



The Refrigeration Experts

Foster Refrigerator • White Paper

# HACCP

What You Need  
to Know

How to ensure your business  
meets food safety requirements





**In January 2006, a new food hygiene regulation act was passed stating all UK food and drink businesses must put in place a 'Food Safety Management System' (FSMS) based on HACCP principles.**

This applies to all food businesses large and small including caterers, primary producers (such as farmers), manufacturers, distributors and retailers.

The legislation was designed to clearly set out the duty of such businesses to produce food safely, with the key aim of reducing the number of cases of food poisoning.

This document will give you an overview of what HACCP is and how it can help protect your customers and your business from food safety hazards.

## What is HACCP?

HACCP stands for 'Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points'. It is an internationally recognised and recommended system of food safety management. It focuses on identifying the 'critical points' in a process where food safety problems (or 'hazards') could arise and putting steps in place to prevent things going wrong. Keeping records is also an important part of a HACCP system.

### The seven principles of HACCP are:

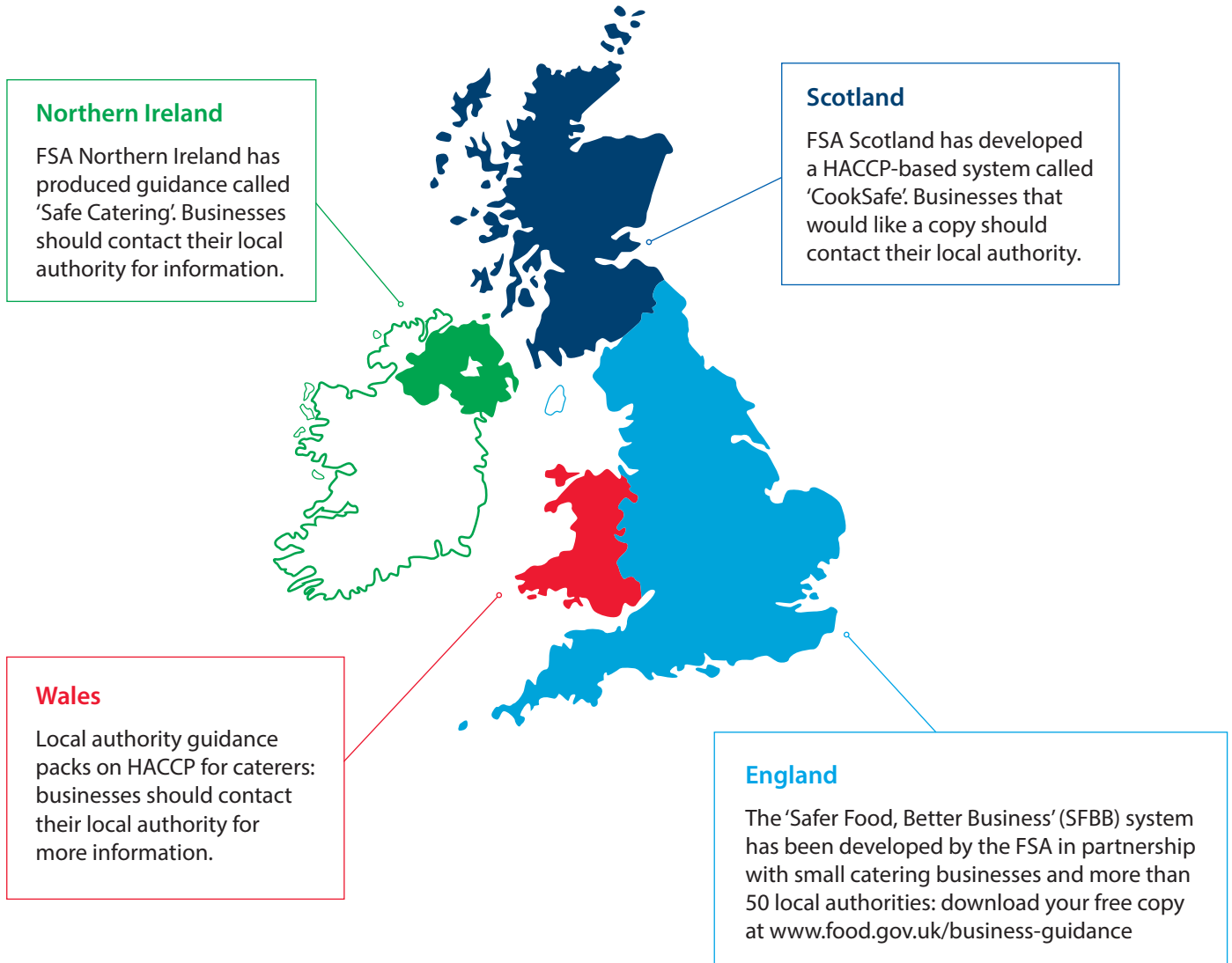
- 1. Conduct a hazard analysis**
- 2. Determine the Critical Control Points (CCP)**
- 3. Establish critical limits**
- 4. Establish a system to monitor control of the CCP**
- 5. Establish corrective action**
- 6. Establish procedures for verification to confirm the system is working**
- 7. Establish documentation**



# How are catering businesses affected by the regulations?

Catering businesses need to have a FSMS based on the principles of HACCP. They must be able to show what they do to make food safely and also ensure they keep accurate written records.

