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GUIDANCE NOTE No GN.C7

CATERING AT OUTDOOR EVENTS

Introduction

This Guidance Note is for managing food safety at outdoor events. It aims to provide guidance to help food business operators comply with the requirements of food safety legislation and improve standards to provide safe and high quality food.

This advice covers all events occurring outdoors: trade shows, promotional events, agricultural fairs, community fairs, carnivals, street events, festivals, sporting events and other events that may use outdoor catering such as weddings.

Although dealing primarily with food hygiene, some health and safety guidance will be included.

Catering at an outdoor event or from mobile facilities is a high risk activity and will always carry with it the possibility of causing food poisoning to a large number of people. There is a general requirement in the hygiene legislation for all food businesses to be operated in a hygienic manner.

The food business operator must:

- Make sure food is supplied, prepared and sold in a hygienic way
- Have in place a documented food safety management system such as “Safer Food Better Business”, which identifies food safety hazards, which steps are critical for food safety and ensures safety controls are in place, maintained and reviewed. This can be found at www.food.gov.uk/SFBB

Remember:

- Your food business and all those attending the event must be registered with the local authority where your unit is based, for Croydon, click on this link [Food business registration | Croydon Council](#)
- Selling alcohol - check with the licensing officer at licensing@croydon.gov.uk
- If someone asks about an allergy - be honest, do not guess about ingredients. You must know which allergens are in your food, either write it down in a matrix and highlight it on your menus, or you must be able to tell the customer which allergens the food contains.
- Buy from reputable suppliers and keep a record.
- Food and drink must be described fairly.
- Make sure you risk assess and do a fire risk assessment.
- Have your own fire extinguisher and fire blanket available on site

Ask yourself:

- Do you provide healthier options?
- Are you eco-friendly?
- Am I prepared for the effects of extreme weather – heatwave, heavy rain/thunderstorms?
- If you make any claims (organic, homemade, Halal, Gluten free) can these be proven - the customer must not be misled.

Design and structure

- All stalls/vehicles should be designed and constructed to protect food from risk of contamination.
- Floors in mobile units should be of smooth, impervious and non-slip material and preferably covered to the wall fixtures
- Stalls should be screened at the sides and back to prevent risk of contamination and pests entering the food area
- Tent/marquees should be of cleanable materials or the kitchen/preparation areas should be provided with washable wall linings
- Frequently used walkways should be effectively weatherproofed
- Lighting levels within the marquees must be adequate

Layout

- Allow adequate space for preparation, cooking, storage and wash-up
- Ensure that refrigerated storage vehicles and trailers are easily accessible
- Dirty crockery and dirty laundry should not be carried through food handling areas
- Make sure you find out what the arrangements are for the collection and removal of food waste and other refuse. Is there recycling on site
- Check for any tripping and safety hazards

Services

Outdoor events take place in a wide variety of sites and locations. At some sites it may be possible to provide essential services such as water, drainage and electricity, others may not. You need to find out the service arrangements BEFORE arriving on site.

Water supply

- You must have an adequate supply of clean and wholesome water provided (ideally from the mains). Make sure you know where to obtain fresh water – there is normally a water supply point on site.
- If water containers are used they must be cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis

Drainage

- Waste water from sinks and wash hand basins should be discharged into foul water system or into suitable containers wherever possible and not directly onto the ground

Equipment

- All equipment should readily cleanable
- Preparation surfaces and tables must have smooth, impervious surfaces, stainless steel or formica laminate surfaces are suitable

Washing facilities

- Suitable and sufficient wash hand basins must be provided and accessible for use by food handlers. Supplies of soap and means of hygienic hand drying must be available at each basin
- Suitable sinks must be provided for food preparation and for equipment washing
- A constant supply of hot water should be provided at the sink(s) and wash hand basin
- The use of plastic bowls as sinks or wash hand basins is not recommended

Toilets

- Make sure you know the location of the toilets on site.
- If you provide your own toilet facilities then these must be maintained in a clean condition and have at least one wash hand basin with hot and cold water, soap and towels

Temperature control

Effective temperature control and storage is one of the most important safeguards for controlling the growth of food poisoning organisms. You should consider the following points:

