



Advice on Preparing Cakes at Home

Food Safety Advice for Cake Makers



This guidance is intended for anyone who plans to run a food business from home making cakes. This might include preparing food to sell in shops, at a market, or selling to other businesses or consumers.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have produced guidance which can be viewed at [Starting a food business | Food Standards Agency](#) and which can be read in conjunction with this advice.

Before you get started make sure you have considered the following:

REGISTRATION

Your home will need to be registered with the Council as a food business. This is free, and there is only one simple form to fill in, but it is a legal requirement, and you can be prosecuted if you do not register before starting.

Please visit [Register a food business](#) to complete the online registration form.

FOOD SAFETY LAW

The laws on food safety apply in the same way to a business run from home as they do to all other commercial premises. This also applies if you use a kitchen somewhere else to prepare food for example, a village or community hall kitchen.

In addition, you must also meet the requirements of the Food Information Regulations 2014. These Regulations state that all pre-packed foods must be labelled with certain information relating to ingredients, name of producer, use by dates, allergens etc.

Further advice on these requirements can be found on the FSA website.

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The Inspection

Catering from home falls under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004. These Regulations lay down the requirements relating to persons engaged in the handling of food, the methods and practices used in food businesses and structural matters in food premises.

This is broken down into three areas: Management, Hygiene and Structure.

The standards you will have to meet depend upon a number of factors such as the type and quantity of food you intend to prepare, and what else the kitchen is used for. However, the following has been produced as a guide on what is expected in most cases to meet the requirements of food law.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

This is a national scheme which rates a business based on compliance with the three areas stated above. You will receive a rating following your inspection which will be published on a website at [Food Hygiene Ratings | Food Standards Agency](#).

Your address will not be published.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

**VERY
GOOD**

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Management

FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

All food businesses are required to think about how they will prevent the food they prepare from being contaminated and ensure it is safe to eat.

Contamination falls into three categories: chemical; physical and microbiological.

Hazard	Example
Chemical contamination	Using cleaning materials that are not 'food safe' / storing chemicals around food
Microbiological contamination	Not cooking food properly / leaving high risk food (such as fresh cream) out at room temperature / storing baked goods below raw foods causing cross contamination
Physical contamination	Items falling into bakes (hair / nail varnish) / poor structure of the kitchen (peeling paint / damaged sink seals) / pest control

You are required to have a simple written system in place which shows how you will control these problems. The Food and Safety Team have produced a short document which you can use to meet these requirements, at the end of this guide. Complete the blanks in this document to form a food safety management system.

TRACEABILITY

You need to make sure that you can show where all your ingredients have come from and to where your cakes have been sold. Keep a record of your supplier details for ingredients and keep a record of your customers and dates sold.

TRAINING

The law requires you to have suitable and sufficient knowledge to ensure that you prepare food safely. You may wish to undertake a food hygiene training course to help achieve this.

Courses can be done online or in person and can be offered by many training providers.



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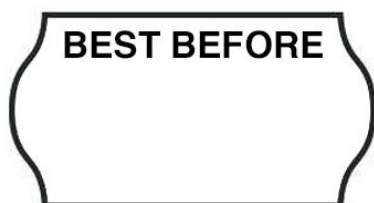


USE BY / BEST BEFORE DATES

Cakes and biscuits often contain preservatives and may have been specially packed to allow the products to have an extended shelf life.

Best before/use by dates can only be established by microbiological testing of a product.

As this is something which is costly, we suggest a short shelf life, erring on the side of caution. Whilst most cakes are generally a low-risk product, there could be mould growth and loss of cake quality. You may wish to do some trials (taste and quality) which will help you to confirm this, although you must bear in mind that you cannot see bacteria.



LABELLING

If you pre-pack food please contact [Suffolk Trading Standards](#) for labelling advice. However, if you do not pre-pack, or pre-pack for direct sale you need to provide allergen information. The 14 ingredients or products capable of causing allergies or intolerances are: cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut), crustaceans, molluscs, eggs, fish, peanuts, soybeans, milk (including lactose), nuts, celery, mustard, sesame seeds, lupin, sulphur dioxide and sulphites (at concentrations of more than 10mg/kg). Food allergy training is available online at [Food Allergy Training | Food Standards Agency](#).

NATASHA'S LAW - A food allergen labelling requirement from 1 October 2021.

The new labelling requirements for food which is "Pre-packed for Direct Sale" (PPDS) will help protect your customers by providing potentially life-saving allergen information on packaging.

What is Pre-packed for Direct Sale (PPDS)?

