

Introducing the...



National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Sussex

Councils in East and West Sussex are launching the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in April 2011. This is a scheme where the hygiene ratings of food businesses are displayed to the public.

The Aim of the scheme

The primary aim of the scheme will be to allow consumers to make informed choices about the places in which they choose to eat and through this, to encourage businesses to improve hygiene standards. This will be done by:

- Ensuring that the food businesses who achieve consistently high standards of food hygiene are publicly recognised
- Encouraging food businesses to improve their standard of food hygiene leading to greater food safety.

Working in Partnership

Eleven Sussex Authorities are working in partnership with Food Standards Agency (FSA) for the implementation of a Sussex National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Food Safety Officers who carry out food hygiene inspections of food premises will, in accordance with Food Law Code of Practice (England), score businesses and management for the following:

1. Food Hygiene compliance (food preparation, cooking, re-heating, cooling and storage)
2. Structural compliance (cleanliness, condition, layout, lighting and ventilation)
3. Confidence in management (how food safety is managed and documented)

The overall score will be identified by adding the three scores together. The business will then be awarded a score rating.

The Scoring System

Food businesses will be given an easy to understand rating that reflects the conditions found at the premises at the time of the routine food hygiene inspection.

The ratings will be made available on the Food Standards Agency website, <http://rating.food.gov.uk>. The scheme is based on a simple numerical rating and descriptor, with the scores ranging from 0 (urgent improvement necessary) to 5 (very good).



Premises will be issued with window stickers and certificates to display on the premises.

How to achieve a high rating

In order for a business to achieve a high rating the Food Business Operator (FBO) must be able to demonstrate a very high standard of food safety management and be compliant with food hygiene legislation.

Scores are given for the following three elements:

- Food hygiene and safety procedures
- Compliance with structural requirements
- Confidence in food safety management/control procedures

Food Hygiene & Safety Procedures

The FBO must demonstrate and/or provide evidence of:

- safe food preparation, cooking, re-heating, cooling and storage
- a good level of staff personal hygiene
- controlling the risk of cross-contamination
- food hygiene training for food handlers
- temperature control

Only minor follow up action in relation to food handling procedures, personal hygiene or temperature control is acceptable.



Benefits for Food Business Operators

- Businesses can advertise their high hygiene standard.
- Ratings awarded can be used in advertising or promotional activities.
- Evidence from other schemes demonstrate that good businesses can increase their profits.

Benefit for Consumers

- The scheme will give the public the opportunity to make informed choices about where they choose to eat or buy food, based of the standard of food hygiene within food premises.
- Consumers will be able to compare one business with another within their area and more widely.

Compliance with Structural Requirements

The FBO must demonstrate and/or provide evidence of:

- a clean premises
- a well maintained premises and equipment
- satisfactory pest control procedures are in place
- a good level of natural and/or artificial lighting
- adequate ventilation (natural and/or mechanical)
- effective waste disposal provision

Only minor follow up action in relation to structural requirements including cleanliness, layout, condition of structure, lighting and ventilation is acceptable.



WARNING!!

Even though your premises is spotlessly clean and in good repair you may still receive a poor rating if you fail to provide a documented food safety management system.

Confidence in food safety management/control procedures

You must be able to demonstrate and/or provide evidence that food safety is being managed and documented in accordance with current legislation, in particular:

- food safety hazards are understood, controlled, managed and reviewed
- food safety management procedures must cover all activities ranging from the receipt to the point of sale of food
- food handlers are adequately trained
- suitable supervision and food safety induction training for new staff.



The law states that food businesses must write down simple details of what they do to make sure that the food produced or sold at their premises is safe to eat. The depth of your Food Safety Management System (FSMS) will depend on the size and nature of your business i.e. a manufacturer would be required to implement a more detailed documented system than a caterer or retailer.



All food business operators must by law provide written evidence to demonstrate how they intend to make sure food made or sold at their premises will be safe to eat. You must write down details of all significant food safety hazards and the procedures you are using to control them. You will need to periodically check your procedures to ensure that they are working effectively and record the findings especially if you have been required to correct anything.

Records of the most important checks include cleaning correct cooking, chilling of food or the prevention of cross contamination. This written evidence is known as food safety management system. This could be your own system or a nationally recognised one, such as Safer Food Better Business.

Safer Food Better Business (SFBB)

To assist food business operators of small to medium sized establishments in implementing a documented food safety management system, the Food Standards Agency have produced 'Safer Food Better Business' which is a pack that is free and can be used to document your food safety management system. The pack also comes with a DVD that explains the system and this can be used as a training tool for food handlers.

The pack is available free of charge to order a copy please call 0845 606 0667 or email foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com



SFBB is not the only food safety management system and businesses may choose whatever type of system they like. For any further information please contact the Food Safety Team on 01403 215641.

The Importance of Food Safety Training

To help food businesses comply with the legal requirement for food hygiene training, Wealden District Council regularly run all of the training courses below. The regulations require that all food businesses ensure that:

Food Handlers

All food handlers working in food businesses are supervised, instructed or trained in food hygiene matters as necessary, bearing in mind the type of work that they do.

It is recommended that staff who prepare or handle open high-risk food receive training to a level equivalent to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Food Safety in Catering within 3 months of starting work.

This course lasts for 6 hours and includes a short multiple-choice exam. The cost of the Level 2 course includes a course handbook and a certificate for successful candidates.

It is recommended that food handlers who already have the Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering should have refresher training every 3 to 5 years.

Food Managers or Supervisors

Food hygiene regulations have placed greater onus and accountability on anyone in the food business with supervisory responsibility. It is therefore vital that they are equipped with both the knowledge and confidence to do their job effectively. It is also important that they understand how to operate management systems that will ensure that food is safe.

Wealden offer the CIEH Level 3 Award in Supervising Food Safety in Catering, which takes place over 3 days (1 per week) a half-day revision and a 2 hour multiple choice exam.

The cost of the Level 3 course includes a course handbook and a certificate for successful candidates.

Other courses offered:

CIEH Level 2 Award in Healthier Food and Special Diets

CIEH Level 3 Award in Training Skills and Practice

Tailor-made courses to suit your business

We will deliver any of the courses at a time and a place that meets your needs, if you have 10 or more people to train. This includes our popular Wealden Food Hygiene Awareness Course (half day).

For further details about courses offered by Wealden District Council please contact us on 01323 443322 or email us at foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk

Further information is available on our dedicated website: www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk



Wealden Business Help

If you want to find out more about the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, and many other subjects helpful to businesses, please check our dedicated website:

www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk

You'll find all kinds of useful information, links, downloads and guidance to help your business prosper and comply with legal requirements.



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