

Farmers Market Food Safety



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East Herts Introduction

The aim of this Farmer's Market Guide is to ensure that effective food safety principles are applied in practice. East Herts Council is working hard through the efforts of its Economic Development Team to support Farmers' Markets throughout the district. The markets are an exciting way to support local producers. East Hertfordshire has some of the finest livestock and poultry producers, selling direct to the public at the markets and through direct sales from the farm. You can find delicious beef, pork, gammon, sausages, cheeses, cakes, honey, jams, chutneys, eggs, fruit and vegetables and much more at any one of the local markets.

The guide aims to provide a sensible, plain English interpretation of the law and a clear explanation of good food safety principles. In this way East Herts Council's Environmental Health Officers will work with you as a Farmer's Market stall holder to provide safe food for your customers.

Food Safety is all about ensuring that the food that your customers eat is safe. A step by step approach is required to consider the controls you need for the safe production, storage, preparation and sale of food.

Food poisoning is often linked to poor food safety practice and a lack of consideration of the hazards involved. Farmer's markets and their individual operators can use this guide to help ensure that the right food processes are being followed. In turn this will help to ensure that the products you sell to your consumers have been produced safely and most importantly provide your customers with quality produced food.

The Economic Development Team is committed to helping you as East Herts Farmer's Market operators to produce and sell quality local produce to the residents of East Herts.



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Environmental Health Manager (Commercial)

January 2011.

Registration

Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament requires food businesses to register their premises with the Council prior to opening. In relation to Farmer's Market providers this relates to their market stalls and the operation of them. If you have registered your premises already and have not changed the type of work you do, you don't need to register them again.

The purpose of registration is to provide Councils with information about the food premises in their area so that they can plan their inspections and resources effectively. The information will help them to target premises which represent a higher risk to health more frequently than those which only pose a lower risk.

Registration is not a form of licensing and does not give approval to trade. Registration is a very simple process and the registration form should only take a few minutes to complete.

There is no charge to register premises and it does not need to be renewed periodically. Council's cannot refuse to register a food business. Changes, such as a change of a proprietor or a change in the nature of the business must be notified to the Council.

Certain types of businesses may need to be approved, rather than registered, depending on the scale and distribution and various other factors. Some examples of the types of production can include*:

- meat and meat products
- eggs
- milk and dairy products
- fish and fish products

** Please note under certain conditions, exemptions apply.*

Food business operators whose establishments require approval should contact their Environmental Health Officer to discuss their requirements. The necessary application form for registration with East Hertfordshire can be found on the East Herts Council website www.eastherts.gov.uk/foodregistration or please contact Environmental Health's Business Support Team on 01279 655261 who will be able to send one to you.

Regulations and Legal Framework

What does the law say?

Applying food safety in practice means that compliance is required with the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006. Food Safety Officers from East Herts Council may, at any reasonable time, inspect the parts of your business used to store, prepare or transport food. Normally 24 hours notice is given for businesses run from home.

This guide is designed to help you comply with the Regulations, and more importantly, take the necessary steps to ensure the food you serve is safe to eat.

Training - why do you need to have it?

It is a statutory requirement to train staff in food safety matters.

Proper training benefits both you and your staff. Your staff will benefit from personal development, knowledge of correct and safe procedures and understand why they are necessary.

All food handlers must receive appropriate food safety training for the work being carried out. The more involved the work or preparation, the greater the risk is and therefore more training needs to be given. For example, someone unloading sacks of potatoes from a delivery van would need less training than someone involved in the preparation or sale of fresh cream cakes. Well trained staff consistently perform better and more effectively. Many managers have reported increased staff motivation from training.

Where can you do a course?

The courses run by Environmental Health at East Herts Council are friendly and undertaken in an informal environment. Each course ends in a short examination which leads to the nationally recognised Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering awarded by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

East Herts Council runs regular Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering training courses. The course is designed to cater for all learning styles with different practical activities assisting you to learn. There is a high pass rate for candidates who attend. Please direct enquiries to Simon Barfoot on 01992 531471 or email: simon.barfoot@eastherts.gov.uk. You can also make credit card payments to secure your place on a course by speaking to Simon or Environmental Health's Business Support team.

Alternatively if you would like information about providing training for 10 or more people at your workplace at discounted rates please contact Simon Barfoot using the details above.

Food Safety - how to achieve it?

Personal Hygiene

Anyone involved in the running of a food business should have a high standard of personal hygiene. This will be reflected in appearance, dress, behaviour and personal cleanliness. Poor cleanliness and bad habits mean the likelihood of contaminating food. High standards of personal hygiene will reduce the risk of contamination and help to prevent food poisoning. The following key points should be followed by all food handlers.

