

FOOD AND SAFETY

Summer
2013



A Publication for Businesses
Produced by Huntingdonshire District Council

Training • Team Review • Summer Working • FHRs • Refrigeration • Safe Salads • H&S Update • Food Containers • Shape Your Place

Food Hygiene Training



Most of us will have heard of 'basic food hygiene training' yet during inspections it has been found that many people lack the knowledge required to be able to produce food safely.

Food hygiene law requires all food handlers to be trained in food hygiene matters. The law also requires managers and supervisors to be trained to develop and monitor food safety management procedures and systems. Anyone working in a supervisory position in the food industry is not just responsible for food safety in the business. It is very important that they are equipped with both the knowledge and confidence to do their job effectively.

In order to assist food business operators to meet this requirement, we are hosting a Level 3 Award in Supervising Food Safety in Catering together with Blue Cloud Training.

The three day course will be held at the council offices on the following dates:

Monday 23rd September 2013
(9am – 5pm)

Monday 30th September 2013
(9am – 5pm)

Monday 7th October 2013
(9am – 5pm)

Level 3 Training - Learning points covered:

Implementing and supervising a food safety management system

General food safety procedures

Food hazards and the risks associated with them

Understanding the language with respect to supervising food safety

Techniques involved in controlling and monitoring food safety

The risks linked to cross contamination

The role temperature has to play in the control of food safety

Supervising high standards of cleanliness in food premises

Cost: £299 per candidate which includes all course materials, exam fee, and refreshments.

For further information and to reserve a place on the course please contact us on 01480 388302

Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering

Traditionally food handlers attended a 6-hour classroom based accredited training course in Food Safety in Catering. Recently there has been a rise in the popularity of online training courses, which can be a cost effective and flexible way to train staff. However, we have found that some online courses are offering cut-price deals which claim to train staff to level 2 standard in less than two hours. Talks with staff who have taken these courses have shown a lack of knowledge to enable them to carry out their duties safely. Employers are then having to pay out again to send staff on accredited courses in order to adequately train them in food safety matters.

Remember – if the offer looks too good to be true, it probably is. Please contact us for advice on suitable accredited food hygiene training courses, or refer to the list of training providers on the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health website www.cieh.org

Training in Other Languages

To further assist businesses, we are currently looking at providing food hygiene training courses in languages other than English. So far there has been a considerable amount of interest in an Urdu course and we are pleased to say that a Level 2 course for Urdu speakers is planned for 9th September 2013. If you feel that a course in another language would benefit you or your staff please let us know and if there is sufficient demand we will try to meet the demand. Please send your request to food@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or call 01480 388302.

Commercial Team Review: 2012/13

It's been a particularly busy year for the Commercial Team dealing with our usual program of routine interventions and visits as well as managing some unexpected and challenging situations

The service aims to provide a complementary programme of education and enforcement. While the primary aim of a food safety or health and safety intervention is to secure compliance, officers spend a considerable amount of time providing advice, guidance, and support to local businesses and in particular start-up businesses.

Here are some headlines from the last financial year.



Food Safety Service

- There are currently 1500 registered food businesses in the district
- A total of 1216 food inspections, interventions and visits were carried out, including support visits to 136 new food businesses who registered this year
- 33 Hygiene Improvement Notices were served on 11 premises. 5 premises were subject to voluntary closure and 4 food businesses were prosecuted for food hygiene offences
- 526 service requests were received from the public and food businesses including an allegation of illegal meat slaughtering and visits were carried out to a number of premises in connection with the horse meat scandal.
- 140 complaints were received about unfit food or unhygienic food premises
- 119 food and 14 water samples were taken for analysis of which 20 were found to be unsatisfactory
- 147 food-borne illness notifications were received and investigated.

Health and Safety Service

- There are over 2000 businesses in the district for which the Council is the health & safety enforcing authority
- In total over 270 interventions to businesses were carried out with particular emphasis on the management of asbestos, fire and explosion risks associated with underground pipework, and gas safety in catering establishments. The service also worked with partner organisations to raise the health and safety profile within the Polish community.
- The service dealt with 90 complaints about working conditions, and 96 accidents and dangerous occurrences
- There were 4 prosecutions for health and safety offences, 8 enforcement notices were served, two of which were prohibition notices for working conditions which presented an immediate danger.