Pre-packed for Direct Sale (PPDS) is food which is packaged at the same place that it is offered or sold to consumers and is in this packaging before it is ordered or selected. If you wrap or pack your bakes, or you sell them elsewhere on a market stall or mobile site, these requirements will apply to you.

What is the requirement?

Any business that produces PPDS food will be required to label it with the name of the food and a full ingredients list, with allergenic ingredients emphasised within the list.

Where can I find out more?

The Food Standards Agency has produced an allergen and ingredients labelling tool. You can check if your business sells PPDS food and find out more about the different requirements for labelling, and what you need to do at [Allergen labelling | Food Standards Agency](#).

If you require more information or do not understand the requirements, please contact Suffolk Trading Standards on 0345 404 0506 or email trading_standards@suffolk.gov.uk.

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Hygiene

SINKS AND HAND WASHING

Most people do not have a separate wash hand basin in their kitchen. You must ensure that you do however have “adequate facilities for the cleaning of utensils and maintaining adequate personal hygiene”. If you are fortunate enough to be having a new kitchen, we recommend that you install a 1½ or double sink unit. One of these units can then be designated solely for hand washing.

If you only have one sink, you need to consider how you can meet this requirement.

As you will be using your sink in your household’s day to day activities, you must ensure that before you start undertaking any baking that you thoroughly clean and disinfect the sink, taps and surrounding area. It can then be used for hand washing whilst you bake.

If utensils are washed in the sink, you must ensure that again, the procedure for cleaning and sanitising the sink after use is implemented.



NOROVIRUS AND FITNESS TO WORK

You do not want to be the cause of an outbreak of norovirus or food poisoning (sickness and diarrhoea illness) at a function you have prepared cakes for, or amongst your customers.



If you suffer from sickness and/or diarrhoea you must ensure that you are symptom free (no sickness and/or diarrhoea without the help of medicine) for 48 hours before you undertake any baking or cake preparation.

Take the time to consider now what you would do if you had a large order to fulfil and became ill.

HIGH RISK BAKING

Although most cakes and biscuits are classed as low risk products, some fillings and finishes are more high risk. Fresh cream, some cheesecakes and royal icing made from raw egg whites are all high risk and require extra thought to ensure they are prepared safely.

Cakes that require refrigeration must be kept at or below 8°C at all times with limited time out of temperature control (maximum 4 hours in total).

Royal icing is traditionally produced using raw egg whites. This method can still be used however we would recommend that British Lion marked eggs (or a demonstrably equivalent comprehensive quality assurance scheme) are used, and that these products are not given to vulnerable groups (the young, elderly or pregnant). You can now purchase pasteurised dried egg whites or pasteurised royal icing mixes which remove this risk.

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FRIDGE

Any items being kept in the fridge must be stored in a way which does not cause contamination. Raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables must be stored below ready to eat foods at all times.

You must ensure that your fridge is well organised and running at a temperature of 8°C or below. Use a fridge thermometer to check the temperature regularly.

Don't overload your fridge. The efficiency of the fridge will suffer if the cooling air circulating within it cannot flow freely.

Keep the fridge door closed as much as possible. Leaving the fridge door open raises the temperature.

If you prepare a large amount of food that needs to be kept in the fridge you may need a separate fridge which is only used for your business.

CLEANING CHEMICALS

You must ensure that you have appropriate cleaning chemicals to keep the kitchen clean and sanitise surfaces and equipment. Antibacterial sprays and sanitisers should meet the British Standard (BS EN: 1276 or 13697).

Different types of disinfectants require different dilutions and contact times. These are specified and validated by the manufacturer and you must ensure you follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and contact time to ensure the product is effective.



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Making cakes is a low-risk activity, however if you prepare raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables in your home you may introduce an E. coli risk. You must take care when preparing your food at home to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

You must make sure that before you begin work that your kitchen is prepared to be your "working kitchen". This will generally mean removing anything not required in the kitchen and thoroughly cleaning and sanitising the surfaces.

E. coli bacteria and other food poisoning bacteria can grow on the smallest food source on a dirty work surface. Proper cleaning and sanitising should also remove all the bacteria from surfaces and equipment involved in food preparation.

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Structure

YOUR KITCHEN

You must ensure that the structure of your kitchen is kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition so as to avoid the risk of contamination.

Walls	need to be a smooth impervious finish (for example tiled or smooth plaster painted with a gloss or silk vinyl paint).
Floors	need to be impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material (for example, sealed lino or sealed floor tiles with waterproof joint), but also give due consideration to slip resistance.
Ceiling	need to be smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material.

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TOILETS

Toilets should not open directly into your kitchen. However, in some houses the toilet leads straight from the kitchen and cannot be avoided. In these situations, you must ensure that the toilet is well ventilated and the door to the toilet kept shut. People should not use the toilet whilst you are baking.



