

HOW TO USE THIS PACK

IS THIS PACK FOR ME?



This pack is for small catering businesses such as restaurants, cafés and takeaways.

It is designed to be practical and easy to use and can be adapted to suit the size and nature of your business.

Other Safer Food Better Business packs are available for:

- Retailers
- Indian cuisine
- Chinese cuisine
- Childminders
- Residential care homes (supplement)

These are available via the [Safer Food Better Business web page](#). Other options as well as designing your own are [the FSA's Safe Catering Pack](#) or the MyHACCP tool which is better suited to more complex food businesses.

REGISTRATION

You **must** register your food business with the Environmental Health Team at your local council, at least 28 days before you start food operations. Read additional guidance '[Getting ready to start your food business](#)'.

If you have bought an existing food business from someone else, you need to register as the new owner. You must also tell your local council about any significant changes to your business on an ongoing basis.

For more information, visit [Guidance on how to register a new and existing food business](#).

HOW DOES THIS PACK HELP ME COMPLY WITH THE LAW?

The law says you must write down what you do to make sure food is safe. It is a legal requirement to put in place, implement and maintain food safety procedures based on hazard analysis, and critical control points (HACCP). It is an offence not to have food safety procedures in place and could lead to legal action being taken against the operator of the food business. This pack is a food safety management system based on the principles of HACCP, but you will not find words such as 'HACCP' or 'hazard' in the pack because we have cut out all the jargon. This pack must be completed for all your food operations and must outline the food safety practices in place with daily records kept in the diary. This will help demonstrate compliance with food hygiene laws and it will help you get a better food hygiene rating.

HOW DOES THE PACK WORK?

This pack contains sheets for you to work through and complete. These are called 'safe methods' and they must be completed before you start food operations. They need to be reviewed regularly and updated if your food operations change. This pack also contains a diary for you to fill in every day and write down anything different that happens, including anything that goes wrong.

WHO SHOULD TAKE CHARGE OF THE PACK?

The operator of the food business has overall responsibility for ensuring the food served to customers is safe to eat.

All food handlers are responsible for following the safe methods within this pack and reporting any problems to the food business operator immediately.

The person who takes charge of the pack needs to make sure other staff know how to use the pack and the diary is completed when they are not at work. This pack should always be available at the business.

They also need to make sure the pack is reviewed regularly and updated where needed. Filling in the table below will help you keep track of when the pack is updated or reviewed.



DATE PACK FIRST COMPLETED:

REVIEW DATE:	REVIEWED BY (NAME):

HOW TO USE THE SAFE METHODS

Front

The **'Safety point'** column highlights things that are important to make food safely.

The **'Why'** column tells you why the safety point is important.

The **'How do you do this?'** column is for you to write down what you do.

In some places you only need to tick a box and in other places write a small amount.

Pictures help to illustrate the safety points.

SAFE METHOD:
DEFROSTING

Harmful bacteria can grow in food that is not defrosted properly.

SAFETY POINT	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
Food should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking (unless the manufacturer's instructions tell you to cook from frozen or you have a proven safe method).	If food is still frozen or partially frozen, it will take longer to cook. The outside of the food could be cooked, but the centre might not be, which means it could contain harmful bacteria.	Do you check food is thoroughly defrosted before cooking? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If not, what do you do?
OPTIONS FOR DEFROSTING FOOD		
1. Ideally, plan ahead to leave enough time and space to defrost small amounts of food in the fridge.	Putting food in the fridge will keep it at a safe temperature while it is defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> How much time do you allow for defrosting?
2. If you cannot defrost food in the fridge, you could put it in a container and then place it under cold running water.	Cold water will help to speed up defrosting without allowing the outside of the food to get too warm.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?
3. Raw meat and poultry (including large joints and whole birds) should not be defrosted under cold running water unless they are in a sealed container. For more information visit the FSA website .	Harmful bacteria could be spread contaminating sinks, taps and surfaces.	How do you defrost raw meat and poultry?
4. If you use the sink to defrost some foods, make sure the sink is clean and empty. The sink should be cleaned and then disinfected after being used for defrosting.	Cold running water will help speed up defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?

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Back

Some safe methods have a **'Check it'** section, which tells you what to look for to make sure your method has worked.

The **'What to do if things go wrong'** column gives practical tips on how to tackle problems.

The **'How to stop this happening again'** column tells you how you can prevent problems.

If things go wrong, write down what happened and what you did in your diary. Each safe method reminds you to do this.

Sometimes the pictures are marked with one of these symbols:



SAFE METHOD:
DEFROSTING

Harmful bacteria can grow in food that is not defrosted properly.

