

Guide to Food Safety for Event Catering

Food Safety
Cardiff Council



Strategic Planning & Environment

This guidance provides advice for event catering (weddings, celebrations, parties etc) in the following situations:

- Where food is prepared and cooked at one kitchen before being transferred for further cooking and/or holding before service in another kitchen or building, and
- Where food is prepared, cooked, held and served from a kitchen that is part of the event venue and is not the registered premises of the caterer.

For the purpose of this guidance, in addition to traditional food businesses, a caterer can include religious groups, community groups and individuals who may, or may not, be providing food and drink at cost, as a gift or as a service to the community.

Although some of the principles and advice will apply, this guidance does not intend to cover outside or mobile catering where additional issues need to be considered. If you require advice for this type of catering please contact the Food Safety Team on 029 2087 1120.

This guide applies to any event where food is supplied for profit or not.

Introduction

When catering for an event, e.g. weddings, celebrations, parties, etc. there are a number of things you must consider to ensure food safety. These include:

- The number of people to be catered for
- The time food is to be served
- The storage of food before preparation
- The storage of food following preparation but before cooking/service
- Transport of the food to the location/venue
- The storage of food at the location/venue
- Preparation for service of the food at the location/venue

These issues are important to ensure the food provided to the guests is safe to eat. This is achieved by ensuring bacteria growth/ survival, foreign body and chemical contamination is prevented or controlled.

The most effective method of ensuring the food served at the event is safe to eat is to plan ahead. This guidance will take you through issues you will need to consider and address. It also provides examples of check sheets and monitoring sheets you may wish to use.

The Venue

When planning to provide food at an event, consideration must be given to the venue. The location of the venue and the facilities available at the venue will dictate where food preparation and cooking will take place. This will then result in you having to consider different food safety hazards and controls. For example, the hazards will differ for the transport of food where food is cooked at the venue as opposed to cooked at a fixed premise and delivered ready to the venue. Therefore, access to a kitchen is an important consideration when planning ahead for the event.

You need to consider if the venue itself is suitable. The ceilings and walls should be in good repair and clean. The floor must be suitable and capable of being cleaned. There must be suitable work-surfaces available for use that can be effectively cleaned and disinfected. There must be a running supply of hot and cold water for your use.

In the venue there must be adequate space for you to be able to prepare, store and serve the volume of food being provided safely. You must also consider where food will be prepared, cooked, stored and reheated in relation to where the food will be served. These locations may be some distance from each other, or once guests arrive some of these locations may not be accessible to staff. You must think ahead and prepare how the food will flow through the venue as this will determine what hazards you need to consider and if food will need to be hot held in a location away from the main kitchen.

If hot food is to be provided, you should consider preparing and cooking the food on site if a kitchen is available and suitable for use. As a minimum you should have access to a kitchen or a heating source to allow you to reheat hot food.

If you are serving hot food and there is no kitchen at the venue or the cooking equipment available is not suitable you must consider how you will keep that food hot or reheat it if required. Access to heating sources to reheat food is important to ensure the food reaches temperatures suitable to destroy and minimise food poisoning bacteria before service.

If food is to be provided cold, e.g. buffet, or is to be kept cold prior to cooking or reheating, you need to check if you have access to suitable cold storage at the venue. Where cold storage is provided at the venue you need to consider if it is suitable and whether it is large enough to store the volume of food you are going to serve and whether the equipment you use to store the food will fit into the fridge.

Where cold storage is provided and is suitable you must check the temperatures of the fridges and freezer are cold enough before you start to store food in them, i.e. below 8°C for the fridge or below -18°C for freezers. If the temperatures are too high they must be lowered or alternative provisions made.

If there is no cold storage at the venue or the storage available is not suitable, you will need to consider how you will keep the food cold. This may be achieved by:

- Providing your own cold storage – e.g. using a refrigeration van or insulated cold boxes. If you are using a refrigerated van you must consider if the van can be parked close to the venue to assist in service. If you are using insulated cold boxes they must be large enough for the volume of food to be stored and for the equipment you are storing the food in. The boxes must also be capable of keeping the food at 8°C or below for the required time.
- If you can not provide your own cold storage consider the timing of deliveries to the venue and the time of service. This will only be an option if the food is travelling over a short distance.
- If neither of the above are possible you will need to decide whether the menu can be altered or if this is not possible whether it is practical for you to accept the job and provide safe food.

Equipment

When planning ahead you will need to check with the venue what equipment will be available for use to cook, reheat and serve food. It may be necessary for you to supply your own equipment.

In addition to cooking equipment you need to ensure you have a suitable number of temperature probes and probe wipes for use on the day, clean over-clothing for the venue for cooking and serving staff, disposable towels and anti-bacterial soap for washing hands and a mop, bucket and broom. You must take anti-bacterial spray that staff are familiar with to ensure the surfaces used for preparing and serving food are adequately cleaned.

Included in the back of this pack is a checklist of the equipment you need to consider and take with you to the venue.

Waste

When planning you must consider how you will collect waste in the venue and how you will dispose of that waste.

