



Starting a new food business

There are a number of factors to consider before starting a new food business. Although some of the more major issues are detailed here if you have any specific concerns then you should contact an Environmental Health Officer for advice.

Registration

Any new food business must register with the Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation Department at least 28 days before opening. This is a legal requirement under the Food and Drugs (Registration of Food Premises) Order, 1995. If you are taking over an existing food premises then you must notify the department of the changes within 28 days of taking over the business, although it is always beneficial to be made aware of any changes at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

It should be noted that the definition of food in the Food and Drugs (Guernsey) Law, 1970 (as amended) includes drink therefore even premises, such as bars, that only serve liquid refreshments are still subject to the registration process.

A copy of the 'Application for Registration of Food Premises' form can be downloaded from the download section of our webpage – www.gov.gg/foodbusiness - or a copy can be collected from our office.

Planning Control Services

When considering premises that you may wish to use for a food business you should consult with the Development and Planning Authority to ensure that the property is allowed to be used for this type of commercial use. The Development and Planning Authority can be contacted at Sir Charles Frossard House, La Charroterie, St Peter Port, Guernsey, GY1 1FH or on (01481) 717200.

Structure

When choosing the premises that are to be used for your food business it is very important to make sure that they:

- meet the requirements of the necessary regulations
- are suitable for the purpose of the business
- allow you to prepare food safely

It is always preferable to seek advice regarding the layout, provisions and finishes within a food premises at the earliest possible stage so that it can be ensured that the structure is suitable before the business is operational.

Training

It is recommended that any staff member that is involved with preparing or handling high risk open (unwrapped) foods should receive training to CIEH Level Two food hygiene training (or equivalent) level within three months of commencing employment. Staff with managerial responsibilities or those involved with high risk groups or processes are likely to require CIEH Level Three training (or equivalent). Other staff involved with the business (e.g. waiting staff, delivery drivers, pot wash staff etc) should be trained regarding the hygiene issues that are relevant to their duties. Upon commencing employment staff should also receive supervision to ensure that they are carrying out their duties in a suitable and hygienic manner.

Hazard Analysis

Local food hygiene legislation requires that all food businesses assess their food safety hazards and make sure they have suitable controls in place to prevent problems occurring and that they have a written record of this assessment.

Your written food safety management system must be based on the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points). This is an internationally recognised and recommended system of food safety management. It focuses on identifying the 'critical points' in a process where food safety problems (or 'hazards') could arise and putting steps in place to prevent things going wrong. This is sometimes referred to as 'controlling hazards'. Keeping records is also an important part of HACCP systems. The type of system you need to record and implement your hazard analysis will depend on the size and type of your business.

The Food Standards Agency has developed two 'Safer Food Better Business' toolkits to help small catering businesses and retail businesses demonstrate that they have a documented food safety management system based on the principles of hazard analysis critical control points. There is no obligation to use either toolkit but you may find that it is useful to formalise the practices and procedures within your business. Copies of these toolkits are available directly from the department and a small charge applies.

Licensing

If your business involves the sale of alcohol or you require an 'under 18's permit' then this is legislated by the Liquor Licensing Ordinance 2006. Whilst this department is a consultee regarding the suitability of applications, any queries or applications should be referred via the Licensing section of the Office for Home Affairs.