- High-risk products must be kept at or below 8°C or above 63°C
- Ideally food should be prepared immediately before service, if this is not possible then the food should be prepared in small batches and kept at the correct temperature
- All should have sufficient fridge space for the storage of high-risk foods or the use of commercial cool boxes with eutectic freezer blocks. Keep a check of the temperatures in your food management diary
- Cooked food should reach over 75°C. Take particular care when barbecuing as cooking temperatures can be less predictable. Use a probe thermometer and disinfect between uses
- Hot food displayed for sale/service should be kept above 63°C
- Thermometers with probes should be used to check temperatures (all probes should be disinfected after use)
- Keep food covered when stored in the fridge
- Vehicles used for transporting high-risk food should be refrigerated

Cross-contamination

One of the main risks facing event and mobile catering is to protect food from contamination. This is an important legal requirement:

- Food preparation areas/chopping boards should be cleaned/disinfected after use
- Raw and cooked food should be kept separate at all times, raw food should always be stored below cooked food, ideally separate refrigerators should be used
- Clean sinks after washing/preparing vegetables and raw food
- Avoid touching food - use tongs etc
- All equipment including knives and containers should be cleaned and disinfected after use

- Disinfect all cloths regularly and replace as soon as they become worn/damaged. The use of disposable cloths and paper towels is recommended
- Food must not be stored on the ground and must be kept away from risk of contamination
- Food may be kept at a suggested height of 45cm (18 inches) above ground and protected from the weather
- Equipment/utensils/crockery should be stored above ground, covered and kept free from contamination
- Protect food from pests (insects, birds and rodents)

Cleaning

- Adequate supplies of approved disinfectants or sanitising agents should be used for the regular disinfection of equipment and work surfaces. Sanitisers should meet the BS standard BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697
- Hazardous substances such as cleaning materials must be used and stored in a safe manner
- Hot and cold water (or water at a suitably mixed temperature) must be available at sinks and basins and must be available before food preparation begins

Transporting food

- Vehicles and storage areas should be of sound construction, kept in good repair and able to be cleaned

Personal hygiene

High standards of personal hygiene are essential. You must provide a separate hand wash basin to a washing up sink. They must be serviced with hot and cold or mixed water, with soap and hand drying facilities available.

The following rules on personal hygiene must be followed:

- Hand washing must be carried out:
 - Before starting work,
 - After handling any raw foods.
 - After using the toilet,
 - After a break
 - After sneezing, coughing, etc
- All cuts or boils should be covered with a waterproof plaster preferably coloured
- Jewellery and nail varnish should not be worn. Hair should be covered and tied back
- Clean, washable, over-clothing must be worn at all times when handling food
- Outdoor clothing must be stored away from any food area
- Any food handler who knows, or suspects, they are suffering from symptoms of food poisoning must notify their employer or manager and refrain from working with food. A minimum of 48 hours should be left between the last symptoms and handling food.

Food safety training

Event catering is a high-risk activity with potential for food poisoning. Food handlers must be trained to a level appropriate to their work. It is recommended that any person who handles, prepares or cooks high-risk food have a Level 2 Certificate in food safety and catering. Managers should have Level 3. Several organisations approve these courses e.g. the Royal Society of Health info@rsph.org.uk and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health www.CIEH.org.uk or search online.

First aid

A first aid-kit including washable (preferably coloured) plasters must be provided

Refuse

- There must be an adequate supply of suitable refuse containers provided
- Plastic sacks must be tied securely and stored to prevent attraction of pests

Electrical Supply

- Permanent mains or generator electricity should be provided for lighting/power where practicable
- Electrical appliances must be protected from weather, physical damage and interference
- Appliances must be protected by residual current circuit breakers
- Cables and flexes must be positioned so as not to cause a tripping hazard
- Generators must be placed in a safe position, be protected from interference and to reduce noise and fume nuisance to others
- A competent electrician should carry out all electrical work on mobile vehicles and catering trailers

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

- Gas appliances should be fitted and tested by a competent person
- LPG cylinders should be in a fire-resisting lockable compartment (with ½ hour fire resistance). Compartments must have adequate ventilation at high and low levels
- Suitable signs indicating "Caution - LPG" and "Highly Flammable" should be displayed
- Cylinders should be fitted with automatic cut-off valves & be protected from tampering
- All cylinders should be kept away from heat and ignition sources
- All pipes and fittings should be as short as possible with appropriate screw or compression fittings (not slip-on fittings)
- All pipes should be protected from abrasion or mechanical damage
- All pipes should be renewed every two years
- All gas appliances must be fitted with a flame failure device and adequately ventilated.
- All fryers should be fitted with an automatic high temperature-limiting device (operates at a fat temperature of 250°C or lower)

Checklists

Use the checklists below to make sure you have covered the key hygiene rules.

