is protected from the risk of contamination e.g., pet hair, dust and dirt, insects. If the cakes contain high risk ingredients e.g., fresh cream they should be transported in cool boxes to maintain the temperature at 8°C or below.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **WASHING MACHINES**

A common query is that of having a washing machine in the kitchen. We understand

that washing machines are generally in domestic kitchens. You therefore need to consider this and ensure that no washing is undertaken at the same time as you prepare food for the business.

### **EDIBLE DUSTS AND GLITTER**

Care should be taken when using dusts or glitters to ensure they are edible. Edible products will be made of permitted additives (such as mica or titanium dioxide). Edible dusts or glitters will be labelled with the name or e-number of any additives used and should carry a statement such as '*for food*', '*restricted use in food*' or a more specific reference to their intended food use, for example '*edible lustre*'.

If you are unsure whether or not a specific dust or glitter is edible you should contact the product supplier.

### **PETS**

Having pets is fine! However, you must consider this as part of how you prevent any animal hair etc. from ending up in the food you prepare. Pets must not be allowed in the kitchen when you are preparing food.

All surfaces/equipment that they may have come into contact with must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to you beginning a baking session.

### **EGGS**

We all know that cake makers prefer to use eggs that are at room temperature. It is best to keep eggs in the fridge and to get them out a few hours prior to baking to bring them up to room temperature. Leaving eggs out at room temperature in your kitchen exposes the eggs to a lot of changes in temperature; keeping them in the fridge keeps them at a constant temperature.

Eggs which are British Lion, laid in Britain or other egg assurance schemes marked meet a specific safety standard. We recommend that you use eggs with this marking. All supermarket eggs will be Lion/laid in Britain marked. If you shop elsewhere, you should check that the eggs have been marked or meet an equivalent standard.

**For further information please contact:**

**Food Safety Team  
Environmental Health & Community Safety  
Exeter City Council  
Civic Centre  
Paris Street  
Exeter EX1 1RQ**










**Tel: 01392 265147**

**Email: [environmental.health@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:environmental.health@exeter.gov.uk)**

**Web: [www.exeter.gov.uk](http://www.exeter.gov.uk)**



### QR Codes & Websites Links mentioned in document

Website link	QR Code
Starting a Food Business: <a href="https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/starting-a-food-business">https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/starting-a-food-business</a>	
Register a Food Business: <a href="https://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/environmental-health/register-a-food-business/">https://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/environmental-health/register-a-food-business/</a>	
Valuations Office Agency: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/contact-voa">https://www.gov.uk/contact-voa</a>	
Trading Standards: <a href="https://www.devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk/">https://www.devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk/</a>	
FSA Packaging and Labelling Guidance: <a href="https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/packaging-and-labelling">https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/packaging-and-labelling</a>	
Food Hygiene Rating Score: <a href="https://ratings.food.gov.uk/">https://ratings.food.gov.uk/</a>	
Safer Food Better Business packs: <a href="https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-sfbb">https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-sfbb</a>	
Exeter City Council Food Safety Training: <a href="https://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/environmental-health/environmental-health-training/level-2-award-in-food-safety-and-hygiene/">https://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/environmental-health/environmental-health-training/level-2-award-in-food-safety-and-hygiene/</a>	
FSA Allergen Training: <a href="https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/">https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/</a>	

Website link	QR Code
FSA Allergen Labelling PPDS: <a href="https://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-labelling-changes-for-prepacked-for-direct-sale-ppds-food">https://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-labelling-changes-for-prepacked-for-direct-sale-ppds-food</a>	