



What to expect from a food hygiene inspection

If your business handles food, you will be subject to a food hygiene inspection. Environmental Health officers can visit your premises to carry out a food hygiene inspection at any reasonable time to issue the premises with a food hygiene rating. Ratings go from 5 to 0.

5 - hygiene standards are very good

4 - hygiene standards are good

3 - hygiene standards are generally satisfactory

2 - Some improvement is necessary

1 - Major improvement is necessary

0 - Urgent improvement is required

Many customers use these ratings when choosing where to eat out or shop for food. Online food platforms require a minimum rating of a 2/3 before they will host businesses.



Areas of inspection

During an inspection, an Environmental Health Officer will be looking at 3 main areas:

- 1) Confidence in management - How the business manages keeping food safe, for example the processes, training, and systems in place to ensure good hygiene is maintained.
- 2) Food hygiene and safety. How hygienically the food is being handled, how it is prepared, cooked, reheated, cooled, and stored, to prevent cross contamination.
- 3) The physical condition of the business, looking at cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation, and pest control.

If you score well in all these areas, you will achieve a good hygiene rating.

Scoring poorly in any one area will affect your score.

1. Confidence in management of your control systems.

You must have a food safety management system in place for your business which is based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. One way of achieving this is to use Safer Food Better Business (SFBB), a tool provided by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and free to download from their website (www.food.gov.uk).

SFBB enables you to identify the potential hazards associated with your food business and the controls you will put in place to ensure food is safe. The pack includes daily diary where you can document the controls, checks and monitoring that you have in place for your business.

Staff must have the food safety knowledge required to carry out their duties effectively. It is recommended that all staff handling food have at least a Level 2 food hygiene certificate and have carried out food allergen training. There is a free online allergen awareness course on the FSA website.

Inspecting officers will be looking for evidence of a positive food safety culture throughout the business. All staff must understand and follow the requirements of the business' food safety management system.

2. Food hygiene and safety.

Environmental Health Officers will ask who supplies your food and will want to see records of the deliveries, notes made of visual checks carried out and temperatures monitored and recorded. You should record what you have bought, who you bought it from, the quantity, date, and allergen information. Keep invoices and receipts of all food purchased.

Checks will be made on how food is stored, evidence that the temperatures of fridges and freezers are monitored and recorded will be required, temperature checks may be made throughout the inspection. Raw and cooked foods must be kept separate. You may be asked questions on how you ensure food reaches correct temperatures on cooking and cooling and how you monitor and record this information. You may be asked about hot holding, cold service, reheating, and rules surrounding this.

You should use a 2-stage cleaning process as set out in Safer Food Better Business, it will be checked that this is being done and that you are using a British Standard approved sanitiser (BS EN number 1276 or 13697). Seals around fridges and freezers must be kept clean and in good condition, fridges and freezers must be kept clean and freezers regularly defrosted.

3. Physical condition of the business.

Environmental Health officers will review the structure of the property and consider the state of walls, floors, ceilings, lighting, maintenance, drainage, ventilation etc to ensure everything is in good working order and free from anything that could cause bacteria build-up or pose a risk of contamination. The overall cleanliness of the structure will be assessed.

It is a mandatory requirement to have a separate hand wash basin in the food preparation area only used for hand washing with a supply of hot and cold water.

During the inspection evidence of pest infestation will be looked for and you will be asked about pest control and how it is managed. It is good practise to have a pest control contract.

Businesses need a trade waste contract and waste cooking oil must be disposed of by an authorised collector.

For further information, please visit the Food Standards Agency website: www.food.gov.uk

If you need any business compliance help or support, please contact info@gmbcs.co.uk



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