SAFETY POINTS	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
5. Or you could defrost food in the microwave on the 'defrost' setting.	This is a fast way to defrost food.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?
6. If necessary you could defrost food at room temperature. Follow the manufacturer's defrosting instructions. Food should be left out at room temperature for the shortest time possible. Ideally, defrost these foods in the fridge.	Foods will defrost quite quickly at room temperature, but harmful bacteria could grow in food if it gets too warm while defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Which foods do you defrost in this way?
7. If you have another method of defrosting, write the details here:		Which foods do you defrost in this way?
THINK TWICE! Keep meat/poultry separate from other food when it is defrosting, to prevent cross-contamination. Once food has been defrosted you should use it immediately (within one day).		
CHECK IT When you think food has defrosted, it is important to check to make sure.	WHY? The outside may look defrosted but the inside could still be frozen.	HOW DO YOU DO THIS? Check for ice crystals in the food using your hand or a skewer. Do you use this check? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> With birds, check the joints are flexible. Do you use this check? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If you use another check, write the details here:
WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG		HOW TO STOP THIS HAPPENING AGAIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If food has not fully defrosted, continue to defrost the food until no ice crystals are left. Test again before cooking or reheating. Speed up the defrosting process e.g. by using cold water or a microwave (see the front of this sheet). Use an alternative menu item. If you do not have time to defrost for longer, replace the dish with a similar dish that is ready to serve. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change your defrosting method and make it safer, e.g. defrost smaller amounts. Make sure you allow enough time to defrost. Train staff again on this safe method. Improve staff supervision. If you defrost lots of food in your business you may wish to consider creating extra fridge space or using a special defrosting cabinet.

Write down what went wrong and what you did about it in your diary.

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HOW TO USE THE DIARY



The diary should be filled in every day by the person responsible for running the business. There is also a 4-weekly review so you can look back at previous weeks and identify any persistent problems.

Fill in the date at the start of the week.

Each day, tick here to say you have completed your Opening checks and your Closing checks – see the Management section for more information on these.

If anything different happens or something goes wrong, make a note of it under the appropriate day.

Each day, write your name and sign to say that all the safe methods have been followed.

If you do any Extra checks, (e.g. something you don't do every day such as maintenance of equipment or cleaning the freezer) make a note in the section at the end of the week – see the Management section for more information on these.

Week commencing:

Monday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?

Opening checks: ☐ Closing checks: ☐
Name: _____ Signed: _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Tuesday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?

Opening checks: ☐ Closing checks: ☐
Name: _____ Signed: _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Wednesday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?

Opening checks: ☐ Closing checks: ☐
Name: _____ Signed: _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Thursday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?

Opening checks: ☐ Closing checks: ☐
Name: _____ Signed: _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Friday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?

Opening checks: ☐ Closing checks: ☐
Name: _____ Signed: _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Saturday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?

Opening checks: ☐ Closing checks: ☐
Name: _____ Signed: _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Sunday
Any problems or changes – what did you do?

Opening checks: ☐ Closing checks: ☐
Name: _____ Signed: _____
Our safe methods were followed and effectively supervised today.

Extra checks
Any problems or changes – what did you do?

Name: _____ Signed: _____

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QUESTIONS

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Work through the pack one section at a time and complete all the safe methods that apply to your business. We suggest you do one section at a time but make sure the pack is completed before you start food operations.

When you have worked through all the sections, make sure you and your staff:

- follow the safe methods all the time
- fill in the diary every day

HOW DO I USE THE 'WORKING WITH FOOD?' FACTSHEET

Use the 'Working with food?' factsheet to train your staff on good personal hygiene on their first day at work. It has been designed to help overcome language difficulties. Food Safety Coaching videos are available on the [FSA YouTube channel](#).

HOW WILL I BENEFIT FROM USING THIS PACK?

Using the pack in your business will help you to:

- comply with food hygiene regulations
- show what you do to make food safely
- train staff
- protect your business's reputation
- improve your business, e.g. by wasting less food
- improve your Food Hygiene Rating

DO I NEED TO KEEP LOTS OF DAILY RECORDS?

No, but as a minimum, you need to fill in the diary each day. Depending on the size and nature of your business you may need to keep more records to demonstrate that you are making food safely.

It is a legal requirement to keep a record of what food products you have bought, who you bought them from, the quantity, the date and allergen information. Usually, the easiest way to do this is to keep all your invoices and receipts.

DO I NEED TO USE A TEMPERATURE PROBE?

The use of a temperature probe is the best way to make sure what you are doing is safe when cooking, reheating, hot holding or chilling. See the 'Prove it' safe method in the Management section.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

For more information on food safety, visit [the FSA website](#). There are also several FSA videos relevant to food safety on the [FSA YouTube Channel](#). If you still need additional guidance then contact the Environmental Health Team at your local council.