- They should wash their hands regularly, and especially:
 - On starting work
 - After using the toilet
 - Between handling raw and cooked foods
 - After breaks for eating, drinking or smoking
 - After coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose
 - After touching hair
 - After handling refuse or waste materials
 - After handling cleaning chemicals

N.B. In the instance when hand wash facilities are not available you must make suitable arrangements to prevent the contamination of food, e.g. use of tongs, gloves, use of hand sanitisers/gels etc.

Food handlers must always:

- Cover cuts, sores and burns with clean waterproof dressings (those of a distinctive colour are best e.g. blue).
- Wear clean, and where appropriate, protective clothing.
- Keep your finger nails short and clean and remove all nail polish.
- Remove jewellery other than a plain wedding ring.
- Avoid wearing strong smelling perfumes or aftershaves.
- Tie back long hair.

People suffering from certain medical conditions

- Any person working in a food area who has reason to believe that he or she is suffering from or is a carrier of any illness likely to result in food contamination **MUST** seek further advice.
- Any person who is a source of possible contamination should **NOT** be allowed to work in any food handling area, e.g. a person who has infected wounds, skin infection, sores or diarrhoea.
- Do not prepare food until at least 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.

Requirements for mobile, temporary and domestic premises

Mobile and temporary premises include marquees, market stalls, mobile catering vans and trailers and businesses that operate from home where food is regularly prepared to be sold to the public.

All these types of premises must be positioned, designed, constructed, and kept clean and maintained to a good standard. Good design principles will help avoid the risk of contamination, particularly from animals and pests.

Where necessary depending on the type of food products you are handling, preparing or selling:

- You must have appropriate facilities to maintain adequate personal hygiene, including suitable facilities to wash and dry hands.
- Surfaces in contact with food are to be in a sound condition, be easy to clean and where necessary easy to disinfect. This means they should be made of materials that are smooth, washable, durable and non-absorbent.
- You must have adequate facilities for the cleaning and, where necessary, disinfecting of working utensils and equipment.
- If you wash or clean foods as part of your business, then you must have adequate facilities to do this hygienically.
- You must have an adequate supply of hot and/or cold water that is "Potable" (drinking quality).
- You must have adequate arrangements and/or facilities to store and dispose of waste products.
- You must have adequate facilities and/or arrangements for keeping food at suitable temperatures and monitoring these.
- You must store foods in a way that avoids the risk of contamination as far as is reasonably practical.

Food Safety Management Systems

Food business operators are now required to put into place, implement and maintain a permanent procedure based on the principles of HACCP. HACCP stands for 'Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point'.

The Food Standards Agency has developed its own form of food management safety system which you may be aware of called, "Safer Food Better Business" or SFBB. It is a simple and helpful system which many businesses have found easy to implement. It is a legal requirement to have an effective documented Food Safety Management System such as SFBB or already established system in place to ensure good food safety.

The food safety management system focuses on identifying the 'critical points' in a process where food safety problems (or 'hazards') could arise and putting steps in place to prevent things going wrong. This is sometimes referred to as 'controlling hazards'.

Keeping records is also an important part of HACCP systems and the SFBB folder has an action diary to record any issues and come up with safer processes. Examples of the types of areas which are necessary to look at include:

- Purchase
- Receipt of food
- Storage
- Preparation
- Cooking
- Cooling
- Hot holding
- Re-heating
- Chilled Storage
- Transportation
- Display.

It is recognised businesses will be slightly different and as a result may involve different steps for different food types. For example, the retail sale of dairy products might involve the following steps:

- Purchase
- Receipt
- Storage
- Display/Sale
- Disposal of out of date product.



Establishing a Food Safety Management System

To set up a system, you will need some understanding of food safety, including food microbiology, especially factors affecting harmful bacterial growth (germs), legal requirements and the need for staff training.

The following practical example should help you to understand this legal requirement.

Practical example:

The examples below are similar to the type of layout you may find in the Safer Food Better Business food safety management system. This has been developed by the Food Standards Agency and is widely used as it gives a straight forward, no-nonsense approach to helping you maintain good food safety. It is a legal requirement to keep it properly filled in and up to date. Copies are available free from www.food.gov.uk or by contacting the Environmental Health Business Support Team.