VENTILATION

You must ensure that you have adequate ventilation in place in the kitchen to prevent condensation, mould growth, and damage to decoration – but make sure open windows don't create a problem with flies and pests.

PEST CONTROL

You must ensure that your kitchen is always pest free. This can be achieved with regular checking of the kitchen for evidence of pests (droppings/ nibbled food), making sure that no food is left out and that the kitchen is kept in a clean condition at all times.

Cakes should be covered, with, for example, clean tea towels or mesh cake domes when cooling.

Any signs of pest activity should be treated straight away. It is a good idea to record any problems you have and what you did about the problem.

STORAGE

You need to ensure that at all stages of storage, production, and delivery the cakes that you produce are free from microbiological, chemical, and physical contamination.

Storage equipment, tins and ingredients should be kept separately from your day-to-day items wherever possible. Lidded containers are useful for preventing contaminants falling into tins/ equipment whilst it is being stored.

Food in the fridge should be wrapped/ covered to prevent items falling/ dripping on to others.



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TRANSPORT

When transporting food, it is important that it is protected from the risk of contamination e.g. pet hair, dust, dirt, and insects. If the cakes contain high risk ingredients e.g. fresh cream, they should be transported in cool boxes to maintain the temperature at 8°C or below.

WASHING MACHINES

A common query is that of having a washing machine in the kitchen. We understand that washing machines are generally in domestic kitchens. You therefore need to consider this and ensure that no washing is undertaken at the same time as you prepare food for the business.

EDIBLE DECORATIONS

The Food Standards Agency has issued guidance on the use of glitters and dusts on cakes. Only glitter or dust clearly labelled as 'edible' should be applied to food for consumption. Further advice can be found on the FSA website: [Food Standards Agency](#).



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

PETS

Having pets is absolutely fine! However, you must consider this as part of how you prevent any animal hair etc. from ending up in the food you prepare.

Pets must not be allowed in the kitchen when you are preparing food.

All surfaces/equipment that they may have come into contact with must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised prior to you beginning a baking session.

EGGS

We all know that cake makers prefer to use eggs that are at room temperature. It is best to keep eggs in the fridge and to get them out a few hours prior to baking to bring them up to room temperature. Leaving eggs out at room temperature in your kitchen exposes the eggs to a lot of changes in temperature; keeping them in the fridge keeps them at a constant temperature.

Eggs which are British Lion, laid in Britain or other egg assurance schemes marked meet a specific safety standard. We recommend that you use eggs with this marking. All supermarket eggs will be Lion/laid in Britain marked. If you shop elsewhere, you should check that the eggs have been marked or meet an equivalent standard.

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For further information please contact:

Food & Safety Team

Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils

Endeavour House

8 Russell Road

Ipswich

IP1 2BX

Tel: 0300 1234000

Email: foodsafety@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Food Safety Management System

for cake makers and general home catering



Name of business

Address from which business ordinarily operates

Postcode:

Name of business owner/food business operator

Signature of business owner/ food business operator

Date this pack was first completed

Review date

(This document should be reviewed every year and amended when necessary, particularly if you start making a new product or use new methods of preparation)

How to complete

All food businesses are required by law to have a documented food safety management system in place to show how they are producing safe food. This document can be used to meet this requirement for small scale caterers. You should examine each safety point in turn and complete the right-hand column of the table to indicate how you, as the food business operator, will ensure that the food you produce is safe. Ensure that you consider any additional hazards specific to your business, for example if you also make jam etc.

Monitoring

Some aspects of your food activities will require monitoring, for example ensuring your fridges are running at a temperature below 8°C. Where you need to record data, a simple diary will suffice.

Traceability

Where you sell products to other businesses you must be able to trace them. You should consider what labelling and record keeping is required.

Food Safety Management System

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Safety point – cross contamination

