

Introduction

This guidance is based on environmental health experience in managing food safety and health & safety at outdoor events. It aims to provide guidance to help food business operators comply with the requirements of food safety and health and safety legislation and improve standards so as to provide safe and high-quality food.

The type of events that this advice covers include: trade shows, promotional events, agricultural fairs, community fairs, carnivals, street events, festivals, sporting events and other events that may use outdoor catering such as weddings.

You are still advised to seek further information and direct advice from your local environmental health service within your local council.

Catering at an outdoor event or from mobile facilities is a high-risk activity and will always carry with it the possibility of causing food poisoning to a large number of people. There is a general requirement in the hygiene legislation for all food businesses to be operated in a hygienic manner. Some recommendations of good hygiene practice are included below as they may be necessary to help you to meet a legal requirement or to achieve good management practice.

Advice for Food Business Operators

The food business operator must:

- Make sure food is supplied or sold in a hygienic way
- Have in place a documented food safety management system that covers the provision of food and drinks at this event. This should identify food safety hazards, which steps are critical for food safety and ensures that safety controls are in place, maintained and reviewed.
- Your food business must be registered with the local authority where your unit is based.
- Selling alcohol may need a licence - check with the licensing officer at your local council.
- If someone asks about an allergy - be honest and do not guess ingredients.
- Buy food from reputable suppliers and keep a record of purchases.
- Food and drink must be described fairly.
- Make sure you risk assess and do a fire risk assessment and take with you fire extinguisher and fire blanket.
- Check the weather forecast - be prepared for all weather conditions, both wet weather and extremes of heat and dust.

Design and structure

- All stalls/vehicles should be designed and constructed to protect food from risk of contamination.
- Fittings and equipment for mobile units should be of good quality materials capable of being readily cleaned. Bare wood is not acceptable.
- Floors in mobile units should be of smooth, impervious and non-slip material and preferably coved to the wall fixtures.
- For those stalls that will be situated outside or in marquees, suitable ground covering must be provided in areas where food and drinks are prepared, cooked, stored or displayed.
- Stalls should be screened at the sides and back to prevent risk of contamination and pests.
- Tents and marquees should be of cleanable materials or the kitchen/preparation areas should be provided with washable wall linings.
- Frequently used walkways should be effectively weatherproofed.
- Lighting levels within the tents and marquees must be adequate.

Layout

- Ideally catering exhibitors should be sited close to essential services e.g. water and power.
- Allow adequate space for preparation, cooking, storage and wash-up.
- Ensure that refrigerated storage vehicles and trailers are easily accessible.
- Dirty crockery and dirty laundry should not be carried through food handling areas.
- The event organiser should arrange collection and removal of refuse and recycling from the site.
- Check for any tripping and safety hazards.

Pest Control

See the guidance produced by The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health "[Pest Minimisation – Pest management for Outdoor and Mobile Catering](#)".

Services

Outdoor events take place in a wide variety of sites and locations. At some sites it may be possible to provide essential services such as water, drainage and electricity, others may not. You need to find out the service arrangements BEFORE arriving on site.

Water supply

- There must be an adequate supply of clean and wholesome water provided (ideally from the mains).
- If water containers are used they must be cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis.

Drainage

- Waste water from sinks and wash hand basins should be discharged into foul water system or into suitable containers and not directly onto the ground

Equipment

- All equipment should be readily cleanable.
- Preparation surfaces and tables must have smooth, impervious surfaces. Stainless steel or Formica laminate surfaces are suitable.

Washing facilities

- Suitable and sufficient wash hand basins with hot and cold water supplies must be provided and be readily accessible for use by food handlers. Supplies of soap and means of hygienic hand drying, e.g. paper towels, must be available at each basin.
- Suitable sinks must be provided for food preparation and for equipment washing.
- A constant supply of hot water should be provided at the sinks and wash hand basin.
- The use of plastic bowls as sinks or wash hand basins is not permitted.

Staff toilets

- Separate toilets for the exclusive use of food handlers should be provided on site where possible.
- All sanitary accommodation must be maintained in a clean condition.
- Suitable and sufficient wash hand basins with hot and cold water, soap, and hand drying facilities, e.g. paper towels, must be provided at the sanitary accommodation.

Temperature control

Effective temperature control and storage is one of the most important safeguards for controlling the growth of food poisoning organisms. You should consider the following points:

- High-risk products must be kept at or below 8°C or above 63°C.
- Ideally food should be prepared immediately before service, if this is not possible then the food should be prepared in small batches and kept at the correct temperature.
- All stalls and vehicles should have sufficient fridge space for the storage of high-risk foods or the use of commercial cool boxes with sufficient freezer blocks. Keep a check of the temperatures in your food management diary.

- Cooked food should reach over 75°C. Take particular care when barbecuing as cooking temperatures can be less predictable. Use a probe thermometer and disinfect between uses
- Hot food displayed for sale or service should be kept above 63°C.
- Thermometers with probes should be used to check temperatures (all probes should be disinfected after each use).
- Keep food covered when stored in the fridge.
- Vehicles used for transporting high-risk food should be refrigerated.

