

# Food & Safety

## BULLETIN

Summer 2011

### Welcome to to the 'new-look' Food & Safety Bulletin....

This edition covers both food and health & safety topics which we feel will be useful in helping you to achieve the highest standards of compliance within your business. The Team have been very busy over the past 12 months completing a number of successful projects including health and safety inspections of every Care Home in Torbay and a project working closely with Butchers. Furthermore we have been preparing for the introduction of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme; this exciting initiative, which started in July 2011, will hopefully raise the standards of food safety in businesses across the Bay and allow consumers to make more informed choices on where they eat out or shop.

We wish you a successful summer of trading,

**Helen Perkins** - Principal Environmental Health Officer, Community Safety

### Food Business Registration

Registration of premises used for a food business is required by law. The purpose of the registration is to provide information for the Local Authority, which is responsible for enforcing food law, about the food businesses within its area so that it can target inspections and education programmes effectively.

#### Who needs to register?

Anyone starting a new food business or taking over an existing food business must register with the local authority at least 28 days before opening the business.

If you run a food business, you must tell the local authority about any premises you use for storing, selling, distributing or preparing food. Food premises that require registration includes restaurants, hotels, guest houses, cafes, shops, supermarkets, staff canteens, warehouses, delivery vehicles, market stalls, catering businesses run from home, hot dog and ice cream vans etc. Registration cannot be refused and there is no charge.

To register your business online please go to

**[www.torbay.gov.uk/settingupafoodbusiness](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/settingupafoodbusiness)**

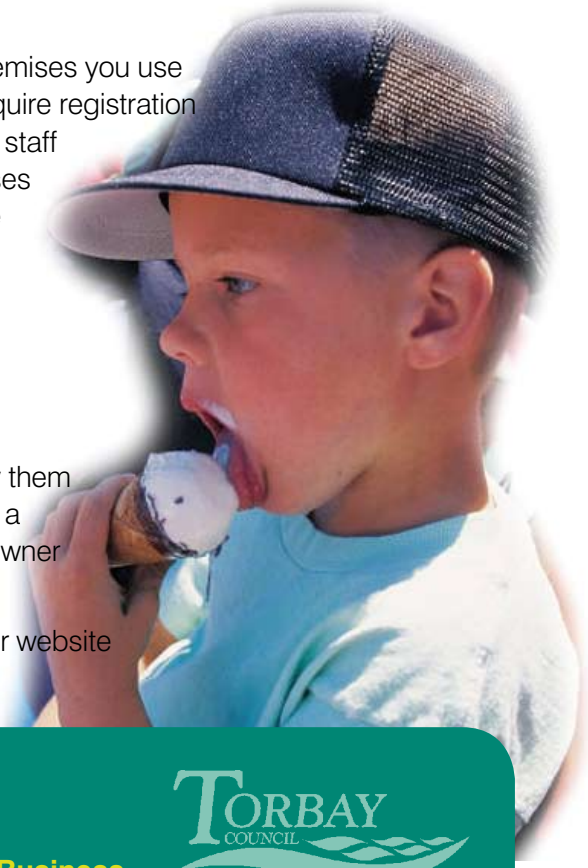
Alternatively please call 01803 208025 to request a registration form.

#### What about changes?

Once you have registered with the local authority, you only need to notify them of a change of owner, if the nature of the business changes, or if there is a change of the address at which moveable premises are kept. The new owner will have to complete an application form.

For more information on starting up a new food business, please visit our website

**[www.torbay.gov.uk/settingupafoodbusiness](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/settingupafoodbusiness)**



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# Good Hygiene = Good Business

## Are you ready to tell your customers how well you are doing?

The national Food Hygiene Rating scheme aims to provide consumers with information on the hygiene standards found by Environmental Health Officers when they carry out their routine food hygiene inspections. The scheme is designed to give consumers a choice about where they eat out or shop for food and at the same time encourage businesses to improve their food hygiene standards.



Window stickers and certificates will be given to businesses and their rating will be displayed on the food hygiene rating scheme section of the Food Standards Agency website.

