

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - Business Focus

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.

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), appropriate headwear, minimal jewellery 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 called Safer food better business. These are suitable for many types of food business, but not all.

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 and we will be able to give you a copy or look up on [Rate my Place](#) .
- 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. You must lodge your appeal with your local authority within 14 days- including weekends and bank holiday- of being told what your hygiene rating is. You'll need to make your appeal in writing. You can do this by sending us an email or a letter or we will send you a form to complete and return.

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 we will send you a form to complete and return. 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 to hygiene standards that the food safety officer told you about at your last inspection. You'll need to do this in writing and supply evidence of the improvements made. You can make your request by email or letter or we will send you a form to complete and return. The food safety officer will re-assess hygiene standards and give you a new rating -this could go up but it could stay the same or it could go down.

Displaying your rating is good for business



To make your rating good for business, make sure you display your rating sticker and put it in a place where your customers can easily see it, for example, in a window or on the door. This immediately reassures them that your business takes food hygiene seriously. 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- an increasing number of food businesses are displaying their hygiene rating stickers and more than a third of them say that this is having a positive impact. 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 [Business toolkit for promoting good food hygiene](#). This includes downloadable images showing your rating that can be easily included in menus, promotional materials and on your website.