Outdoor and Mobile Catering Food Safety Checklist

We have provided the checklist below to help you identify any hazards and for you to put the necessary controls in place to make sure that the food is safe to eat. This is specifically designed for caterers and food business operators attending outdoor events. Please take your completed checklist with you to the event.

If you answer 'no' to any of these questions, then there is a potential problem which will increase risks of something going wrong. Most of these are common sense practices, which you have probably been following for years.

Setting up your stall

Food safety management

	Yes	No
Do you have documentation on the food safety controls you adopt to ensure the food you prepare is safe to eat?		
Do you keep monitoring record sheets, training records, etc?		
Are these available for inspection on your trailer/stall?		

Storage

	Yes	No
Are all food storage areas under cover and protected from contamination?		
Are they clean and free from pests?		
Do you have enough refrigeration? Does it work properly?		
Is good stock rotation carried out, and are stocks within their expiry dates?		
If you use raw and cooked foods are they adequately separated during storage?		
Are high-risk foods (e.g. cooked rice) stored under refrigeration below 8°C?		

Food preparation and service areas

	Yes	No
Have you got enough proper washable floor coverings for the food preparation areas?		
Do you have precautions have you to keep mud out of the stall in wet weather?		
Are all worktops and tables sealed or covered with an impervious, washable material?		
Have you got enough preparation work top space?		
Have you got enough wash hand basins?		
Are they supplied with hot and cold water, soap and paper towels?		
Have you got sinks which are large enough to wash food and equipment in (including bulky items)?		
Are they supplied with hot and cold water?		

If there is no mains drainage have you made hygienic provision for the disposal of waste water, e.g. waste pipe from sink to waste water carrier?		
Have you got enough fresh water containers?		
Are they clean and have they got caps or lids?		
Have you got a supply of hot water reserved for washing up and hand washing?		
Have you got adequate natural/artificial lighting, particularly for food preparation and service?		
Is all your food equipment in good repair?		
Are any repairs outstanding since your last event?		

Cleaning

	Yes	No
Is your stall/vehicle clean? Can it be kept clean? Have you allowed time for thorough cleaning of the vehicle/stall equipment between events?		
Do you have a cleaning schedule to ensure all areas are kept clean?		
Have you an ample supply of clean cloths and a 'food-safe' disinfectant/sanitiser to clean food and hand contact surfaces?		
Are the cleaning chemicals stored away from food?		
Do you and your staff operate a 'clean-as-you-go' procedure?		
Are you using clean cloths and a 'food-safe' disinfectant/sanitiser to clean food contact surfaces?		

Contamination

	Yes	No
Can food be protected from contamination at all times?		
Is the unit free from pests, and is open food protected from flying insects?		

Food waste

	Yes	No
Have you got proper bins with lids for food and other waste and proper waste disposal arrangements?		
Do you have arrangements for the collection and disposal of waste oil cooking.		

Staff

	Yes	No
Are all your food handlers trained, supervised or given instruction to ensure food safety?		
Have you any untrained, casual staff carrying out high risk food preparation?		
Do your staff display a good standard of personal hygiene and wear clean over-clothing?		
Have you a good supply of clean overalls/aprons?		

Are your staff aware that they should not handle food if suffering from certain illnesses?		
Have you a first aid box with blue waterproof plasters?		

Safe food practices during the event

Preparation

	Yes	No
Do your staff always wash their hands before preparing food, and after handling raw food?		
Are separate utensils used for raw and cooked food, e.g. tongs, knives, etc?		
Do you use separate chopping boards for raw and cooked food?		
If you answered 'no' to the previous question, are they properly disinfected between contact with raw and cooked foods?		

Cooking

	Yes	No
Is all frozen meat and poultry thoroughly thawed before cooking?		
Is all meat and poultry cooked until it is piping hot (above 75°C and the juices run clear)?		
Are cooked and part-cooked food separated during cooking?		

Reheating food

	Yes	No
Is all food reheated to above 75°C?		
Do you only reheat food once?		

Service of food

	Yes	No
Is food cooked and served straight away?		
If 'no' is it held at 63°C or above until served?		
Once cooked, is food protected from contact with raw food and foreign bodies?		

Hand washing

	Yes	No
Are your staff washing their hands regularly, e.g. on entering the unit, especially after visiting the toilets, handling raw food, etc?		

Registration details	Name
Name of Local Authority registered with e.g.Croydon, Lambeth	

Company details	
Company name :	
Company Address:	

Directors name:

Owners name:

Tel Number:

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Remember - food poisoning is preventable you can help avoid it by carrying out these checks.