Hazard Control Point	Why is it needed?
When selling your products to consumers be sure to give clear instructions if the food or product requires further cooking, reheating or specific storage instructions.	Food manufacturers carry out their own testing and so they know how long their products take to cook.
Turn on equipment before cooking starts, e.g. grills and ovens so the required cooking temperature is reached.	If cooking equipment has had time to warm up properly then cooking times stated by the manufacturer are likely to be reasonably accurate.
Always keep raw foods away from cooked, e.g. do not let blood juices from a raw burger drop on to a cooked burger.	Raw food carries a range of bacteria which can be harmful if it comes into contact with cooked food.
Seal the surface of meat joints or whole pieces such as lamb and beef.	This will help to ensure that the bacteria on the surface of the meat is killed. As long as these meat types have been properly sealed they can be served rare.
Turn meat and poultry once or twice during cooking.	This means that the meat will be cooked evenly because the heat can go through



Hazard Control Point	Why is it needed?	What checks would you do?
<p>Food should always be properly defrosted. Allow plenty of time for this.</p> <p>Good practice is to ensure overnight defrosting in a fridge with the covered food stored in a clean container at the bottom of the fridge.</p>	<p>If all or some parts of the food are frozen it will take a lot longer to cook or some parts might not be cooked when others are, meaning harmful bacteria could remain in the food.</p>	<p>Write down the checks you would carry out:</p> <p>If you do not do checks what other methods do you have to make sure food is not frozen?</p>

Checks for poultry being cooked properly:

		
<p>Poultry should not be pink or red, juices need to be clear and contain no blood.</p>	<p>Check poultry is cooked at the thickest point.</p>	<p>Properly cooked chicken with juices running clear and no sign of any pink bits.</p>

Stopping things from going wrong	Getting it right next time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cook food for longer until it is done ● Divide the food into smaller amounts or use more cooking equipment to help it cook better and more evenly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check equipment and replace or repair it, if it is not working ● Change your cooking method; think about increasing the time or cooking it at a hotter temperature ● Maybe use another more suitable piece of cooking equipment ● Re-train staff on how to cook the food properly ● Support and help staff more when they are working

The process may be summarised as follows:




Think of one type of food you handle in your business.

Identify each step in the food preparation process.

Perhaps create a table like the example below or on the next page.

The list provided overleaf gives some examples of hazards and what could go wrong.

- ✓ Think about what could go wrong at each step.
- ✓ Think about how to stop those things going wrong.
- ✓ Put your thoughts and ideas into action.
- ✓ Carry out this exercise again from time to time to see if anything has changed.

Hazard	Risk	Controlling Risk	Picture example
Contaminated meat, eggs (infected at source)	Contamination with food poisoning bacteria or toxins	Buy from a reputable supplier. As farmers' markets suppliers and sellers you will know the quality including organic/home grown nature of your supplied goods	
Poor temperature control of high risk/ready to eat foods	Food poisoning bacteria present and multiplying	Specify delivery temperature of received food supplies Check regularly the temperature of fridges/freezers	
Out of date food	If food is used past its 'Use-by' date then food poisoning is likely to occur. If food is used past its 'Best-before' date, quality, taste or appearance of food may not be as originally intended	Discard out of date stock Carry out regular checks of food for 'Use-by' and 'Best-before' dates. Adopt colour (day dot) coded system	

Examples of Hazards and Control Measures

These are examples only and there may well be many more hazards and control measures than those listed below.

Hazards	Control Measures
Contamination with food poisoning bacteria or toxins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Buy from a reputable supplier ● Specify temperature at delivery ● Check the temperature is right ● Separate raw and cooked food
Food poisoning bacteria present and multiplying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specify standards at delivery ● Refrigerate food quickly after delivery ● Cook food to correct temperature ● Reheat to correct temperature
Out of date food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular checks on stock ● Discard out of date stock
Harmful chemicals stored with food products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Store cleaning chemicals in a separate area
Chemicals in unmarked bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure cleaning chemicals are used in accordance with instructions and are clearly labelled
Dry goods gone past best before date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rotate stock according to date code ● Use first in, first out (FIFO) principle ● Consider reducing stock bought by using smaller packs
Chemical residues left on surfaces after cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure equipment and surfaces are clean ● Food safe sanitiser/cleaning products
Survival of food poisoning bacteria in cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Probe food to ensure correct cooking temperatures have been reached
Contamination with foreign bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete visual checks for damaged packaging ● Throw out affected food ● Store food wrapped or in covered containers
Contamination of food during transport and display	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train staff ● Store raw and cooked food separately ● Protect from pests ● Display food wrapped/covered or in containers where possible

Sourcing Responsibly

- Always buy food from reputable suppliers.
- When purchasing chilled or frozen foods put them in fridge/freezer storage as soon as possible.