Why it is critical to food safety	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>Food handlers should wash their hands thoroughly using hot water and soap before commencing work, and after handling potentially contaminated foods such as raw eggs or raw meats/vegetables/ fruits/ salads. Bacteria and dirt can spread from the hands of food handlers to the product they are making.</p>	
<p>Clean aprons or clean clothing should be changed into prior to starting work. Dirty overalls or clothing can contaminate food with anything from bacteria to pet hairs.</p>	
<p>Hair should be tied back, and excessive jewellery should be removed prior to commencing work. Loose hair can contaminate food and jewellery can trap dirt and bacteria and could also fall into the food.</p>	
<p>Food handlers who are ill or have been unwell within the last 48 hours should not handle foods. This includes diarrhoea and vomiting illnesses, and colds/ flu. Some illnesses are contagious and can be passed on to customers through food handling. You should make sure that anyone who handles food has been symptom free for 48 hours before resuming work. (You should also have a back-up plan to ensure orders are met if you are unwell.)</p>	
<p>Where finished products are stored in the fridge, raw meats should either be stored elsewhere or on the bottom shelves of the fridge to prevent cross contamination. Cross contamination can easily occur during storage. Finished products and ingredients should be covered whilst in storage and during transit. Finished products should be boxed or wrapped in fresh, clean, non-toxic, food grade packaging.</p>	
<p>Fresh raw salad/fruit/vegetables must be washed thoroughly before use (particularly where they are to be eaten raw.) These foods are grown outside, often in the ground and could have soil/fertilizers on them. Both can contain bacteria sufficient to cause illness.</p>	

Food Safety Management System

for cake makers and general home catering



Safety point – cleaning

Why it is critical to food safety	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>Domestic pets should be removed from the food preparation area before commencing work. Animals can carry potentially dangerous bacteria which could contaminate work surfaces. Their hair/ fur can also be a source of contamination.</p>	
<p>Domestic kitchen equipment and surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised prior to use. Bacteria from raw meats or unwashed vegetables can contaminate work surfaces, fridges and equipment, which can then be spread onto the food (e.g. cakes) being prepared.</p>	
<p>Specify the type of cleaning chemicals used. Reusable cloths should be changed regularly and washed at a hot temperature (boil washed). Alternatively single use, disposable cloths may be used. Bacteria can easily survive and spread from cleaning cloths onto food or work surfaces.</p>	
<p>Check your working area for anything (particularly very small items) that could drop into your products. Food could become physically contaminated, posing a risk to customers.</p>	
<p>Fridge shelves must be cleaned regularly because they can become contaminated with bacteria. This can easily pass onto hands and other products stored in the fridge.</p>	
<p>The kitchen must be generally clean and tidy, with no evidence of pests such as rodents or insects. Pests can contaminate foods and ingredients. Attention should be paid to cupboards where dry goods such as flour are stored, as these foods may attract pests.</p>	

Safety point – cooking and temperature control

Why it is critical to food safety	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>Specify the different types of food that you make.</p>	
<p>Raw egg products, such as some chocolate mousses and cheesecakes should be avoided (unless you can demonstrate how you are making them safely). Products made with uncooked or lightly cooked eggs can carry Salmonella bacteria which can cause food poisoning unless made with Lion Marked or Laid in Britain or equivalent assured branded eggs.</p>	
<p>Ingredients requiring chilled storage (such as dairy items) must be kept in the fridge (You should have some method of being able to monitor the temperature of your fridges to ensure they are 8°C or colder).</p>	
<p>Bacteria can survive and grow in foods of this type if they are not properly refrigerated. This then has the potential to cause food poisoning. Indicate here how often you will check your fridge temperature. Will you write the temperatures down?</p>	



Safety point – cooking and temperature control

Why it is critical to food safety	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>If you are working on a market stall and have high risk products that require refrigeration (such as fresh cream cakes or cheesecakes) you must have suitable refrigeration available to store them. This could include cool boxes with ice packs or portable refrigerators. How will you check that the temperature is ok?</p>	
<p>High risk foods can be kept unrefrigerated for a single period of 4 hours during service. If you are relying on this exemption, you must be able to demonstrate what time the food was first put out.</p>	
<p>If you are working on a market stall and supply open foods, such as slices of cake that are not pre-wrapped, you must take along handwashing facilities and cleaning materials (as necessary). Facilities for hand washing will enable personal hygiene to be maintained. Antibacterial hand gels alone are not sufficient.</p>	

Food Safety Management System

for cake makers and general home catering



Safety point – cooking and temperature control

Why it is critical to food safety	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>Catering premises should be using good quality, fresh, Grade A eggs. Lion marked/ laid in Britain eggs are from flocks that have been vaccinated against Salmonella and are recommended. Ungraded eggs can be from flocks at risk of avian diseases and Salmonella which can contaminate eggs and the foods produced with them.</p>	
<p>Allergenic products should be used in specific batches and care should be taken to avoid contaminating other foods. Some people have severe allergic reactions to allergens and cross contamination must be avoided.</p>	
<p>Where foods are prepared in large quantities and then stored, you should have some method of being able to identify their shelf life. This includes foods placed in the freezer. Usual methods would include using date labels.</p>	
<p>Stock rotation will ensure that foods beyond their use by date are not consumed. Follow the FIFO rule - first in first out.</p>	