



Food Safety News

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Produced by Environmental Services, Stratford-on-Avon District Council

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Important!!

New food law will affect you - Soon!

Food hygiene legislation is changing - new requirements are coming into force on 1 January 2006 that will affect your business. In particular you need to know about one major new requirement, which is why we have put this newsletter together.

The new Regulations bring together and extend the requirements of the current UK food hygiene laws, but here's the important bit – **if you run a food business you will need to have a documented food safety management system.**

In other words, you will need to say what you do to make food that is safe to eat and have this written down. The amount of documentation you will need will be related to the type of food you prepare/handle and the risks presented by your business. A full Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system is more suited to food manufacturers who produce large amounts of similar foods. This system doesn't easily work in a restaurant or pub kitchen where the menu continually changes and is made up of lots of different menu items, and many people have had difficulty in understanding it. Retail premises also need to consider the amount of records that need to be kept. We therefore needed to consider how you can comply with these new requirements without introducing an unnecessary burden. Following extensive consultation with the catering industry the Food Standards Agency has developed "**Safer Food Better Business**" (**SFBB**). This package can be used in conjunction with records that are already being kept, or form the basis for developing a record keeping system. A retail version is also soon to be made available.





Cross contamination



Cleaning



Chilling



Cooking



Management

Don't Panic! Safer Food Better Business is here.....

Safer Food Better Business is a simple fact sheet system that tells you how to ensure that the major potential hazards in your catering business, namely those to do with avoiding cross-contamination, cleaning, chilling and cooking (the "4 Cs"), can be safely controlled. It is designed to be simple, and can easily be made to fit your catering business. Each SFBB pack is split into five sections containing a number of fact sheets called 'Safe Methods'. Typical safe methods would include instructions on "Cooking Food Safely" and "Reheating" for example. The idea is that you look at the pack and decide which safe methods apply to your business, and then follow them. There are about twenty methods in total covering aspects of the "4Cs", but not all of them will apply to all businesses. A simple diary is also provided, for appropriate record keeping. This also includes a four-weekly review to ensure that the document remains up-to-date and to allow common problems to be identified and addressed. So, from January 1st next year, you will need to have a documented food safety management system – it doesn't have to be SFBB, but any alternative may involve a lot of work for you if you do not already have such a system in place.

What's in it for me?

Safer Food Better Business provides you with a documented food safety management system that will ensure you comply with the requirements of the new law, as long as you follow it. It is designed to cut out jargon, and can be easily tailored to your business. It will be widely recognised, and will be taken into businesses all over England. It will help ensure that you produce safe food, and may result in fewer visits by your Environmental Health Officer. Above all, IT'S FREE!

How do I get SFBB working for me?

Ensuring all our food businesses comply with these new requirements will be a huge undertaking and something that will take time and effort by business and us. To assist with this the Food Standards Agency has made money available to Councils to provide coaching to food catering businesses on the new law and the use of the SFBB pack. Stratford-on-Avon has been successful in a bid for funding, and therefore will be using the money awarded to implement an 18 month coaching programme initially in some 220 premises across the District. The coaching will be undertaken in conjunction with an officer of the Council, who will initially run introductory seminars in conjunction with an approved trainer, and then visit premises to provide coaching and guidance on the implementation of the pack. During this period the District Council will continue to provide advice and guidance to all our premises on any issues that may arise.

I am a small retail/bed and breakfast business - is this really for me?

There is a requirement to keep appropriate records. The SRBB process may in fact be unnecessary for many businesses who already keep extensive records, or inappropriate for small businesses who handle limited open food.



Your questions answered

The following information is provided in response to some of the questions you will undoubtedly have, however if you have any other questions please let us know.

Why the change?

Over the past ten years more and more food hygiene legislation has been introduced to ensure the continued control of the risks presented by an ever changing food industry. This has resulted in more than fifteen separate pieces of legislation, making it difficult for businesses to be clear on what they need to do in order to comply with the law. A number of these pieces of legislation are also now outdated.

How do I get an SFBB pack?

Initially the packs are being supplied to those premises which have been included in the first round of coaching; however, in time the pack will be provided to all catering premises that do not currently have a food safety management system in place.

Copies of the pack can be obtained from EC Logistics 0845 606 0667. It is also available to download at www.food.gov.uk/catering.

How much does the pack cost?

The packs are to be provided free of charge, although the implementation will require your time to complete each section.

How long will it take me to implement the system?

It is suggested that each of the five sections should take one hour to work through and complete, it is suggested that food businesses complete one section per week.

What happens once I have implemented the system?

Once you have implemented the system, you need to ensure that it is adhered to by you and your employees. You should also review your diary every 4 weeks and when operations change, such as style of cooking, use of new equipment.

Won't this take up a lot of time, and require me to keep lots of records?

With SFBB, filling out the diary is the only daily record you will need to complete. This should only take a couple of minutes each day. You don't need to keep lots of records. Once you have worked through the safe methods, you will have a record of what your business does to make sure the food is safe to eat. This will only need to be reviewed and amended if you change the way your food business operates.

Currently I write down the temperatures of fridges every day, do I need to keep doing this?

Keeping a written record of fridge temperatures is good practice, and helps to highlight when a problem arises. SFBB still requires you to monitor fridge temperatures, but you would only need to record problems that have arisen and what you have done to correct them. If you want to continue writing down the fridge temperatures and cooking temperatures daily then you can.

Do I need any additional training?

The seminars and coaching sessions should provide you with sufficient knowledge and information to successfully implement and maintain the pack.

If you require foundation level or other training, reduced cost training will be arranged.

Will the Council provide me with any help to implement the new changes?

Yes, as explained above, Stratford-on-Avon, in conjunction with an independent consultant, will be running a number of seminars and coaching sessions to ensure that businesses can successfully implement the new requirements. After the pack has been successfully implemented, the Council will continue to provide advice and guidance on the pack and all other aspects of food safety.

I already have a system in place, do I have to change to SFBB?

No. We are aware that some premises may already have a documented food safety system in place which has either been provided by their parent company, or has been developed in-house. If you already have one of these systems then it may mean that you already comply with the new requirements. You are however advised to speak to your company or contact us for further advice.

Will the pack be available in other languages?

No. The Food Standards Agency is working on producing packs for a range of cuisines, including Indian, Thai and Chinese, but these will only be produced in English. There will also be a pack tailored to sandwich production.



Is there a deadline for me to implement SFBB?

Although the new regulations come into force on the 1 January 2006, sufficient time will be allowed for all food businesses to comply.

What happens if I don't implement SFBB?

The new regulations require you to implement a documented food safety system. SFBB has been developed to assist food businesses in complying with this new requirement. Ultimately if you choose not to use SFBB and do not implement and maintain any other suitable system the District Council may take legal action in line with its enforcement policy. In view of the extensive free training and coaching that is being offered we hope that such legal action will not be necessary.

What do I do now?

Initially Stratford-on-avon will be targeting 220 premises for SFBB implementation in the next 18 months. These businesses will be approached on a rolling programme from December 2005 and will be invited to attend an initial seminar. Those that wish to go forward with the initiative will then receive personal tuition on the SFBB pack. If your business isn't one of those in the initial batch we are looking at, don't worry. We will ensure that you are not left out and will not take enforcement action against you for not having a documented food safety management system. You will, of course, need to make sure that your business complies with the other requirements of the new food hygiene legislation, which is similar to the current food safety requirements.



Need to talk to someone?

If you have any further questions on the new food hygiene legislation please contact a member of our Public Protection Team on:

01789 260832

email food@stratford-dc.gov.uk

or visit our website at www.stratford.gov.uk

