

Food Safety & Caterers

Caterers



A food-business operator must register food establishments under its control with the local environmental health department. Each catering operation should have a nominated responsible person, who has the duty of ensuring that the operation is safe, and that other employees are trained in accordance with their duties and aware of their responsibilities.

All structures, which include mobile vehicles and carts, must be sited, designed, constructed, kept clean, and maintained in good repair and condition so as to avoid the risk of contamination. Structures should be of sturdy construction, weatherproof, windproof, and designed and constructed to prevent the ingress of water and, wherever possible, pests. They should be fully covered to top and sides, including food preparation, equipment, and food-storage areas.

Caterers should provide their own fire-fighting equipment relevant to the type of fuel they are using to cook with.

Legislation requires caterers to display food allergens in a variety of ways depending on how the food is served. The Food Standards Agency has a tool to help caterers decide how to display and sell food, and what needs to be in place: <https://www.food.gov.uk/allergen-ingredients-food-labelling-decision-tool>

You need to ensure that you have completed checks on your caterers before you use them to ensure that they have adequate standards in place. Ideally, we want to use caterers with a 4 rating or higher. As they should be registered with a local authority you can check their food hygiene rating at either:

- <https://ratings.food.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/buying-food-eating-out/food-hygiene-information-scheme>



You also need to ensure they have Public Liability Insurance and Employers Liability Insurance (if applicable) as well as a risk assessment for their activities

Actions

- Ensure you have documentation on record for your caterers
- Check caterers on the day to ensure that their units are fit for purpose, and they have appropriate firefighting equipment
- Ensure generators or gas cylinders are cordoned off and that fuel is being stored safely. See [SR Event Manual – Fire & Gas](#)

Allergens

Whilst there is no legal requirement for you to display allergen information for food you prepare, doing this will help to keep your attendees safe and is a requirement for CRUK sanctioned events.

The best way to provide food at your event, is to serve prepacked foods which are required to have all the necessary info about ingredients and allergens.

Consumers may be allergic or have intolerance to other ingredients, but there are 14 allergens that you should display information about:

- celery
- cereals containing gluten (such as wheat, rye, barley and oats)
- crustaceans (such as prawns, crabs and lobsters)
- eggs
- fish
- lupin
- milk
- molluscs (such as mussels and oysters)
- mustard
- peanuts
- sesame
- soybeans
- sulphur dioxide and sulphites (at a concentration of more than ten parts per million)
- tree nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts)

You'll need to provide allergen information for each individual item not your catering as a whole

Preparing Food

Here are some practical tips when preparing food:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water, using hand sanitisers if hand washing facilities are not available
- Store uncooked food below 5°C.
- Always wash fresh fruit and vegetables

- Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods apart and any boards or utensils you use separate.
- Use different utensils or wash them in between working with raw and cooked food and avoid cross contamination
- Do not use food past its use-by date
- Always read any cooking instructions and make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it
- Use a food thermometer to ensure food is fully cooked; the centre of the food should reach 70°C for two minutes.
- Ensure that food preparation areas are suitably cleaned and sanitised after use and wash any equipment you are using in hot soapy water
- Keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible. Food that needs to be chilled, such as sandwich fillings served as part of a buffet, should be left out of the fridge for no more than four hours.

The Food Standards Agency Guidelines are a great place to find out more:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/providing-food-at-community-and-charity-events>

You may wish to undertake a Level 2 Basic Food Hygiene course. There are many providers with online course that you can access for around £15 and it will take around 2 hours.

Cakes

You can serve home-made cakes at community events. They should be safe to eat if:

- The people who make them follow good food hygiene advice
- The cakes are stored and transported safely
- A list of allergens contained in each item is provided