



Running a
**small food
business**
from home

The following guide will give you a brief outline of the standards expected of you if you are running a small business from your home. This may include preparing food at home to sell in a shop or from a market, selling to other businesses, a sandwich round business, cake making or even full scale catering. If you require more detailed information or advice on any of the following issues or any other food safety matter please contact the Council's Environmental Health Service.

Consider the following matters:

Planning Permission

You may need planning permission to run a business from home, so you should contact the Council's Planning Department for advice. Approval of your business proposals by the Environmental Health Division does not constitute planning permission.

Business Rates

You may have to pay increased rates if you use part of your property for a business. You should take advice from the Council's Local Taxation and Benefits Team.

Mortgage Instructions

If you have a mortgage on your property you should discuss your business proposals with your lender.



Restrictive Covenants

You may find that the deeds to your property contain clauses that prevent you from carrying out certain activities at your property. This may include running a food business. Such covenants are more common in older properties. You should consult your solicitor about this.

If, after considering all of the above matters, it is still your intention to proceed with your plans to set up a food business from home you are advised to contact the Council's Environmental Health Service for further advice. If necessary, an officer may carry out an advisory visit.

Registration

Under European Regulation 852/2004, you are required to register your business 28 days before you start trading. If you are already trading it is very important that you register as soon as possible. There is no fee for registration and the relevant form “Application Form for the Registration of a Food Business Establishment” is readily available from Environmental Health or from the Council website at:

<http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk>

Liability Insurance

You are strongly advised to take out Liability Insurance to cover claims against you should things go wrong. You should contact your solicitor about this.

Legislation

Food safety legislation applies to food businesses which are run from domestic premises in the same way as it does to commercial premises. You will be liable to periodic inspections by officers from the Environmental Health Service and officers will provide free advice and support to help ensure you get it right first time.



Training

People involved in handling food must have enough knowledge to enable them to carry out the tasks that they are doing safely. One of the ways of fulfilling this requirement is to attend/study for a food hygiene training course at a level which is equivalent to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering.

A list of approved training courses can be obtained from the CIEH website at:

<http://www.cieh-coursefinder.com/>

In addition you may want to update or improve your knowledge by checking out these free online demonstrations on good hand washing and cleaning techniques <http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/hygiene-videos>

Documentation

Food businesses are required to provide some simple evidence to demonstrate that food safety matters have been thought through carefully and that controls are being properly applied. You may either produce your own documentation or complete the Food Standards Agency’s “Safer Food Better Business for Caterers” pack which is available, free of charge, from the Council’s Environmental Health Service

Structure

Any part of your home used for the food business must be kept in good repair and capable of being thoroughly cleaned.

Safe Practices

Regular checks should be carried out to ensure that all areas where food is stored are pest-free. A system of stock rotation should be in place to ensure that foods are not used beyond their shelf life. A “Best Before” date is the date up until the manufacturer of the food guarantees its quality. Whilst it is not an offence, in itself, to sell food past its “Best Before” date, it is an offence to sell food which is unsafe. As this is more likely to happen if you sell food which is past its “Best Before” date it is advised that you do not engage in such a practice. Foods which have a “Use by” date must be used/sold by midnight on the day of expiry of the date. It is an offence to have foods in your possession which have exceeded their “use by” dates.

Once opened foods should be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. High risk foods which you have prepared yourself should be date labelled and used within 2 days of preparation.

Lighting

Adequate lighting should be available in order to provide a safe working environment and to facilitate effective cleaning.

Ventilation

Adequate ventilation is necessary to remove steam and cooking odours and to keep the food rooms cool.

Equipment

All equipment should be safe, in a good state of repair, capable of being effectively cleaned and maintained in a clean condition. Some items of equipment which come into contact with high risk foods will also need to be disinfected, for example, chopping boards. If you are preparing raw and ready to eat foods then it is advised that you have colour-coded chopping boards.

Washing Facilities

Ideally, two sinks should be provided, one for washing and preparing food and the other for the washing of equipment and cleaning. As this is not always possible in a domestic kitchen, it will be acceptable for you to have just one sink provided that it is disinfected between uses or use a dishwasher to clean equipment. Most modern kitchens are suitable for running a small scale business from home, but some may need minor changes. It’s best to ring Environmental Health Service for advice.

Hand Washing Facilities

A separate facility must be provided for hand washing and this should be reasonably accessible from the kitchen, for example, in a nearby cloakroom or utility room. The facilities must have hot and cold water, soap and hygienic hand-drying facilities. The use of antibacterial liquid soap and disposable paper towels is recommended.

Temperature Control

Refrigerators must be capable of maintaining foods at 8°C (ideally below 5°C) and freezers should operate in the region of -18 °C to -25°C. The temperatures of the appliances should be monitored using a suitable thermometer. Food which is intended for your own personal consumption should be stored separately to that which is intended to be used for your business.

Ideally, separate refrigerators/freezers should be used. However, if this is not practicable then separate shelves or clearly labelled containers may be used.



Personal Hygiene

People handling food should wear clean over-clothing and should maintain a high standard of personal hygiene, for example, long hair should be tied back or a hat worn, jewellery should be kept to a minimum and cuts should be covered with a waterproof plaster. Food handlers suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting should not engage in food handling until they have been symptom free for at least 48 hours.

First Aid

An adequate supply of bandages and waterproof plasters should be provided for food handlers to use. Blue plasters are recommended as they are more visible if they fall off into food.

Pest Control/Pets

The premises must be free from insect and rodent pests and adequately proofed in order to prevent any risk of infestation. Pets, their food and bedding should be kept away from food preparation and storage areas at all times.



Washing Machines

Ideally, washing machines should not be located in food preparation or storage areas. If this is not practicable, it may be acceptable for the washing machine to be used solely at times when food preparation is not taking place.

Water Supply

Only potable (wholesome) water may be used. If your water is not mains water then you must have it tested in order to ensure that it is wholesome.

Labelling Requirements

You are advised to contact the Trading Standards Department of Staffordshire County Council on 08453 303313 or by email businessadvice@staffordshire.gov.uk for advice on labelling matters and menu descriptions.

Health and Safety

All employers, including self-employed people have duties under the Health and safety at Work etc Act 1974, to ensure that their workplace is safe. Good working practices need to be developed in order to prevent accidents and work-related ill health. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) can provide you with information and advice on improving health and safety in your business. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/business/> for further advice.

Food Hygiene Ratings

A food hygiene rating is normally received after your first inspection. If you would like to know more about ratings or check out a supplier visit <http://www.ratemyplace.org.uk>

Use this checklist to ensure that you have considered the main issues before setting up your food business

	Tick when completed
Planning Permission	
Business Rates	
Mortgage Instructions	
Restrictive Covenants	
Registration	
Insurance	
Legislation	
Training	
Documentation	
Structure	
Lighting	
Ventilation	
Equipment	
Washing Facilities	
Hand Washing Facilities	
Temperature Control	
Water Supply	
Labelling	
Health and Safety at Work	

For further advice on any of the matters contained in this leaflet contact
[Cannock Chase Council on 01543 462621](tel:01543462621)
where you will be put through to the relevant department.

You may also find the [Food Standards Agency](http://www.food.gov.uk/) a useful source of information
www.food.gov.uk/

This publication can be provided in Braille, on audio cassette tape/disk,
large print and in other languages on request to
Cannock Chase Council on 01543 462621.