

Guidance for local authorities on adapting Safer food, better business

Introduction

Safer food, better business (SFBB) was developed by the Food Standards Agency to assist small food businesses in complying with the requirements for documented HACCP-based procedures, effective from 1 January 2006. The Agency has produced a range of SFBB packs for small caterers and retailers and an interactive DVD guide with voiceovers in 16 languages.

SFBB for caterers and SFBB for retailers were designed to work in most small catering and food retail businesses (excluding specialist retailers such as butchers, fishmongers and bakers). The food business operator completes the 'safe methods' in the pack and tailors them to become specific to their particular business.

The use of a common pack across a wide range of businesses has enormous benefits for businesses, their staff and enforcement officers. However, a number of local authorities (LAs) have already produced adaptations of SFBB or additional safe methods. This guidance aims to provide assistance to those LAs who are considering developing adaptations. It details guidelines on issues such as branding, logos and copyright and aims to ensure the quality of any product produced.

Thinking of producing an adaptation of SFBB?

Before making any changes or adding additional information to the SFBB pack, please consider whether the change is really necessary or whether it could be achieved by the business tailoring the existing safe methods (by completing the 'How do you do this?' column) or by adding safe methods from another pack.

For instance, SFBB for retailers has a section on Cooking and preparation, developed with the industry to reflect the most common foods cooked or prepared in the small retail sector. It was not intended to cover the complete range of possible foods being prepared. If small retailers are cooking or preparing foods that are not covered, then they could use selected safe methods from SFBB for caterers, where appropriate.

For some businesses, the language used in the pack may not be familiar e.g. home caterers, but with support, these businesses may be able to use the existing packs successfully.

What about copyright?

All of the material in the SFBB packs is subject to Crown copyright protection.

You may re-use the information in the SFBB pack (not including the Food Standards Agency logo and photographs that are the copyright of a third party) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#).

Any enquiries regarding the use and re-use of this information resource should be emailed to: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

or you can write to: Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU

Please note that copyright in many of the stock photograph images in the SFBB pack does not rest with the Crown. We are therefore unable to grant you permission to reproduce these images.

When re-using the SFBB information the Food Standards Agency logo should not be used and it should be clear that the material was not produced by the Food Standards Agency.

The statement:

Produced by (insert name of LA/organisation), based on the Food Standards Agency's Safer food, better business (SFBB) format should appear in the footer of each new page produced in a minimum font size of 12 points.

What about the format of any new materials?

Any changes made should add complete safe methods. It is not appropriate to partially re-write a safe method, as each of the existing safe methods has been validated by the Food Standards Agency.

As SFBB is a well established brand you should not change the style, including the icons, layout of the pages and the colours used.

The statement:

Produced by (insert name of LA/organisation), based on the Food Standards Agency's Safer food, better business (SFBB) format should appear in the footer of each new page produced in a minimum font size of 12 points.

What about the content?

SFBB is designed to be a simple system that does not impose undue burdens on businesses. It is very important that any new methods retain this simplicity. In particular, proposed changes should:

- Retain options for using sensory information (e.g. colour changes or food steaming) as an indicator of critical controls, and not insist on temperature monitoring through the use of probe thermometers.
- Retain the 'reporting by exception' approach of the diary.

SFBB is designed to take account of the seven principles of HACCP, but in a way that hides the complexity of HACCP from the end user. Any adaptations must retain this approach. No systems analysis or flow-charts should be included. Any new material should be developed within the 4 Cs / Management framework of the pack.

Any additional material developed should retain the SFBB approach, identifying:

- The overall purpose of the method – included below the name of the safe method
- Brief, simple safety points
- A description of why each safety point is important
- The key step/steps that make the food safe – for example, cooking for a certain time or until thoroughly cooked
- Space to allow the business to confirm if they follow the advice in the safe method or describe their own procedures to control the hazard
- What to do if things go wrong – the corrective action
- How to manage the hazards in the business
- A reminder to make a note of any problems in their diary

You will need to validate any new safe methods that you produce.

What about translations?

In accordance with the Agency's statutory Welsh Language Scheme, the Safer food, better business packs are available in Welsh, and are entitled Bwyd mwy diogel, busnes gwell.

Research carried out by the Agency identified the need to translate the Chinese cuisine pack into Chinese. However, this research showed that translation of the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan cuisines pack was not necessary.

If you intend to translate the pack, we would urge you to consider the rationale for this. The pack is intended for use by food business managers and many catering workers may not be able to read the language(s) they speak. The business may find it helpful to use the SFBB DVD, which has voiceovers in 16 languages and can be found at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2008/jun/sfbbonline>

Can food businesses adapt SFBB?

Food business operators are responsible for demonstrating that they produce safe food and comply with the requirements for documented food safety management procedures. This may be achieved in many ways – SFBB is just one example of a HACCP-based system.

Businesses may use the SFBB packs as the basis for their food safety management procedures, adding material or merging existing guidance to suit their own circumstances. Where this is done, it is recommended that the SFBB pack is used to check against, to ensure that any changes made, or material added, at least covers the same ground as the SFBB materials.

Any new safe methods, developed by a business, will need to be validated, following the 'Prove it' safe method in the Management section of the pack and documented in the 'Prove it: records' sheet in the diary, where relevant.

Businesses should be aware that the level of record keeping required by SFBB is suggested as the minimum required to comply with the legislation. Businesses may add further records if they find this helpful or to provide further evidence of due diligence. However, the additional burden that this places on the business is their own responsibility.

As a private consultant, can I adapt SFBB?

As a private consultant, working for a specific business and adapting the pack for that business, you should follow the guidelines for food businesses in the section above. If you are adapting the pack for any other purpose you should follow the guidelines on formatting, content and translations and pay particular attention to the information on copyright.