Cross-contamination

One of the main risks facing event and mobile catering is to protect food from contamination. See further advice from the Food Standards Agency on [Avoiding cross-contamination in your food business - GOV.UK](#)

- Food preparation areas/chopping boards should be cleaned/disinfected after use.
- Raw and cooked food should be kept separate at all times. Raw food should always be stored below cooked food. Ideally separate refrigerators should be used.
- Clean sinks after washing or preparing vegetables and raw food.
- Avoid touching food and use tongs.
- All equipment including knives and containers should be cleaned and disinfected after use.
- Disinfect all cloths regularly and replace as soon as they become worn/damaged. The use of disposable cloths and paper towels is recommended.
- Food must not be stored on the ground and must be kept away from risk of contamination.
- Food should be kept at a height of over 45cm above ground and protected from the weather.
- Equipment, utensils and crockery should be stored above ground, covered and kept free from contamination.
- Protect food from pests (insects, birds and rodents).

Cleaning

- Adequate supplies of a 'food-safe' disinfectant/sanitiser which meet the official standards of **BS EN 1276** and **BS EN 13697** should be used for the regular disinfection of equipment, work surfaces and hand contact surfaces. You can check with your supplier that they meet the required standards. Ensure you use according to the instructions taking note of the dilution and contact time for effective use.
- Hazardous substances such as cleaning materials must be used and stored in a safe manner.
- Hot and cold water (or water at a suitably mixed temperature) must be available at sinks and wash hand basins and must be available before food preparation begins.

Transporting food

- Vehicles and storage areas should be of sound construction, kept in good repair and able to be cleaned and be kept clean.

Personal hygiene

- High standards of personal hygiene are essential and the following rules must be followed:
- Hand washing must be carried out: before starting work, after handling any raw foods, after using the toilet, after a break, after sneezing, coughing, smoking/vaping etc.
- Where possible tongs should be used for handling food.
- All cuts or boils should be covered with a waterproof plaster preferably blue.
- Jewellery and nail varnish should not be worn. Hair should be covered and tied back.
- Clean, washable, over-clothing must be worn at all times when handling food.
- Outdoor clothing must be stored away from any food area.
- Any food handler who knows, or suspects, they are suffering from symptoms of food poisoning must notify their employer or manager and refrain from working with food.

Food safety training

- Event catering is a high-risk activity with potential for food poisoning. Food handlers, including casual staff, must be trained to a level appropriate to their work and be aware of the controls identified in the food safety management system.
- It is recommended that any person who handles, prepares or cooks high-risk food have a Level 2 Certificate in food hygiene.

First aid

- A first aid-kit including washable (preferably blue) plasters must be provided.

Refuse

- There must be an adequate supply of suitable refuse containers provided.
- Plastic sacks must be tied securely and stored to prevent attraction of pests.

Electrical Supply

- Permanent mains electricity should be provided for lighting and power where practicable.
- Electrical appliances must be protected from weather, physical damage and interference.
- Make sure that all plugs and connections are secure with the outer cable sheath being secured in the cord grip, with no exposed wires.
- Use proper sealed cable connectors on all leads. Open connectors covered in tape are not safe particularly when wet.
- Appliances must be protected by residual current circuit breakers.
- Cables and flexes must be positioned so as not to cause a tripping hazard.
- Electrical equipment and systems should have a current portable appliance test certificate.
- If generators have to be used, steps should be taken to place them safely, protect from interference and to reduce noise and fume nuisance.
- A competent electrician should carry out all electrical work.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

- Gas appliances should be fitted and tested by a competent person.
- LPG cylinders should be in a fire-resisting lockable compartment (with ½ hour fire resistance). Compartments must have adequate ventilation at high and low levels.
- Cylinders should be fitted with automatic cut-off valves & be protected from tampering.
- All cylinders should be kept away from heat and ignition sources.
- All pipes and fittings should be as short as possible with appropriate screw or compression fittings (not slip-on fittings).
- All pipes should be protected from abrasion or mechanical damage (armoured if subject to temperatures over 50°C).
- All gas appliances must be fitted with a flame failure device and adequately ventilated.
- All fryers should be fitted with an automatic high temperature-limiting device (operates at a fat temperature of 250°C or lower).
- Suitable signs indicating "Caution - LPG" and "Highly Flammable" should be displayed
- Any compressed gas cylinders must be upright and stable in use and secured in this position by straps or chains to a suitable support.

Health and Safety General

- Under Health and Safety legislation as stallholders you have responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of your staff and any persons who visit your stall. You will therefore need to exercise supervision and control to prevent accidents. Particular care will be required for children and the elderly.
- You must assess any work carried out by yourselves, including pre-show site erection, ongoing maintenance, alterations and post show dismantling, for risk to health & safety of staff, helpers and non staff to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation.
- All exhibitors employing over 5 members of staff should have a written risk assessment and health and safety policy.

References

[Assimilated Regulation \(EC\) 852/2004 on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs](#)

[The Food Hygiene \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)

Further information

[The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's National Guidance for Outdoor and Mobile Catering](#)

[Food Standards Agency - GOV.UK](#)

[HSE: Information about health and safety at work](#)

Food and Safety Team, Environmental Health, Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands,
Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1SS

Tel. 01444 477433 E-mail: foodsafety@midsussex.gov.uk