

Safe method:

Product withdrawal and recall

Responding quickly to any problems with food products you use or sell is an important part of managing food safety in your business.



Sometimes there will be a problem with a food product that means you will need to 'withdraw' it (when you should stop using/selling it) and/or 'recall' it (when customers are asked to return/destroy a product).

You may find out about a problem with a product from:

- a manufacturer of the product
- a supplier or wholesaler
- a notice in newspapers
- your local authority
- a trade association
- the Food Standards Agency

If you hear about a problem with a product, you should stop using/selling it straight away. You might also need to tell your customers.

There are a number of reasons that a product might be withdrawn or recalled. For example, it could have been found to:

- contain harmful bacteria
- be physically contaminated, e.g. with pieces of glass or metal
- be wrongly labelled, which could be a problem for people with food allergies

You or your staff may also notice a problem with a food product that means it may not be safe to eat. If this happens, you should stop using/selling it straight away and tell your local authority and the Food Standards Agency.

What to do	How?
Make sure you know the details of the problem.	If a manufacturer or supplier has issued a product withdrawal or recall, make sure you know which product and which batches are affected.
As soon as you find out about a problem with a product, stop using/selling it.	Remove the affected product from anywhere you use, store or sell it and label it clearly to show it should not be used/sold. Remember to check if you have used the product as an ingredient in any food you have prepared and stored, e.g. in the freezer – if you have, ask your local authority for advice.
Make sure your staff know about the problem.	This is so your staff know what to do and do not use/sell the product.
Tell your customers if you need to.	If the problem is with a product that your customers might not eat or drink straight away, you may need to let them know that the product is being recalled and why. If the manufacturer or supplier asks you to put up a recall notice, you should do this. If you are not sure what to do, contact your local authority.

Think twice!

It is a legal requirement to keep a record of what food products you have bought, who you bought them from, the quantity and the date. Usually the easiest way to do this is to keep all your invoices and receipts. You should keep this information in a way that makes it easy for you or an enforcement officer to check back to see where a product came from.