The scheme was launched by Torbay Council in July 2011 and is being introduced in a staged approach with certain categories of businesses being inspected first, such as takeaways, cafes and public houses.

Below we have produced a number of frequently asked questions which may help you.

### 1. How will the Food Hygiene Rating be calculated?

Following every programmed food hygiene inspection the business will be given a score between 0 and 5 based on what was found at the time in relation to the following categories:

- Compliance with food hygiene and safety** – this includes food hygiene practices and procedures preventing cross-contamination and temperature control.
- Structure and cleaning of the establishment** – this includes cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation etc.
- Confidence in management** – this includes evidence of a documented food safety management system and whether there is a good history of complying with food law and

whether the management have acted on previous advice given and are implementing food safety procedures.

### 2. How will I be notified of the food hygiene rating for my business?

Whenever an inspection is carried out, the score will be calculated at the time and the business will be notified within 14 days of that date. You will receive details of how the premises was scored and if you did not reach the top score you will be given advice as to how improvements can be made. You will also receive a window sticker and certificate and the score will be published on the National Food Hygiene Rating System website.

### 3. Do businesses have to display their rating?

There is no legal requirement for food businesses to display their window stickers and certificates although by doing this it will ensure consumers are given the choice as to where they eat.

### 4. Can a food hygiene rating be changed once works have been completed?

Following a 3 month 'cooling off' period, a food business may request a revisit for the purpose of rescored following the completion of works.

### 5. What if I don't agree with my rating?

There are a number of safeguards built into the scheme to ensure that food businesses are not incorrectly scored:

- You can appeal if you do not believe the score given reflects what was found at your premises
- You have a 'right of reply' to highlight the actions you have taken as a result of the score.
- You can request a revisit for the purposes of re-scoring providing you have taken action to remedy the conditions found at the time of the initial inspection.

### 6. What businesses are covered in the scheme?

The national scheme includes any business where consumers can eat or buy food i.e. pubs selling food, hotels, mobile catering vans.

In Torbay it is proposed that the scheme will be rolled out gradually through different sectors of food businesses. If you are to be included in the scheme you will be notified in a timely manner by the Council.

For further information please contact the Food & Safety Team on 01803 208025 or go to [www.torbay.gov.uk/fhrs](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/fhrs) or [www.food.gov.uk/safereating/hyg/hygieneratings](http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/hyg/hygieneratings)



# E.coli 0157:

## An invisible threat to your business

E.coli 0157 is a particularly nasty organism. It is highly infectious; only a few organisms can cause potentially fatal infection. Children under 5 and elderly over 75 are particularly vulnerable. The more long serious term effects of infection may include kidney failure or brain damage as well as death.

You've probably seen the high profile news reports about E.coli 0157 and the devastating effect it can have; the 1996 Lanarkshire outbreak linked to a butchers shop where 373 people became ill and 21 died and the 2005 South Wales outbreak linked to a meat supplier where 158 people became ill and a child died.

E.coli is a bacterium commonly found in the intestines of humans and animals. However, E.coli 0157 is a mutant form of the bacteria that lives in the intestines of some cattle, sheep and goats. Low-level contamination of ready-to-eat foods by E.coli 0157 can cause serious, untreatable, illness and even death.

Fresh meat flesh can easily become contaminated at the abattoir stage of meat production. Despite strict hygiene controls, it is found on fresh meat frequently enough to require that all meat should be treated as being potentially contaminated.

If your food business involves handling both raw meat and ready to eat foods you have an important food safety responsibility. You must ensure that potentially contaminated meat does not directly or indirectly come into contact with ready to foods.

If you handle both raw and ready-to-eat foods in your food business then there is potential for cross contamination to occur. Because E. coli 0157 survives at freezer, chill and ambient temperatures, measures to control cross-contamination apply to all of these environments. The Food Standards Agency has recently produced guidance on the strict control measures that are necessary to control this particular bacterium. These measures will also help in the control of other food poisoning bacteria, such as campylobacter and salmonella.



