

Food Safety newsletter 2011

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Food hygiene rating scheme



More than 170 local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have now joined the Food Standards Agency Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. At present the scheme is voluntary but the Lord Young review is looking at making it mandatory by 2012 so every Local Authority has to run the scheme and every business has to display their rating.

Your risk rating is based on the findings at the time of the inspection so the better the inspection the better your published rating will be.

If you are planning on going on holiday you must ensure the person left in charge understands the paperwork as a fully documented and operating food safety management system is required at all times.

If you do not have one when the inspector calls then you will only be able to achieve 1 out of 5 on the hygiene scheme. This will be indicated on the public website so you need to get it right on the first visit and **do not** wait for us to tell you what to do. The Food Standards Agency is considering in the longer term, the possibility of charging for revisits.

A Middlesbrough takeaway owner was fined for claiming his business had been awarded three stars for good hygiene standards when he had only been awarded one. He was fined £2,500 and ordered to pay costs of £1,199.

Is this your business?



This picture was taken of a fridge where they had a serious rat problem due to the accumulation of rubbish. It shows the lengths rodents will go to, to get to a food source. This is the inside of a refrigerator with a hole made by a rodent.

Rodents need: Food, Water & Shelter.
Make it difficult for rats to access food including food waste and it will reduce the rat population.

As a Food Business you must:

- have procedures in place to control pests and ensure your premises are protected against pests, and
- design and manage your refuse store in such a way as to allow it to be kept clean, and to protect against access by pests.



Legal action

Indian restaurant in Reigate shut down by EHO's

A Reigate restaurant was fined more than £5,000 after a routine environmental health inspection found rat droppings in its kitchen.

EHO's uncovered a number of food hygiene offences during an inspection last year. The council took immediate action to enforce thorough cleaning of the premises. The restaurant was inspected again the following day, when the situation appeared to be improving.

However, on another unannounced visit later that week, officers were not satisfied with the progress, and the restaurant was immediately closed down using the council's emergency powers. This action was confirmed by the courts, after which, the restaurant was only allowed to re-open following works approved by the council.

The restaurant owner pleaded guilty to three offences under food hygiene regulations on 10 December. He was fined £5,280 which included £2,265 awarded to the council in costs and a £15 victim surcharge.

The three offences under the food hygiene regulations were not keeping the food premises clean and maintained in good repair and condition, not having adequate procedures in place to control pests and failing to notify the council of a change of ownership of the business.



Chinese restaurant in Redhill fined

The restaurant owner was found guilty after failing to appear at court to face two food hygiene charges. He was fined £2,180 in his absence for four offences at Redhill magistrate's court in May, plus a £15 victim surcharge.

EHOs made a routine inspection of the premises in March 2009. The owner was served with two hygiene improvement notices for inadequate cleaning and lack of a food safety management system. But a follow-up inspection in May revealed that no action had been taken.

Reigate Public House shut down due to cockroach infestation

On 7 September 2011, the Food and Safety Team received a complaint from a member of the public who saw a cockroach in the bar of a Reigate Public House. The EHO visited and found the cockroaches running up the walls in the kitchen.



As cockroaches carry harmful bacteria, a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice was issued shutting the kitchen immediately. The EHOs went to the Magistrates court. The magistrates confirm the

EHO's had taken the correct action and issued a Prohibition Order.

The Pub Company did have a pest control contractor treating the cockroaches but the treatment was not being carried out satisfactorily and the problem was getting worse. After the correct treatment, the EHO was able to lift the order on 12 September allowing the kitchen to re-open.

Reigate takeaway due in court for food hygiene and health & safety offences

The directors of a takeaway are due in court in December 2011 for non compliance with food safety law, health & safety law and knowingly providing false or misleading information to an authorised officer.

New guidance that affects you

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have issued guidance to clarify the steps that food businesses need to take to control the risk of contamination from E.coli O157.

Serious outbreaks of E.coli in Scotland in 1996 and Wales in 2005 resulted in serious illness in some individuals and, in a few cases, death. These outbreaks were attributed to cross-contamination arising from the poor handling of food. Some of the key measures highlighted in the guidance to control E.coli are:

- identification of separate work areas, surfaces and equipment for raw and ready-to-eat food
- use of separate complex equipment, such as vacuum-packing machines, slicers and mincers for raw and ready-to-eat food
- handwashing should be carried out using a recognised technique. Anti-bacterial gels must not be used instead of thorough handwashing
- disinfectants and sanitisers must meet officially recognised standards and should be used as instructed by the manufacturer.



The full guidance can be viewed on the FSA's website: www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes/hygguid/ecoliguide.

