

Food safety for food delivery

Hygiene and allergy advice for takeaways and food delivery businesses

This guidance provides food safety information for food businesses which deliver meals to customers.

If you are a new business, we have further information on [setting up a food business](#) and how to [manage food safety](#) effectively.

Registration

Existing food businesses which intend to start delivering food orders need to consider any new or different risks posed by this change in operation. They should adapt their Food Safety Management System to make sure food placed on the market remains safe to eat.

IMPORTANT

[Planning rules were relaxed](#) on 17 March 2020 to allow pubs and restaurants to operate for 12 months as hot food and drinks takeaways during the coronavirus outbreak. Businesses must tell their [local authority](#) when the new use begins and ends.

Taking an order

You can receive an order for a takeaway by phone, your own website, or another online platform.

If you are providing an online menu or order form, you must make sure it's clear what you're selling, the quantity, the price, and all relevant [allergen information](#).

Food delivery businesses must provide allergen information to customers when taking an order. This can be done orally (by phone) or in writing (through your website or a printed menu).

You should have a statement on your website to advise customers where they can obtain allergen information before they place their order. If you provide food via an external online ordering website, they may have their own requirements for providing allergen information to customers.

Staff should be aware of how to take orders with specific allergy requirements over the phone or online. Staff should have clear written allergen information to refer to, so that they can respond to allergy requests accurately when taking orders.

Hygiene guidance for food delivery

The four main things to remember for good hygiene in your food business are the 4Cs: [cleaning](#), [cooking](#), [chilling](#) and avoiding [cross-contamination](#).

It's very important to store food properly to keep it safe. Storing food in sealed containers and at the correct temperature protects it from harmful bacteria, stops objects falling into it, and avoids cross-contamination with other ingredients. We have more information on how to [chill food correctly and fridge temperatures](#) for your food business.

Existing food businesses which change to delivering food to customers should review and, if necessary, update their [Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point \(HACCP\)](#) procedures.

A simpler, practical guide for smaller businesses and retailers on how to manage hygiene and allergens in the kitchen can be found in our [Safer food, better business](#) information packs for caterers. This includes advice on what to consider when delivering food.

Allergen guidance for food delivery

Food businesses need to tell customers if food they provide contains any of the specified allergens as an ingredient. These [14 allergens](#) have been chosen because they are the most common and dangerous.

Consumers may be allergic or intolerant to other ingredients, but you are only legally required to provide information for these 14 allergens.

The 14 allergens are: **celery**, **cereals containing gluten** (such as 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** (if they are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million) and **tree nuts** (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts).

If food is sold online or by phone through distance selling, allergen information must be provided at two stages in the order process.

You must provide allergen information:

- before the purchase of the food is completed - this can be in writing (on a website, catalogue or menu) or orally (by phone)
- when the food is delivered - this can be in writing (allergen stickers on food or an enclosed copy of a menu) or orally (by delivery driver).

It is important for food businesses to take steps to avoid cross-contamination in food preparation. This protects customers with a food allergy.

There are a number of [actions you can take to prevent cross-contamination with allergens](#) in your food business. These include:

- cleaning utensils before each usage
- regularly washing hands thoroughly
- storing ingredients and prepared foods separately
- keeping ingredients that contain allergens separate from other ingredients.
- Takeaway meals should be labelled clearly so customers know which dishes are suitable

for those with an allergy.

Delivering food orders

All food must be delivered to consumers in a way that ensures that it does not become unsafe or unfit to eat.

Food that needs refrigerating must be kept cool while being transported. This may need to be packed in an insulated box with a coolant gel or in a cool bag. Equally, food that needs to be kept hot should be packed in an insulated bag.

Food businesses should also identify and remove possible cross-contamination risks in the delivery process. This can be done through packaging meals securely and storing allergen-free meals separately in transit to avoid contamination through any spillages.

If an allergen-free meal has been ordered, it should be clear when delivered which container it is in. You can use stickers or a note on the container to label each meal.

Delivery vehicles

If you use a domestic vehicle (or a non-food industry business vehicle) to transport groceries or food orders, our [guidance for businesses that supply or produce food on the move](#) provides more information about hygiene requirements and vehicle specifications.

If vehicles or containers have been used for transporting anything other than food, effective cleaning is required between loads to avoid the risk of contamination.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans need to be updated to include details of transported food.

Further advice should always be sought from [your local authority](#), who will need to be satisfied with the suitability of the vehicle.