**Raw foods that may be contaminated with E.coli 0157 include raw meat and unwashed vegetables**

**Ready-to-eat foods are foods that will not be cooked or reheated before being eaten, for example cooked meats, sandwiches, cheese, salads and desserts.**

### Control Measures

**Separation of equipment** - you need to think about food preparation worktops, utensils, cleaning products, packaging materials and cash tills. There should be no dual use of food preparation equipment such as vacuum packers, mincers, weighing scales and slicers.

**Separation of staff involved in handling raw food from staff that handle ready-to-eat food**

**Effective cleaning and disinfection** - are you using the right products, in the right way? Effective cleaning is essential to get rid of harmful bacteria and stop them spreading to food. Work surfaces and equipment should be washed regularly and disinfected between tasks. Single-use, disposable cloths should be used wherever possible.

**Personal hygiene and hand washing** - It is vital for staff to follow good personal hygiene practices to help prevent harmful bacteria spreading to ready-to-eat food by cross-contamination.

**Further information produced by the Food Standards Agency can be found at the following links:**

**E. coli O157: Control of cross-contaminaton. Guidance for food business operators and enforcement authorities** <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/ecoliguide0211.pdf>

**E.coli O157: An invisible threat to your business Factsheet on steps to control the risk of contamination** <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/ecolifactsheet0211.pdf>

# Safer Workplace, Better Business

A new pack has been published to help small and medium sized businesses comply with health and safety standards in their premises. The pack, entitled 'Safer Workplace Better Business' (SWBB), is intended to raise awareness of current health and safety requirements and provide guidance on how to achieve compliance in a concise easy to use format. The pack has been designed to assist businesses such as cafes, retailers, small hotels, small care homes and offices. It has been created by the Devon Health & Safety Sub Group and has been designed on the same principles of the 'Safer Food Better Business' pack.

Under health and safety legislation employers must be able to show that they have assessed all aspects of their business to enable them to adequately control any risks. By completing the pack the employer can identify the key hazards in their workplace, introduce suitable control measures and have documented risk assessments available for inspection. The colour coded sections explain the employer's duties, the actions required, and allows the employer to document policies, controls and procedures they implement within their business.

**The pack can be downloaded from Torbay Council's website at [www.torbay.gov.uk/swbb](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/swbb) or businesses can telephone 01803 208025 for further information.**



## As one check opens.....another one closes

### SFBB and the Food Hygiene Rating System

**With the forthcoming introduction of the Food Hygiene Rating scheme, it is worth taking a few moments to remind your staff of the importance of those two little tick boxes on your SFBB daily diary sheets.**

For the Environmental Health Officer to assess the 'Confidence in Management' element of your inspection, evidence of a history of daily checks being conducted has to be established. If the checks have been signed off and the officer still finds premises in an excessively dirty condition, food found beyond the legal use-by date, or inadequate temperature control, this will show poor management. It also suggests that false declarations have been made. As a result the 'Confidence in Management' score will be marked down and so reflect in the food hygiene rating awarded.

To help maximise your potential food hygiene rating you must:

- Check that the SFBB daily diary sheets are being filled in ....for every day that your business is operating!
- Verify that the various opening and closing checks listed in the management section of your SFBB pack have been adequately completed.

Typical **opening** check lists will include:

- ✓ All cold storage equipment operating at the required temperatures.
- ✓ Food preparation areas and equipment has been cleaned and disinfected prior to use.

Typical **closing** checks will include:

- ✓ All food which is due to expire past its use-by date has been thrown away
- ✓ All used equipment and food preparation surfaces cleaned down and disinfected.

**Diary refill packs can be requested from the Community Safety Department on 01803 208025 or email your request to the Food Standards Agency at [foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk](mailto:foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk)**

## FAQ's

**Q. What temperature does food in the fridge need to be held at?**

**A.** It is a legal requirement for chilled foods to be stored at or below 8°C. Ideally the air temperature of the fridge should be between 0-5 °C to ensure that foods are stored at the legal temperature.

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For further information please contact 01803 208010.

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