The FSA have also produced a DVD for those working in butchers shops to encourage them to think about the type of food safety risks they face in their business and how they should control them. It features three butchers talking about the steps they have taken to reduce food safety risks.



Are you using cling film correctly?

Not all cling films or plastic containers can be safely used in microwave ovens, so always read the manufacturer's instructions. Some may cause the transfer of plasticisers into the food, others may simply melt.

Any container which is specifically designed for microwave use should be safe, but if it doesn't say it is microwavable then you should not use it.

Registering your business is getting easier

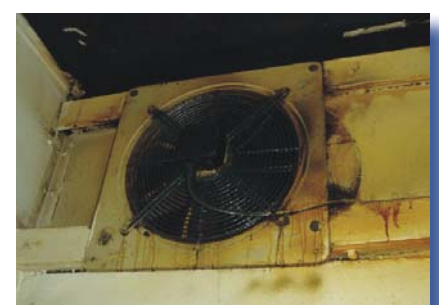
Are you correctly registered with Environmental Health? If you run a business that stores, sells, distributes or prepares food then you must register with us.

- **Food includes** bottles/tins of drink, alcohol, crisps, sweets etc.
- **A food business is** any undertaking selling or handling food, whether or not it is wrapped and regardless of whether it is being done for charity or is seasonal etc. A food business includes restaurants, hotels, cafes, shops, butchers shops, supermarkets, staff canteens, warehouses, guest houses, private member clubs, voluntary luncheon clubs, day centres, childminders, care homes, delivery vehicles, market and other stalls, vending machines, etc.

The registration form is on our website which you can print out and return by post or you can now complete the form on our website: www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk. Search for 'food registration'.

Ventilation

We often come across greasy ventilation with filters missing. As well as not complying with food safety and fire safety laws you will not be complying with your insurance policy or the requirement to clean and maintain your ventilation system. Ventilation systems going up in flames are quite common and if you haven't got evidence of proper cleaning, you probably aren't insured.



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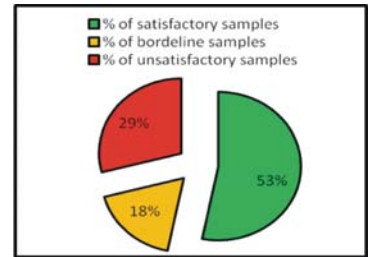
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Sampling 2009/10

Many of you will know the Food and Safety Team take food samples, cloths and swabs for microbiological examination. From April 2009 and March 2010 we took 79 samples. Out of 79 samples taken 42 were found to be satisfactory, 14 were found to be acceptable but borderline and 23 found to be unsatisfactory. No samples were found to be potentially hazardous where urgent action would need to be taken.



The borderline and unsatisfactory samples were mainly due to the high aerobic colony count which indicates that the levels of general micro-organisms on the surfaces are too high. These micro-organisms will transfer to/from hands and then onto food through handling and on to surfaces in contact with food. The results are used as an indicator of levels of hygiene. Where bacteria are present there is a high risk of disease-causing bacteria (pathogens such as E.coli) also being present.

To avoid more unsatisfactory statistics you need to take note of the following:

- Is the sanitiser in use suitable for its purpose? yes / no
- Are the dilution rates correct? yes / no
- Is the contact time observed correctly? yes / no
- Are the cleaning cloths changed throughout the preparation period? yes / no
- Could disposable towels/cloths be used? yes / no
- Can you avoid touching the wash basin taps after washing hands? It is good practice to wash hands and dry them thoroughly and then turn off the tap(s) using the same paper towel used for drying. This prevents touching of the taps. yes / no
- When hand washing it is vitally important to dry hands very thoroughly to remove more bacteria and also to remove moisture which is needed for bacteria multiply in numbers.

Baby boomers gambling with food safety

People over the age of 60 are more likely to take risks with 'use by' dates than younger people, according to new research published by the Food Standards Agency. A recent sharp rise in the number of people taken ill with Listeria has seen more older people affected.

Eating food beyond its 'use by' date increases the risk of food poisoning from listeria, which can be life-threatening for this age group. A factsheet can be downloaded from the Food Standards Agency website: www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/listeriafactsheet0708.pdf

How you can help minimising the risk of Listeria

- keep your refrigerator set at 5°C or below
- foods taken out of chilled storage should be eaten within four hours – after that you should throw the food away
- maintain temperature control from cooking until serving – keep hot food above 63°C and cold food below 8°C
- do not use/sell food after its 'use by' date (it is an offence to sell food after a use by date)
- use opened foods within two days, unless the manufacturer's instructions state otherwise.