Summer Working

If your workplace requires you and your employees to spend a long time outdoors they could be exposed to more sun than is healthy for them.

Prevent dehydration and sunstroke by:

- minimising exposure to hot environments by rotating outdoor work activities with indoor work activities
- taking frequent rest breaks in shaded areas
- ensuring you and your employees have access to cool drinking water
- training workers to recognise the early symptoms of heat stroke

Protect you and your employees from skin cancer by:

- wearing the appropriate clothing e.g. keep T-shirts and shirts on
- wear a hat with a brim or flap that covers the ears and the back of the neck
- Use a high factor sunscreen of at least SPF15 on any exposed skin
- Check your skin regularly for any unusual changes to moles

For more information see www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg147.pdf

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme continues to grow in popularity, with more members of the public becoming familiar with the scheme and using the information when choosing where to dine out or purchase food. There are now over 1000 Huntingdonshire businesses included on the database, with mobile food traders in the process of being added to it.

Food premises are given a rating after each routine food hygiene inspection. Areas assessed are:

- Confidence in management (provision and use of an up-to-date food safety management system, eg Safer Food Better Business; adequate staff food hygiene training)
- Structure (condition and cleanliness of premises; pest control procedures; waste management)
- Food hygiene and safety (cross contamination risks managed; hygiene habits and practices; temperature control; equipment kept in sound and clean condition)

Make sure you always display your certificate and window sticker in a prominent place to show customers how you are rated. If customers can't see your rating they may draw their own conclusions. Don't forget that you can use the distinctive FSA food hygiene rating scheme logo in your advertising, promotional material and website as long as you use your current rating. All ratings are listed on the FSA website: www.food.gov.uk

Gas Safety in Catering Premises: 2012 Project

A number of local authorities have carried out gas safety projects recently, as a result of an increasing number of incidents related to the use of unsafe gas appliances in catering premises.

In 2012 the Commercial Team carried out a small project to assess current compliance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998, specifically Regulation 35 which requires regular maintenance of gas appliances, pipework and flues.

The project identified a number of shortcomings in dutyholders' responsibilities to maintain gas appliances in their businesses, suggesting that similar issues may be found in businesses across the district. As a result the Commercial Team plans to increase the number of premises included in this project in 2013-14.

The key issues found were:

- Maintenance work about to be undertaken by a company not registered with Gas Safe
- No record of maintenance or installation being available
- 'At Risk' notices issued by a Gas Safe engineer, yet no repair works carried out
- Gas Safe engineers providing inadequate information on incorrect inspection certificates
- Dutyholders assuming that having an inspection certificate meant compliance with the law, even where failures were identified



For further information on what the law requires please visit www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cais23.pdf

Refrigeration

During the summer, refrigerators and freezers are more likely to break down because they have to work harder.

It is important to have a backup plan in place if your equipment breaks down. Daily monitoring of the temperatures allows early recognition of a problem. If you notice that one of your refrigerators is not working efficiently you should have another available with adequate space in order to store the food whilst the broken refrigerator is fixed or replaced. For more information see: www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/rshrcoldtemp.pdf

Are Your Salads and Vegetables Safe to Eat?

With summer (hopefully) around the corner, salads become more popular menu items. It is important to remember that while 'ready-to-eat', salad items grow outdoors and may be contaminated with animal faecal matter, or fertiliser.

Vegetables and fruits that have been supplied as ready-to-eat, should already have been subjected to procedures that ensure the number of bacteria has been reduced to safe levels. Leafy, root vegetables and salad items that have not been supplied as ready-to-eat will not have been subjected to controlled washing procedures. These products need to be strictly controlled using the procedures shown below:

Thorough washing of the produce

Washing will help to remove bacteria present on the surface of fruit and vegetables (including E.coli). Most of the bacteria will be in the soil attached to the produce therefore thorough washing is particularly important. Washing loose produce is particularly important as it tends to have more soil attached to it than pre-packaged fruit and vegetables. Peeling or cooking fruit and vegetables can also remove bacteria.

