



## **Good food hygiene is getting easier to spot – a good food hygiene rating can help you keep your customers**

### **What does a business need to do to get the top food hygiene rating?**

All business should be able to achieve the top rating.

To achieve this, you must be able to demonstrate very good compliance with legal requirements for food hygiene.

The level of compliance will be assessed by the food safety officer when your business is inspected.

### **How is this assessed?**

Your food hygiene rating is based on the level of compliance in three areas:

- how hygienically the food is handled – safe food preparation, cooking, re-heating, cooling and storage
- the condition of the structure of the premises – cleanliness, repair, layout, lighting, ventilation and other facilities
- how food safety is managed and documented – using a system such as [Safer food, better business](#) or [Safe Catering](#)

### **How can a business demonstrate that food is handled hygienically?**

You can do this by showing, for example, that:

- there are high standards of personal hygiene of staff – e.g. clean over clothing (such as aprons), appropriate headwear, minimal jewellery and regular and appropriate hand-washing
- control measures in place to prevent cross contamination – e.g. use of separate areas for handling raw and cooked foods, proper use of colour coded chopping boards, and correct use of appropriate cleaning chemicals
- foods are stored at the correct temperature – e.g. food stored in fridges is maintained at less than 8°C and that the chill chain is protected
- foods are properly cooked, re-heated and cooled – e.g. foods are cooked to 75°C or hotter and are checked visually for signs of thorough cooking, and foods are cooled quickly and as necessary refrigerated

## **What about the condition and structure of the premises?**

There should, for example, be:

- a suitable structure which is clean and in good repair throughout the premises
- adequate natural/artificial lighting
- adequate natural/artificial ventilation
- a structure proofed against pest entry

## **What about how the business manages and documents what it does to make sure food is safe?**

It is a legal requirement for food businesses to provide documentary evidence that the food they produce is safe. This should:

- identify and show an understanding of the food safety hazards (microbiological, physical and chemical) within the business
- provide evidence that measures have been taken to effectively control these hazards and that these measures are reviewed as appropriate
- provide evidence that all food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters in order that they produce food that is safe to eat

The Food Standards Agency has produced systems to help create a documented food safety management system – [Safer food, better business](#) or [Safe Catering](#).

These are suitable for many types of food business, but not all.

You are advised to discuss which food safety management system is suitable for your business with one of our food safety officers. Contact them on 01636 650000 or email [environmental.health@nsdc.info](mailto:environmental.health@nsdc.info)

## **How can a business improve its rating?**

All business should be able to achieve the top rating.

To get the best possible rating, you should:

- Look at your last food hygiene inspection report to check that you've taken all of the actions needed to ensure that you meet legal requirements – if you can't find your last report, contact us on 01636 650000 and we will be able to give you a copy.
- At your next inspection, if you don't get the top rating and you have queries about the improvements you need to make to get a better rating, then the food safety officer will be able to give you advice.

The Food Standards Agency has a range of tools, such as Safer food, better business, that can help you manage food hygiene. You can find out more about these on the [hygiene resources page of the Agency's website](#).