Storage and Temperature Control

- Store raw meat and poultry in covered containers at the bottom of the fridge to avoid any risk of juices dripping on to foods which are ready-to-eat.
- Always keep eggs in the fridge and separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- Do not store opened cans of food in the fridge. Put the contents into a suitable container such as a covered plastic bowl before refrigerating.
- Regularly check your fridge to make sure it is working properly (0°C to 5°C). A simple thermometer kept in the fridge will make this easier.
- Defrost the fridge regularly.
- Never overload your fridge. They work best when air can circulate around the food.
- Never leave the fridge door open longer than necessary.
- Clean fridges with warm soapy water followed by a food safe anti-bacterial cleaner. Rinse and allow to dry before replacing the food.
- It is recommended that freezers operate at or below -18°C and should be defrosted on a regular basis. Check food is frozen solid to ensure appropriate operating temperature.
- Keep all stored food covered to stop it being contaminated and to prevent insects and other pests getting in.
- Regularly clean out food cupboards as spillages can harbour germs and attract pests.
- Clean and disinfect bread-bins regularly to help prevent mould growth

Food Handling

- Handle food as little as possible.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly before preparing food; an anti-bacterial soap is recommended.
- Regularly clean work surfaces and equipment and disinfect with a food safe anti-bacterial cleaner.
- A food safe anti-bacterial cleaner will help kill germs and prevent cross contamination.
- Clean work surfaces and spillages as you go.
- Prepare raw and ready-to-eat foods separately.
- Wherever possible use different chopping boards and knives to keep raw foods such as meat and poultry separate from ready-to-eat foods. If this is not possible they should be cleaned and disinfected between uses. Thoroughly defrost meat, poultry and fish before cooking.
- Keep pets out of any food preparation and cooking areas - they can carry disease.
- Do not use foods after their 'Use by' date.

Cooking

- Make sure food is cooked thoroughly until it is piping hot right through to the middle. Burgers, sausages, etc. should be cooked until the juices run clear and there are no pink bits inside.
- Use a clean probe thermometer to check core temperature > 75°C. Always disinfect probe with food safe probe wipes between uses.
- Always follow cooking instructions carefully.

Cooling Methods

- Food which is to be cooled then re-heated or cooled to be eaten/served at a later date should be cooled as quickly as possible within 90 minutes and then chilled until eaten or re-heated later.
- When re-heating food, make sure it is piping hot, right through to the middle. Never re-heat more than once.

Transportation

Food transported to a market must be wrapped, covered or placed in suitable containers to prevent contamination. Vehicles and containers should be kept clean and in good repair and the food should be kept separate from other items. For example, if you are accustomed to transporting farm dogs, game birds or containers of agricultural diesel in the back of your vehicle, you must avoid tainting or direct contamination of foods in transit.

Clean, durable, high quality materials such as lidded metal or plastic containers should be used to store all products during transportation with the exception of raw fruit and vegetables, which can be stored/transported in cardboard boxes or sacks. Ensure packaging is food safe (bin liners are not suitable for food as they may taint or contaminate it).

Some foods must be kept under chilled storage conditions. 8°C is the legal requirement; however 5°C is good practice. To ensure correct storage temperatures are maintained it is important to carry out temperature monitoring.

- Use a cool box or cool bag to transport high-risk foods (foods that need refrigeration) especially in warm weather.
- Use ice packs in the cool box/bag to help keep food cool.
- When transporting raw and ready-to-eat foods, put them in separate boxes and within sealed containers.
- Always leave chilled and frozen foods in their fridge/freezer storage conditions as long as possible before transporting.

Display requirements

To avoid cross-contamination, food must not be placed directly onto the floor and should always be suitably covered/contained or protected.

Make sure that high risk/ready-to-eat food including cooked foods are always kept separate from raw foods to avoid cross-contamination.

Check the temperature of chilled foods at least twice a day and when using portable cooling methods frequent checks of the chilled foods need to be carried out to ensure that these foods are being kept at the right temperature (5°C). Recording these temperatures in the SFBB folder is important in the event that an individual may challenge the storage conditions.

Regularly wipe down surfaces with a clean, preferably disposable cloth or kitchen towel/blue roll using a food safe anti-bacterial cleaner. This will both clean and disinfect providing excess dirt or food residues are removed first during the cleaning process.

If the market does not have refuse services, make sure you have sacks or containers for waste food and water. Ensure that these are securely tied to prevent attracting pests.