Good hand hygiene

Handwashing should be part of all food handlers' working routines and food business operators should ensure all staff are trained in effective handwashing techniques. There must be an adequate number of handwashing basins with hot water, soap and drying facilities available. Single-use towels or air driers are recommended for drying hands hygienically.

Prepare the salads and vegetables in a clean area

In some food premises, complete physical separation of raw and ready-to-eat food during handling and storage can be achieved by the provision of separate working areas, storage facilities and separate staff for raw and ready-to-eat preparation activities.

In food establishments where the above conditions are not achievable, the key to controlling cross-contamination lies in maintaining designated clean areas for the handling and storage of ready-to-eat foods. A designated clean area is an area that is specifically managed to ensure that harmful bacteria have been effectively excluded from all surfaces (including hands) that will come into contact with ready-to-eat foods.

Store the finished product in a covered container in the refrigerator

The clean finished product should be stored in such a way that it cannot be re-contaminated. This is normally achieved by placing it in a clean re-sealable container.

Serve the finished product hygienically

It is good practice to minimise hand contact with foods, particularly ready-to-eat foods, and many FBOs use gloves, tongs and other utensils to minimise direct hand contact.



A ban on health and safety inspections; or a simple change of priorities?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has recently issued the National Local Authority Enforcement Code for Health and Safety. The Department of Work and Pensions then issued a press release saying "Local authorities are being banned from unnecessary health and safety inspections under a new code" and went on to say that "tens of thousands of businesses would be removed from health and safety inspections which are not justified on a risk basis, including most shops and offices".

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) has challenged the statement which wrongly refers to local authorities being "banned" from inspections from 29 May. The CIEH was concerned that the statement might give the impression that shops and offices had been exempted from compliance with health and safety law; this is not the case. The statement failed to make it clear that the new arrangements would only apply to unannounced proactive inspections of premises at which there was no information to suggest any risks to employees or visitors.

The Code emphasises that inspections should only be carried out by properly trained staff and that they are prioritised properly. This is nothing new. The Council is committed to these general arrangements while ensuring that unannounced inspections are reserved for those workplaces with the highest risks. So what will this mean for workplaces in Huntingdonshire?

The highest risk workplaces have been identified according to inspection history and the variety of hazards present. They will still get unannounced inspections and we will take enforcement action for significant breaches of legal requirements, especially if they are associated with the following:

- A risk of Legionella infection
- Buried underground LPG pipework
- Vehicle movements around workplaces
- Occupational noise and dust
- Work at height
- Lifting equipment
- Open farms/animal visitor attractions
- Large scale public events, sports and leisure

We will also target activities where there is evidence of poor compliance with legal duties. These include the management of gas appliances in food businesses and the management of asbestos.

The Council has a key role to play in supporting businesses to comply with their statutory duties and this is acknowledged in the code. It also requires us to use other approaches to promote workplace safety and our officers will be carrying out more visits by appointment, especially to businesses that have not been visited for several years, if at all. We see this as an invaluable way of helping businesses start off 'on the right track'.

Shape Your Place

shapeyourplace.org is Huntingdonshire's online voice, giving local people the power to improve their neighbourhood. Bringing together the police, fire service, county, and district council, it acts as a one-stop-shop for all questions and queries you may have about your neighbourhood.

1. Find out what's been reported in your neighbourhood
2. Help improve your neighbourhood by reporting or suggesting ideas or concerns
3. Local services and neighbours then respond to your reports

Visit today, see what people are saying, and help shape **your** place.



Food Containers

Do you re-use containers for food storage in your business?

Do you use non food-grade containers to store food in your business?

If you have answered YES to either of the above questions you need to be aware of the following.

Food containers that have previously been used for the storage of raw food that need to be cooked or unprepared vegetables should not be used to store ready-to-eat food in unless you can be sure that the following takes place to both the inside and outside of the containers and also the container lids:

- They are cleaned with hot water at a temperature in excess of 60°C
- They are properly sanitised
- They are properly dried before re-use/storage
- The containers are free from damage



You should also be able to clearly distinguish between containers that are used for raw food from those used for ready-to-eat food. The Commercial Team will be visiting food premises later in the year to take environmental swabs from plastic food containers that are re-used. Make sure that your swab samples do not fail!