

Good food hygiene is 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 get the top rating of 5.

To get 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 you manage what you do to make sure food is safe and so that the officer can be confident standards will be maintained in the future

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 – for example, clean over clothing (such as aprons), and regular and appropriate hand-washing
- control measures are in place to prevent cross contamination – for example, use of separate areas and equipment for handling and preparing raw and cooked foods, and correct use of appropriate cleaning chemicals
- foods are stored at the correct temperature – for example, 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 – for example, foods are cooked to 75°C or hotter and are checked visually for signs of thorough cooking, and foods are cooled quickly to 8°C or below and kept at a safe temperature until used

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 and ventilation
- adequate proofing against pest entry
- adequate facilities including: wash basins, toilet(s) and, where necessary, sink(s)

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

It is a legal requirement for most 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 – [\[Safer food better business\]](#)
These are suitable for many types of food business, but not all.

You are advised to discuss what is suitable for your business with one of our food safety officers [\[include contact details\]](#).

How can a business improve its rating?

All businesses should be able to get the top rating.

To help get this you should:

- look at your last food hygiene inspection report to check that you've taken all of the actions needed to meet legal requirements - if you can't find your last report, contact us at [\[include contact details\]](#) and we will be able to give you a copy
- continue making regular routine checks to ensure hygiene standards are being maintained and staff understand and are following the rules, and promptly arrange for any repairs or maintenance of the premises or equipment
- ensure your documented food safety management system is kept up to date and all necessary records and checks completed and recorded
- 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 that can help you manage food hygiene. You can find out more about these on the [hygiene resources page of the FSA's website](#).

Making sure the scheme is fair

To make sure the scheme is fair it includes a number of safeguards.

You can **appeal** if you think your hygiene rating is wrong – in other words it does not reflect the hygiene standards found at the time of your inspection or you believe the rating criteria were not applied correctly when producing your food hygiene rating. You must lodge your appeal with your local authority within 21 days – including weekends and bank holidays - of being notified of your rating. You'll need to make your appeal in writing on the prescribed form. You can download the form [[Include a link to your appeal form](#)], complete it and send that to us.

You can **submit a 'right to reply'** if you've improved hygiene standards since your inspection, or if there were unusual circumstances at the time of the inspection and you want to explain this to your customers. You can include your comments in an email or letter or you can download and complete this form [[Include a link to your right to reply form](#)] and send that to us. We will publish your comments alongside your rating at food.gov.uk/ratings

You can **ask for re-inspection** to get a new rating if you make the improvements that the food safety officer told you about at your last inspection. You'll need to do this on the prescribed form and meet certain conditions listed on the form. You can download the form [[Include a link to your request for re-visit form](#)] and complete. If all the conditions are met the food safety officer will re-assess hygiene standards within 3 months of receiving your request and give you a new rating – this could go up but it could stay the same or it could go down.

Displaying your rating



The Welsh Government's Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act 2013 establishes a mandatory requirement for the display of a rating sticker. Those businesses who receive a 'new' FHRs sticker that includes the Welsh Government logo from 28 November 2013 will have to display the sticker in a prominent place – such as the front door or window – at all customer

entrances and provide information on the rating verbally to customers if asked. This immediately reassures them that your business takes food hygiene seriously. If you have not yet received your 'new' sticker you can continue to display your current one. If you've lost, damaged or misplaced your sticker, contact us and we can provide you with a new one.

It's what customers look for – Food Standards Agency research has shown that people are becoming more aware of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and are actively looking for hygiene rating stickers when they are out and about.

There's a profit to be made – food businesses are reporting that a higher food hygiene rating has had a positive impact on their business. This includes greater

customer confidence, better reputation among customers and, most importantly, more customers.

There are some other straightforward, cost effective tips to help you get the most out of your hygiene rating in the 'How to' guide at food.gov.uk/business-toolkit-fhrs This includes downloadable images showing your rating that can be easily included in menus, promotional materials and on your website.