Many small catering businesses only need to stick to a simple system because the preventative methods and requirements for record keeping are commensurate with the size of the business. The legislation provides flexibility, requiring procedures based on the principles of HACCP and integration of these procedures with documentation and record keeping.



## How should small catering businesses set up an FSMS?

Information packs are available to small catering businesses throughout the UK via their local authorities. These have been produced by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and by local authorities in Wales.

Catering businesses do not have to use any particular pack or model, but they must make sure they have a FSMS that is suitable for their business. Some businesses will already have a suitable system, so they will not need to introduce a new one.

The following is an overview of 'Safer Food, Better Business' (SFBB), produced by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

Businesses in other regions will need to contact their local authority for details of the pack specific to their region, but the SFBB model gives a good understanding of the systems and procedures required.

## Safer Food, Better Business

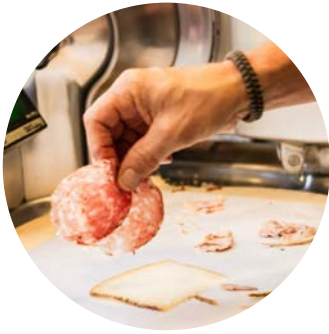
This pack was developed to help small catering businesses such as restaurants, cafés and takeaways, comply with the regulations that came into effect in 2006. Most food businesses will already have in place HACCP or food safety regulations based on common sense anyway; this system simply ensures all businesses have hazard controls covering every area of possible risk and that records are kept to prove this is the case.

SFBB consists of a series of 'Safe Method Fact Sheets' based on cooking, chilling, cleaning and cross-contamination which detail how these key areas of food preparation and handling should be dealt with effectively. They include a section to help the caterer deal with basic supervision and management issues and a daily diary form to provide the record-keeping requirement. The caterer should work through these fact sheets to select which are applicable to them and adopt the procedures as necessary. This simple procedure acts as their hazard analysis. It is unique to them, and if it is maintained and records kept accurately, it will meet statutory requirements.





## SFBB requires procedures to cover the following areas:



### Cross-contamination

- Personal hygiene and fitness to work
- Cleaning cloths
- Separating foodstuffs
- Pest control
- Maintenance



### Cooking

- Cooking safely
- Foods that need extra care
- Reheating
- Ready-to-eat foods
- Checking your menu
- Hot-holding
- Acrylamide



### Cleaning

- Handwashing
- Effective cleaning
- Clean-as-you-go schedule



### Management

- Daily checks
- Other regular checks
- Deep cleaning
- Maintenance
- Checking probe equipment
- Checking pest control
- Using a probe to ensure your methods are safe
- Training and staff supervision
- Using customer feedback
- Handling suppliers
- Stock control



### Chilling

- Storing and displaying chilled food
- Chilling down hot food
- Defrosting
- Freezing

## Temperature monitoring

The SFBB pack can be used without a temperature probe, provided you have a digital temperature display or fridge and freezer thermometer. However, you will need to use a probe if you use methods other than those recommended in the pack for chilling, thawing, cooking, reheating or hot-holding. You may also like to use a probe for extra reassurance that your methods are safe. It may be advisable for larger catering businesses to invest in a temperature monitoring system which can produce information in the form of graphs or figures. This will make it easier to meet your HACCP requirements in a cost-effective and time saving manner and can be tailor-made to suit businesses of any size.

## Larger businesses

Larger businesses should already have an accepted HACCP system of food safety methods and record keeping in place. The system should be based on the critical control points previously listed but the procedures, controls, record-keeping and documentation required will be commensurate to the size of the business. The SFBB model should provide a thorough base for all businesses, although consultants specialising in HACCP systems as well as computer packages are available for larger firms to help in setting up a detailed or tailor-made HACCP system.

For further information visit [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) and to learn more about specialist food cooling and refrigeration products head to [www.fosterrefrigerator.com/products](http://www.fosterrefrigerator.com/products)

## What does the law require?

Since 2006, legislation provides much clearer requirements in certain areas such as thawing and cooling of foods (advice on how to comply is contained in this document), with a requirement to keep chemical storage out of the kitchen. There is also an emphasis on 'disinfection' of food equipment and the general kitchen environment and that waste should be dealt with in an 'environmentally friendly way'.

