

FoodAlert

Preparing for an EHO inspection

A checklist



Preparing for an EHO inspection - A checklist.

This checklist sets out all the things you need to consider and have in place in order to achieve the perfect five out of five food hygiene rating (FHR) when the EHO comes calling.

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 FHR is essential for your business.



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 five to zero with the ratings as shown on the right.

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.



What are they looking for?

When an environmental health officer (EHO) / food safety officer (FSO) comes calling

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:



Food Hygiene

How hygienically is the food handled? How safe is the food preparation, cooking and reheating, cooling and storage?



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.



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.





Checklist

Food Safety Management & Paperwork

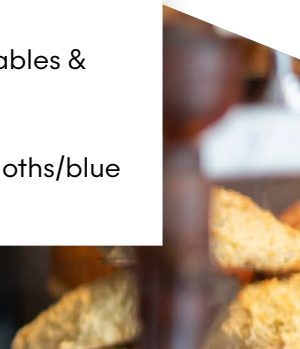
- Do you have a food safety system in place (HACCP/SFBB)?
- Is everything up to date?
- Are all foods that you prepare covered?
- Is everything organised and easily available?
- Are records honest and accurate?
- Are you recording corrective actions?
- Have you considered online food safety management?
- Do you use food probes and keep them clean and calibrated?
- Are staff fully trained?

Structure and Cleaning

- Do you have a cleaning schedule?
- Are staff instructed and trained in the use of cleaning chemicals and cleaning standards?
- Do disinfection products meet BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697?
- Do all staff know the contact time for disinfectants and sanitiser?
- Are chemicals correctly labelled and stored away from food?
- Do you regularly clean behind equipment?
- Do you carry out planned preventative maintenance?
- Does the layout keep clean and unclean tasks and materials apart?

Cross Contamination Controls

- Are high-risk ready to eat foods and raw foods separated?
- Do you have colour coded boards?
- Do you wash salad, vegetables & fruit (including bar fruit)?
- Do you have disposable cloths/blue paper towels?



Temperature Control

- Do you use food probes and keep them clean and calibrated?
- Do you cook and hold food at the correct temperature as detailed below?
- Fridges - below 5 °C, legal below 8°C
- Freezers - below -18°C
- Cook/reheat - > 75°C (82 °C in Scotland)
- Hot hold - >63 °C
- Cool rapidly - 55°C to 20°C within two hours and refrigerate as soon as possible.
- Avoid danger zone - 8°C -63°C.
- Do you thaw high risk foods in the refrigerator?

Personal Hygiene

- Do you have separate hand wash basins for hand washing?
- Is there anti-bacterial liquid soap?
- Are staff washing their hands effectively?
- Do workers change into clean protective clothing before work?
- Do you have a first aid kit with blue waterproof plasters?
- Do staff keep their hair back and/or wear a hair net or hat?
- Do you keep staff sickness records and follow the 48-hour rule for exclusion where required?
- Do you use return to work forms?
- Do you have health screening prior to starting work?

Allergen Controls

- Do you have supplier approval procedures?
- Do you have an up-to-date allergen matrix?
- Are staff trained in your allergy procedures?
- Have you identified any Prepacked for Direct Sale (PPDS) foods for October 2021?

Record Keeping

- Do you record fridge/freezer temperatures?
- Do you keep records at critical control points?
- Do you have food due diligence if required?
- Do you do internal audits/inspections?

Pest Control

- ✓ Do you check your premises regularly for pests?
- ✓ Do you have a pest control contract in place?
- ✓ Do you have fly screens on open windows and doors?
- ✓ Do you have good housekeeping and tidy areas?
- ✓ Do you regularly remove food waste?
- ✓ Are external bin areas clean and tidy with lids on bins?

Storage

- ✓ Do you have dry, clean, and tidy storage areas?
- ✓ Are foods labelled?
- ✓ Do you have a good stock rotation procedure?
- ✓ Are goods clear of wall and off floor?
- ✓ Are allergen ingredients stored in sealed containers?
- ✓ Are foods covered?



Need a hand?

Preparing for an EHO inspection can be tough. With so much to consider and implement, it can be a daunting path to embark on and that's where we come in.

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.

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