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FOOD HYGIENE RATINGS

INTRODUCTION TO FOOD HYGIENE RATINGS



Following a food safety inspection from your local council, your business will receive a Food Hygiene Rating.

Food Hygiene Ratings help customers choose where to eat or buy food – high ratings are good for business.

Ratings are a snapshot of the standards of food hygiene & safety found at the time of inspection.

Your Food Hygiene Rating is based on:

- Hygienic handling of food including preparation, cooking, re-heating, cooling and storage
- Cleanliness and condition of facilities and building – including layout, ventilation, hand washing facilities and pest control
- Hygienic management of food safety including the system or checks in place to ensure food sold or served is safe to eat, and that food safety is always well managed and good standards maintained

UNDERSTANDING FOOD HYGIENE RATINGS



Following an inspection your business will be given a rating between 0 and 5:

- 5** – hygiene standards are very good
- 4** – hygiene standards are good
- 3** – hygiene standards are generally satisfactory
- 2** – some improvement is necessary
- 1** – major improvement is necessary
- 0** – urgent improvement is required

Using this pack properly, following the safe methods and completing the diary correctly will help ensure you are complying with the law and maximise your Food Hygiene Rating.

If you run a food business in Wales or Northern Ireland, you must display your Food Hygiene Rating sticker at each entrance where it can clearly be seen by customers. Food businesses in England are encouraged to do the same. Food Hygiene Ratings can also be seen online.

Following an inspection, businesses can appeal their rating, publish a response to a rating and can request a re-visit from their local council.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

More information is available on [the FSA website](https://www.food.gov.uk/sfbb).

If unsure about any of the guidance in this pack, you can contact the Environmental Health Team at your local council.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START

It is easy for you to spread bacteria and viruses to food without realising. These bacteria are invisible and could make customers ill. Your personal hygiene is important. This is what you need to do to keep food safe:

BEFORE YOU START WORKING WITH FOOD



Always wash your hands



Wear clean clothes



Wear an apron if handling non-prepacked food



Tell your manager if you have vomiting or diarrhoea and do not work with food



Take off your watch and jewellery



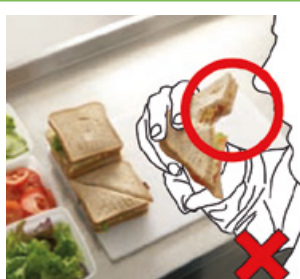
It is a good idea to tie hair back and wear a hat or hairnet



WHEN YOU ARE WORKING WITH FOOD



No smoking



No eating or drinking



Avoid touching your face, coughing or sneezing over food

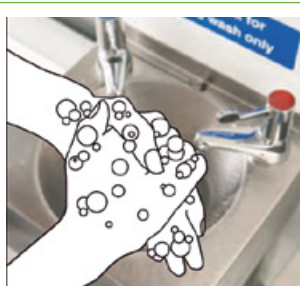


Cover cuts with a brightly coloured waterproof dressing

WASHING HANDS EFFECTIVELY



Step 1: Wet your hands thoroughly under warm running water and squirt liquid soap onto your palm



Step 2: Rub your hands together palm to palm to make a lather



Step 3: Rub the palm of one hand along the back of the other and along the fingers. Repeat with the other hand



Step 4: Put your palms together with fingers interlocked and rub in between each of the fingers thoroughly



Step 5: Rub around your thumbs on each hand and then rub the fingertips of each hand against your palms



Step 6: Rinse off the soap with clean running water and dry your hands thoroughly on a disposable towel. Turn off the tap with the towel and then throw the towel away

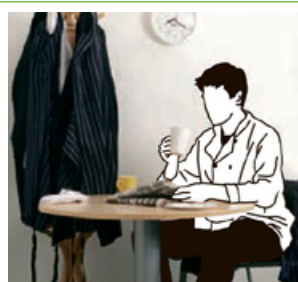
WHEN TO WASH HANDS



Before touching or handling any food, especially ready-to-eat food



After going to the toilet



After every break



After touching raw meat, poultry, fish, eggs or unwashed vegetables



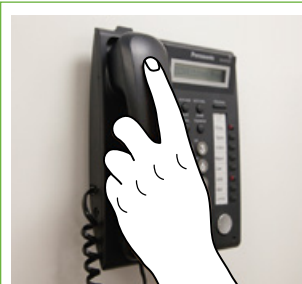
After touching a cut or changing a dressing



After touching or emptying bins



After any cleaning



After touching phones, light switches, door handles, cash registers and money