Labelling

Practically all food displayed for sale must be accurately labelled. However, controls will vary depending on whether the food you supply is to be eaten on the premises, is pre-packed or is unwrapped or loose. Broadly, food labelling laws require you to provide information on:

The composition of food

Pre-packed food needs to show a list of ingredients in weight order. Any additives used in food sold pre-packed or loose must be declared.

Pricing

Food sold loose must have a unit price (e.g. price per kilogram) or price each. In addition packages of food must be priced either on the item or by means of a price list. Certain items like confectionary, meat, fish which are cooked, cured or ready to eat, the price is per 100g. For food to be eaten on the premises, prices must be displayed before the customer enters the supply area and also at the point where the food is ordered, although not all items need to be priced.

Weight or volume

Pre-packed food has to be marked with a net weight, exclusive of the packaging. This weight must be determined by proper commercial, rather than domestic, weighing instruments. As a general rule, most loose foods such as fruit and vegetables must be sold by net weight, using approved weighing equipment approved as fit for trade use (typically referred to as 'stamped'). If food is pre-packed, the weight must be marked on the pack, you can also add an imperial weight provided it is less prominent than the metric one. Some pre-packed foodstuffs must be sold in specific quantities; these include potatoes, jams, honey, dried fruit and dried vegetables.

Example

Loaves of bread can only be sold in multiples of 400g unless they are 300g or less and therefore are exempt from controls. Cakes do not need a weight. Sometimes items such as fruit and vegetables can be sold by number if it is sensible to count them.

'Use by' or 'Best before' date

'Use by' dates are for foods which deteriorate rapidly and may end up causing potential food poisoning if they are consumed after the 'Use-by' date. It is illegal to sell food after its 'Use-by' date and includes high risk/ready-to-eat foods such as chilled meat products/packed sandwiches/cream cakes/meat pies etc.

'Best-before' dates relate to the quality of food including dry or tinned goods such as biscuits, cakes, crisps and confectionary. Selling foods after their 'Best-before' date is not likely to cause serious illness although the freshness and quality of the food may have deteriorated. The nature of the product is such that its quality is likely to decrease over a medium to long shelf life.

Product storage details:

- A list of ingredients
- The name and address of the person putting the product into circulation
- Any storage conditions
- Any previous process or treatment, for example "previously frozen".

There are specific requirements for declaring the percentages of certain ingredients. For instance, where an ingredient is highlighted in the name of a food, e.g. "Apple and ginger chutney" the percentages of apple & ginger would have to be declared on the label.

There are also specific requirements regarding the inclusion of genetically modified and irradiated ingredients.

Meat products require a label showing their minimum meat content or, in the case of cured meat, their added water content. For Farmers' Markets, this is a chance for promoting any superior meat content of your product over those that are available in the high street. Beef Labelling Regulations require traceability information to be displayed for raw beef and mince products.

Allergies - how to be prepared?

In theory, any food could cause an allergic reaction in someone, but labelling legislation requires certain foods always to be labelled on pre-packed foods. These are:

celery (including celeriac)
cereals containing gluten, these are wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt and kamut or their hybridised strains
crustaceans, such as crabs, lobsters and prawns
eggs
fish
lupin
milk
molluscs
mustard
nuts, such as, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, cashew nuts, pecans, pistachio nuts, macadamia nuts and Queensland nuts
peanuts (also called groundnuts)
sesame seeds
soyabeans (sometimes called soya)
sulphur dioxide and sulphites at levels above 10mg/kg or 10mg/L expressed as SO₂

These are the foods that we are referring to when we talk about 'foods that can cause severe allergic reactions'.

Some people need to avoid certain foods because of a food intolerance. About 1 in 100 people need to avoid gluten, a type of protein found in wheat, rye and barley, and some need to avoid oats too. This is because they have an intolerance to gluten, which is called coeliac disease. Other people need to avoid lactose, the sugar found in milk.

Giving away free samples

You will want to introduce your customers to as wide a range of your foods as possible and having tasting samples available is a good way to get their attention. Samples need to be protected from contamination. If your customers have to handle your food, try and make sure they don't touch other samples on the plate, cocktail sticks or tongs help to stop this. Most importantly, don't leave food that must be chilled for safety reasons out of chill control for long periods, so keep quantities to a minimum and throw out uneaten food if it has been out of refrigeration for a long time.

You may find your local market has its own conditions about food samples as this is at the discretion of the market organiser.



If you would like a translation of this document in another language, large print, Braille, audio, or electronic, please contact us.

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