

# Food Alert

## Five Star Hygiene Ratings

How to get the perfect score  
on your door



## This simple guide sets out how you can achieve the perfect 5 out of 5 Food Hygiene Rating (FHR) every time.

With hygiene being such an important part of our lives, customers are paying closer attention to food safety ratings than ever before. Achieving full marks is vital in order to attract and retain business.

Displaying your rating is already compulsory in Northern Ireland and Wales and England is likely to follow soon. Food delivery apps also list ratings of their restaurant partners and expect restaurants to meet a certain rating

before they can go on their platform. Ultimately, FHR's allow consumers to make informed choices about the places where they eat out or shop for food thereby encouraging businesses to improve their hygiene standards. Getting a good Food Hygiene Rating is essential for your business.

Our team of experts have created this guide and handy checklists so your business can reach for five FHR stars!

### What is a food hygiene rating?

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is a local authority / Food Standards Agency (FSA) partnership initiative which operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland it is known as the Food Hygiene Information scheme and is run by Food Standards Scotland.

The FHR reflects the standards of food hygiene found on the date of the inspection by the local authority. Inspections check compliance with legal requirements – the food hygiene rating given reflects the inspection's findings. It is not a guide to food quality. The scheme gives a rating from 5 to 0 with the ratings as follows:



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

**It considers everything from food handling to how ingredients are stored, and of course, general hygiene. Clearly, if you have a low hygiene rating this is likely to have a negative impact on your business.**

## When an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) / Food Safety Officer (FSO) comes calling - what are they looking for?

Usually, the EHO/FSO will turn up unannounced, so making sure your business is compliant and prepared is key. There are three main areas an EHO/FSO will inspect a business for in order to check food hygiene law is being complied with and that the food being prepared is safe to eat:

- 1 Food Hygiene:** How hygienically is the food handled? How safe is the food preparation, cooking and reheating, cooling and storage?
- 2 Structure:** Is the premises in good repair? First impressions count and cleanliness is key along with good maintenance and repair, a safe layout, good lighting, ventilation and pest control
- 3 Food Safety Management:** Confidence in the management is important and being able to demonstrate robust procedures to keep food safe is paramount, including a good food safety management system that is fully implemented with good staff awareness and training.

### How to get the perfect 5:

#### SAFE FOOD PRACTICES

- Do staff have good personal hygiene such as regular handwashing?
- Do you keep staff sickness records? Are staff aware of the 48-hour rule?
- Do you have control measures in place to prevent cross contamination?
- Do you prepare and store raw/unwashed foods separately from cooked/ready to eat foods?
- Do you have colour coded chopping boards?
- Are you keeping chilled food at safe temperatures?
- Are you cooking, reheating and hot holding at safe temperatures?
- Are you following safe cooling practices such as using a blast chiller or using active cooling to cool food quickly and safely?
- Are you using appropriate cleaning chemicals for disinfecting?

## PREMISES

- Do you carry out planned preventative maintenance?
- Do you have a pest control contract and is the premises pest proof?
- Do you have a clean kitchen and tidy storage areas?
- Do you have separate sinks for handwashing facilities?
- Is the equipment clean?
- Is natural or artificial ventilation effective?

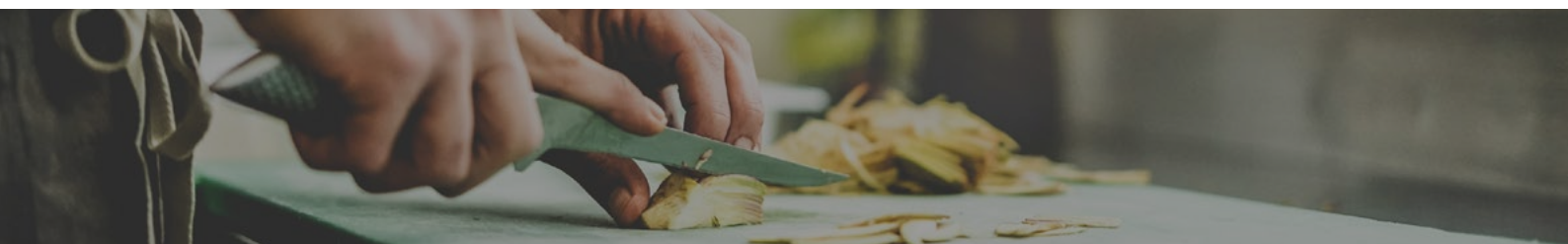
## KEY ITEMS YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO SHOW DURING A VISIT

- Food Safety management system/Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan\*
- Food safety records and temperature logs
- Pest management records
- Training records
- Maintenance and cleaning records

## FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT

- Do you have a documented food safety management system based on HACCP Principles?
- Have you identified food safety hazards (microbiological, physical, chemical and allergen hazards)?
- Have you identified critical control points and taken action to ensure they are monitored and controlled?
- Can you provide evidence of all your food safety procedures and do you keep good due diligence records
- Can you provide evidence that food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained?
- Do you have a cleaning schedule?
- Do you use food probes and keep them clean and calibrated?

**\* A regularly updated HACCP plan is vital as 'confidence in management' accounts for 33% of your Food Hygiene Rating, so it needs to be clear, simple and understood by all food handlers and not just the senior chefs. It is important that food safety management procedures are appropriate for your business.**



## What happens if you get a low score?

Hygiene standards have always been important when it comes to reputation but consumers are now even more aware, since the outbreak of COVID-19.

A low score can impact your reputation in an ever more difficult marketplace. But more importantly poor standards could lead to customer illness and you could also face formal action from the local authority in the form of improvement notices and more stringent action if the hygiene standards are very poor.

## Why chance it?



## Want to be EHO / FSO ready – switch to digital

Alert65 is a complete **digital food safety and health & safety cloud-based software** program. It means all compliance information and policy documentation, such as HACCP, allergen management, food complaints, supplier management, temperature control reports, plus cleaning and training schedules, are all stored in one place and easily accessed, making employees lives easier, as well as that of the EHO.

If you'd like the backing of the expert Food Alert team, simply give us a call on **020 7244 1900** and we will be happy to discuss your general compliance needs. Or **get in touch** with us online and we'll call you back at a time that suits you.