

Changes to UK Food Safety Legislation in 2006

Food safety legislation in the UK will change from 1st January 2006. The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2005 will apply to **all** food businesses. These come into force on 1st January 2006.

Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (Article 5) states that:

'Food business operators shall put into place, implement and maintain a permanent procedure based on the principles of hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP). The HACCP principles referred to above consist of the following:

- **Identifying any hazards** that must be prevented, eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels
- Identifying the **critical control points** at the step or steps at which control is essential to prevent or eliminate a hazard or to reduce it to acceptable levels
- Establishing **critical limits** at critical control points that separate acceptability from unacceptability for the prevention, elimination or reduction of identified hazards
- Establishing and implementing effective **monitoring procedures** at critical control points
- Establishing **corrective actions** when monitoring indicates that a critical control point is not under control
- Establishing procedures, which shall be carried out regularly, to **verify** that the measures outlined in the above paragraphs are working effectively
- Establishing **documents and records** commensurate with the nature and size of the food business to demonstrate the effective application of the measures outlined in the above paragraphs.

When any modification is made in the product, process, or any step, food business operators shall review the procedure and make the necessary changes to it'.

No matter what the nature or size of the food business, owners will have to ensure that they have a sound food safety management system in place.

What About Training?

Chapter XII of Regulation No 852/2004 states that food business operators are to ensure that:

- food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activity;
- those responsible for the development and maintenance of the procedure referred to in Article 5 (1) of the Regulation or for the operation of relevant guides have received adequate training in the application of the HACCP principles, and

- there is compliance with any requirement of national law concerning training programmes for persons working in certain food sectors'.

Managers who are responsible for maintaining a food safety management system will require adequate training to enable them to carry out this statutory requirement.

The Food Standards Agency, Learning and Skills Council, Qualification and Curriculum Authority, together with the examination bodies are preparing the framework for a new set of food safety qualifications for 2006. Also involved is the new Sector Skills Council for the Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism Industry - People 1st.

What do I Have to Do?

If you are the owner of a food business you do not have to do anything at the moment EXCEPT to ensure you comply with the provisions of The Food Safety Act 1990 and regulations such as The Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995.

When the EU Regulations do become UK law then it will be the responsibility of owners of food businesses to ensure that they comply with them.

Guidance will be available from The Food Standards Agency or this Council's Food Safety Team. Keep an eye out for updates on this website, the Food Standards Agency website or in trade magazines.

What is the Food Standards Agency doing?

The FSA is currently piloting a Safer Food, Better Business toolkit to help small catering businesses demonstrate that they have a documented food safety management system based on the principles of hazard analysis critical control points. This toolkit consists of practical food hygiene information centred on the Agency's four C's of its Food Hygiene Campaign. These are:

- Cleaning
- Cooking
- Chilling
- Cross Contamination.

In the toolkit there will also be a diary to enable managers to record relevant information.

New Codes of Practice and Guidance notes will be produced for enforcement officers by the Agency in October 2006. Industry guides will be produced by industry organisations.