Within the venue if bins are not provided for waste you must provide them. If bins are provided they may not contain black bags. Some venues may allow you to dispose of black bagged waste on the site. However, some venues may not allow you to leave waste there and you will need to take the waste away from the venue and dispose of it correctly. If you take waste away from the site you will need to consider the transportation. It is not suitable to take it away in the vehicle used to deliver food and equipment.

Staff

At an event it is often common for temporary / agency staff or volunteers to help during the cooking or service of food. It is important that anyone assisting in the kitchen, or with service, is suitably trained or supervised. Where you rely on supervision of untrained staff or volunteers, the supervisor must have suitable food hygiene training and experience.

Where temporary / agency staff or volunteers are used in the kitchen or for service you must advise them of hygiene rules in the kitchen before they begin work, e.g. when they must wash their hands. Enclosed in the rear of this guidance is a list of hygiene rules you may wish to use to inform staff and volunteers of what is expected of them.

It is very important all staff working an event, including temporary or agency staff and volunteers have been checked that they are fit to work as a food handler. This involves asking all staff and volunteers if they have been, or are, suffering from any illness that may be passed on through the food. If an individual has had any symptoms of sickness or diarrhoea during the last 48 hours, the individual should not be employed as a food handler (in the kitchen, serving or waiting). This can be checked through asking all staff and volunteers to complete a pre-employment questionnaire or you can verbally advise staff and volunteers and ask them to sign a Staff Declaration Form (an example of each can be found at the rear of this guidance).

Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points – HACCP

*Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations 2006
Regulation (EC) 852/2004 Article 5*

When providing food for an event you are required under EU regulations to identify, control and monitor all steps and activities in the food's production, delivery and service to make certain that food is safe. A way of doing this is called Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP). The EU regulations also state that you must write down simple details of what you do to make sure that the food produced is safe to eat. This is also known as your food safety management system.

HACCP involves you identifying those things that could make the food unsafe. You then need to think through and write down steps in the food handling process, for example cooking and keeping food hot for service, that are critical to food safety. These must then be properly controlled and checked with some simple records to show these 'critical points' have been adequately monitored. The arrangements you put in place and the need for them to work and be applied properly by staff or volunteers is your responsibility as a food business operator. You are also responsible for keeping the system up to date and reviewing it from time to time, especially whenever the menu changes.

You may already have a HACCP system within your premises covering the day to day activity of your business. If this is the case, you must develop additional documentation to cover the event catering element of your business. This paperwork, additional controls and monitoring checks can form an addendum to your existing documentation.

For further advice on developing your HACCP or food safety management system, you should contact the local authority with whom you are registered.

When catering for an event the following needs to be considered when developing your HACCP documentation.

Cooking

Ensure cooked high risk food (e.g. chicken, meat, rice, curry sauces) reaches a minimum core temperature sufficient to kill any food poisoning bacteria present. To achieve this, it is recommended a minimum core temperature of 75°C is reached for 30 seconds. Where this minimum core temperature is not reached, the food must be cooked for longer.

You must carry out occasional, representative core temperature monitoring of cooked food with a disinfected temperature probe and record the results. When the cooking temperature is not achieved you must also record the action taken to rectify the problem.

If cooking takes place in large pots on the stoves in your kitchen, it is possible for cold spots to develop. You must ensure that 75°C for 30 sec is achieved throughout the volume of food in the pot, through regular stirring. These temperatures will need to be recorded.

Cooling

If you cool the food, it must be cooled as quickly as possible before placing it in the refrigerator. It is recommended that the cooling process is less than 90 minutes. To aid this

it is recommended you split large batches into smaller shallow containers to assist the cooling process. If you cool the product the cooling times need to be recorded.

Transportation

When transporting the food, the food must be in suitable, easy to clean containers and covered. Cardboard or wooden boxes are not suitable containers for foods that are ready for consumption.

The vehicle used must be suitable and clean and should not be used to transport other goods to avoid the risk of contamination. Journey times should be reduced to a minimum.

When transporting the food you need to consider how you control the temperature of the food to ensure it is kept hot or cold, i.e. above 63°C or below 8°C. For example, for a short journey cold food can be transported in suitable containers in insulated boxes with cold packs. For longer journeys a suitable refrigerated vehicle should be used. For hot food only short journeys must be considered as it is difficult to keep food above 63°C during transportation.

On arrival at the venue, the temperature of the food must be checked and recorded to ensure it is either above 63°C if hot or 8°C or below if delivered cold. These temperatures must be recorded.

Reheating food at the venue

If food is delivered cold to the venue and is intended to be served hot, the food must be reheated to a temperature sufficient to kill any food poisoning bacteria present. To achieve this, it is recommended a minimum core temperature of 75°C is reached for 30 seconds. Where this minimum core temperature is not reached, the food must be cooked for longer.

If food is delivered hot to the venue but the temperature has dropped below 63°C during transportation, the food must be reheated to a temperature sufficient to kill any food poisoning bacteria present. To achieve this, it is recommended a minimum core temperature of 75°C is reached for 30 seconds. Where this minimum core temperature is not reached, the food must be cooked for longer.