The key points in the legislation are those of ensuring segregation and cold-chain maintenance throughout the operation, together with the monitoring of temperatures when necessary.

Businesses are required to train supervisors in such systems. It should be noted there is a procedure in place that enables officials to close kitchens; the Remedial Action Notice (RAN). Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) have the power to do this where they find unsatisfactory standards of hygiene which might cause a health risk. EHOs check all businesses have a satisfactory system in place and that all staff are adequately trained, as well as who trained the staff and how this training took place.

All businesses must register with their local authority and tell it of any material change in their business activity. All staff must be trained 'commensurate with their work activity'. EHOs can serve improvement, prohibition and emergency prohibition notices where they find issues and have power of entry at 'any reasonable time'. It is an offence to obstruct them.

The temperature-control limits are 8°C for chilling and 63°C for hot food, with Scottish difference. Cheeseboards and sweet trolleys are considered safe with a four-hour rule for placing food out on display.

## General tips on compliance

- Reduce the clutter and remove any old equipment in your kitchen in order to improve basic cleanliness. Inspectors hate cluttered kitchens and tend to look deeper.
- Check all 'use by' and 'best before' dates of food in your refrigerator daily.
- Identify areas where you can segregate raw and cooked processes and make a 'raw prep only' sign to demonstrate you have got the message.
- Improve disinfection with easy availability of sanitiser and disposable paper cloths.
- Ensure hand-washing availability with bactericidal soap and paper towels.
- Improve personal hygiene appearance with clean ironed whites and crisp hats - first impressions count.
- Make a simple records system that identifies key critical areas such as delivery, storage, preparation, chilling, thawing, cooking and service. Monitor these in terms of temperature, date codes, times, weights, etc. - that's HACCP - and you have to find simple ways of showing that you know what you are doing.
- Keep bulk chemicals out of food rooms.
- Review your training status so you are up-to-date and can talk the environmental health practitioner's language.
- Sort out your waste arrangements to reduce risk of pests and set up recycling where possible.



## Tips on chilling

- Follow the manufacturer's guidelines on using all equipment, particularly in the case of refrigeration to ensure safe temperatures are maintained.
- Chilled food must be kept at 8°C or below. Commercial refrigeration for fridge applications is set at +1°C/+4°C. This creates a temperature gradient that ensures product core temperature remains below guideline recommendations.
- Domestic equipment is designed with lower cooling duty requirements, meaning it simply cannot cope with the regular door opening of a busy catering environment to ensure temperature maintenance.
- Purchase a decent probe thermometer and probe wipes. Larger businesses may be advised to invest in a temperature monitoring system.
- If you chill food down regularly, it may be advisable to purchase a blast chiller to ensure you do this safely. Some manufacturers, including Foster, offer blast chillers specially designed to meet the needs of smaller catering outlets. This provides you with the means of chilling food down safely within the appropriate time frames without compromising on quality, taste or appearance.
- If you defrost lots of food in your business, you may wish to consider purchasing a special thaw cabinet, particularly if the food being thawed is high risk, such as poultry. Some refrigeration equipment companies supply a cabinet specially designed for this purpose, which works by alternating between circulating gentle heat and refrigeration (via special air conducting and fans) ensuring a safe, even and speedy thaw.
- For further information on refrigeration equipment, please contact your expert Foster representative.

## Benefits of HACCP requirements

- Increased management awareness of food safety hazards
- Reduced risk to customers
- Fewer product complaints
- Greater customer confidence in the business
- Lower risk category for EHO inspections
- Enhanced ability to motivate and supervise staff

Find out more about specialist Foster products today

visit our website [www.fosterrefrigerator.com](http://www.fosterrefrigerator.com)

## Further information

[www.food.gov.uk/safereating](http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating)

[www.instituteofhospitality.org](http://www.instituteofhospitality.org)

[www.fosterrefrigerator.com/food-safety](http://www.fosterrefrigerator.com/food-safety)

If you would like to order a hard copy of 'Safer Food, Better Business', 'CookSafe' (Scotland) or 'Safe Catering' (Northern Ireland) call 0845 606 0667 or

email [foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com](mailto:foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com)

## Other essential Foster White Papers you might find useful include:

Energy Efficiency

Hydrocarbons in Refrigeration  
- What Caterers Need to Know

The Climate Change Levy

Food Temperature Laws

Food Safety & E. Coli

Food Hygiene & Staff Training

Handling and Serving Ice

Safe Food Storage

The Safe Way to Blast Chill, Freeze & Thaw

Inspection by Environmental Health Officers

Plan for a Catering Crisis

Coldroom Panels, Polyurethane Foam  
& Fire Ratings: An Update

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