You must carry out representative core temperature monitoring of reheated food with a disinfected temperature probe and record the results. When the reheating temperature is not achieved you must also record the corrective action.

Hot holding food at the venue

If the food is delivered hot to the venue or reheated it must then be hot held until service. This is a critical point in ensuring the food served is safe. The food must be hot held at a temperature of 63°C or above. If food can not be hot held it must be served within 2 hours of the initial cooking. You will need to record the hot holding temperature. If you do not hot hold you must record the times the food was cooked and served to ensure it is used within 2 hours.

Service of cold food at the venue

Where high risk food requires chilling, e.g. yoghurt, cream, desserts, cold buffets, this must be kept at 8°C or below or served within a maximum of 4 hours after it is removed from the fridge. Once this time has elapsed the food must be returned to cold storage or thrown away. Again, record should be kept of the food's temperature and the time it is out for display/service.

Disposal at the end of service

At the end of service any food left over must be thrown away and must not be given to guests or staff to take home.

Included are examples of templates that you may wish to use or adapt when developing your HACCP documentation.

Please note the above does not provide an exhaustive list of control points.

Review

Once your HACCP is in place, it is important for you to review your control measures for each event and venue as each venue and event may have different requirements and food safety hazards. Where new hazards are identified you must update your HACCP and take any necessary steps to change your operations.

FORMS AND CHARTS

Within the following section are examples of useful forms and charts that you may wish to use or adapt when developing your HACCP.

CHECKLIST

Do I have the following before I leave for the venue?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Knives and utensils to prepare food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Separate colour-coded chopping boards | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equipment to cook/reheat e.g. gas burners | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pots and pans to cook and/or reheat food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Utensils to cook, reheat and serve the food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equipment to hot hold food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dishes to display and serve the food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Temperature probes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Probe wipes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Soap – anti bacterial | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hand drying towels | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clean cloths | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Anti-bacterial spray / sanitizer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other cleaning equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Mop and bucket | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Broom | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Overclothing for staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |

EVENT DIARY

Event Name: _____

Date: _____

Food delivered (ingredients/supplies)	Temperature	Use by date	Packaging	Corrective action

Equipment temperature (-18°C for frozen / +8°C for chilled)

Time	Fridge 1	Fridge 2	Fridge 3	Fridge 4	Freezer 1	Freezer 2

Cooking (75°C for 30 sec)

Food	Time	Temperature

Cooling (90 minutes max.)

Food	Time at room temperature	Temp. into chiller/freezer

Transportation

Food	Time left for venue	Temperature on leaving	Time arrived at venue	Temperature on arrival

Reheating (75°C for 30 sec)

Food	Time	Temperature

Hot holding (63°C)

Food	Temperature

Corrective Actions

Staff signature _____

Manager signature _____

STAFF HYGIENE AND WORK RULES

1. All staff must wear clean overalls and hats when handling food.
2. Overalls and hats must not be worn outside the premises.
3. Staff must not wear watches or jewellery, except a plain band wedding ring and small sleeper earrings.
4. Staff must not wear strong perfume or aftershave.
5. Food and drink must not be consumed in food rooms or store rooms. This includes chewing gum or any other sweets. Smoking is prohibited.
6. Hands must be washed thoroughly with soap and warm water:
 - Before starting work
 - After breaks
 - After visiting the toilet or on return to the workplace
 - After coughing into the hand or using a handkerchief
 - After eating, drinking or smoking
 - After touching the face or hair
 - After carrying out any cleaning
7. Staff must not lick fingers when handling wrapping materials.
8. Staff must not blow their nose, cough, sneeze or spit over/on the food.
9. Hair and fingernails must be kept clean. Nail varnish must not be worn.
10. Staff must inform the manager if they are suffering from vomiting, diarrhoea, other stomach upsets, skin complaints, or cuts. Cuts and abrasions must be covered by an easily detectable waterproof dressing e.g. blue plasters.
11. Food should be handled as little as possible.

I have read the Staff Hygiene and Work Rules and agree to abide by them.

Signed _____

Date _____

Print Name _____

PRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR USE BY EMPLOYERS

Employee Name _____

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Have you now, or have you over the last seven days, suffered from diarrhoea and/or vomiting? | YES/NO |
| 2. At present, are you suffering from: | |
| i) skin trouble affecting hands, arms or face? | YES/NO |
| ii) boils, styes or septic fingers? | YES/NO |
| iii) discharge from eye, ear or gums/mouth? | YES/NO |
| 3. Do you suffer from: | |
| i) recurring skin or ear trouble? | YES/NO |
| ii) a recurring bowel disorder? | YES/NO |
| 4. Have you ever had, or are you now known to be a carrier of, typhoid or paratyphoid? | YES/NO |
| 5. In the last 21 days have you been in contact with anyone, at home or abroad, who may have been suffering from typhoid or paratyphoid? | YES/NO |

Declaration

I have completed the pre-questionnaire and understand that if I have answered 'Yes' to any of the above questions I am not fit to work as a food handler until further medical advice has been sought.

Signed _____

Date _____

Print Name _____

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