

**GOVERNMENT
KEY PROJECT**

Setting Up a Restaurant



**Guide for
Small and
Medium-sized
Businesses**



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Introduction of the Guide

In this guide you will receive important information on how to set up a restaurant business. You will also receive information on how to run things properly in your restaurant, for example, with regard to hygiene and other regulations.

It is important that you know in advance what to do in each phase and how to work in a restaurant. If you do, everything will go well and both the customers and food inspector will be happy.

This guide has been divided into six sections.

- **Section 1, Setting Up.**
Section 1 is a summary of information needed for setting up a restaurant.
- **Section 2, Premises.**
Section 2 contains information about the requirements associated with restaurant premises.
- **Section 3, Operations.**
Section 3 contains requirements for restaurant operations.
- **Section 4, Staff.**
Section 4 contains requirements for restaurant staff.
- **Section 5, Own-check plan.**
In section 5 you will find information about own-check activities. This information helps you to create an own-check plan for your restaurant.
- **Section 6, Terminology.**

This guide does not contain general information on setting up and running a business. Links to such information are provided on the web page www.evira.fi/en/operatorguidance.

Some words in the text have been underlined. You will find explanations for them in section 6.

You will receive information on these topics, among others:

- ▶ How can you ensure that the premises are suitable for a restaurant?
- ▶ How should you notify the authorities of your plan for setting up and running a restaurant?
- ▶ What requirements are there for restaurant premises?
- ▶ What other things are required in the operation of a restaurant?
- ▶ What is required from the staff of a restaurant?
- ▶ What is meant by the restaurant's own-check plan?



Section 1, Setting Up

In this section you will learn

- ▶ What should you bear in mind in the set-up stage?
- ▶ How can you ensure that the premises are suitable for a restaurant?
- ▶ What kind of competence is required from you and your staff?
- ▶ What else is required of you?
- ▶ How should you notify the authorities of your plan for setting up and running a restaurant?
- ▶ What other important things do you need to remember even before you begin?
- ▶ What is the own-check plan and where can you get help for drawing it up?

Suitable premises

When you find premises that you like, check with the municipal building supervision authority that they are intended for the purpose you had in mind. This will normally guarantee that the building or premises are technically suitable for a restaurant, for example, that they are adequately ventilated.

It is also good to contact the municipal food control authority at this early stage.

From the authority, you can confirm that the premises are suitable for your intended purpose.

What does "use prescribed in the building permit" mean?

The municipal building supervision authority approves the use of premises or a property as, for example, a restaurant, shop, office or industrial facility.

The intended use of premises is specified in their building permits, and the premises may not be used for other purposes than those approved in the building permits.

What happens if the premises have not been approved for the use that you require?

If you want to use the premises even though their intended purpose is not suitable, you will require a building permit for changing the prescribed use of the premises.

You may need to make major renovations to, for example, the ventilation or water fixtures.

Check with your municipality's building supervision whether you can apply for the building permit yourself or whether it is the task of some other party, such as the housing company.

When you are applying for a change to the prescribed use of premises, please keep in mind the following considerations:

In these situations, you will have to be prepared for planning costs, such as hiring a designer. Find out the competence requirements for designers from the municipal building supervision authority.

Building may not start until the building permit is final.

Premises may not be put to a new use before the building supervision authority has approved it in a final inspection.

Can there be other obstacles to the operation of the restaurant apart from those related to the building permit?

Check with the housing company that your intended operation can be run in the property you had in mind.

The company's articles of association can include provisions regarding the use of premises.

Are the premises suitable to run your restaurant?

When you are thinking about whether the premises are suitable for your intended purpose, the minimum consideration is whether or not your restaurant can be sensibly run on the premises.

Find out whether or not there are enough water fixtures and toilet facilities and sufficient storage space on the premises. If you think you would like to expand the restaurant at a later date, choose sufficiently large or modifiable premises from the start.

Also consider whether the processing of food could require a large and expensive surface renovation.

The food inspector and advisory organisations will be able to advise you on these matters. Information on advisory organisations is available via the links on our website.

The Premises section of this guide also contains additional information on the requirements for premises.

Design the premises so that the following will be easy to implement:

- Do not allow customers or other external parties onto premises where food is processed.

- Do not process food products close to the front doors. Above all, this should be avoided if people use the door during processing.
- Place food preparation and processing areas so that passage through them, for example, from outside to the dressing room or food storage, is minimised.
- Store non-food products so that they will not leave smells or taste in foodstuffs. Also ensure that they will not pose a danger if they break.
- Remove any unnecessary items, such as furniture, devices and utensils no longer being used, from the premises since they collect dust. They can also cramp the spaces and make cleaning more difficult.

How to notify the authorities of your business?

You must submit a "notification of food premises" no later than four weeks before opening the restaurant. The notification is filed with the food control authority of the municipality in which your restaurant is located.

If you make significant changes to the operations of your restaurant in a manner that increases the food hygiene risk, you must file a notification of significant changes in operations.

For example, starting to serve food in your pub is a significant change.

You can obtain a notification form from your municipality's website or the municipal food inspector. On the web site of the City of Helsinki, for example, you will find the form with the search term "notification of food premises" or "food premises notification".

Every food control area has its own form pre-completed with the information specific to that area. You can use the same form to file a notification of significant changes in operations.

When can you start operations?

Submit the notification at least four weeks before opening your restaurant.

You do not have to wait for a response or the initial inspection, however. You are free to open your restaurant before them.

You have filed the notification, what happens next?

1. The food control authority will respond in writing.
2. The response will state that your restaurant has been included within the scope of regular control.
3. The municipal control authority will usually contact you in order to agree on a date for the first visit. However, the food inspector can also make an inspection without prior notice.
4. The food inspector will visit your restaurant for a first control visit. This is called the initial inspection.
5. During the visit, you and the inspector will review the suitability of the facilities for running a restaurant. The inspector will also check that your own-check plan has addressed the risks of your operations to a sufficient extent. The food inspector will also instruct you on how you can improve the own-check plan.
6. The municipality will charge a fee for processing the notification and the performance of regular control in the future. The amount of the fee is stated in the municipality's tariff list. The tariffs are listed on the website of the municipality in which your restaurant is located.
7. If you are uncertain of how to arrange operations in the kitchen of your restaurant, you can ask for advice in advance from your food inspector. Don't hesitate to ask if you need help and advice.

Requirements for kitchen staff

Persons who process perishable foods professionally must have a hygiene passport and wear appropriate protective clothing. A hygiene passport is a certificate of competence for demonstrating familiarity with food hygiene.

If necessary, the employees must also be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have salmonella infection.

The purpose of all these requirements is to ensure the safety of foodstuffs. These personnel requirements will be discussed in more detail in the Staff section of this guide.

What are perishable foods?

Perishable foodstuffs refers to food in which bacteria that spoil the food or cause food poisoning can grow rapidly if the food is not stored at/in the correct temperature and conditions.

For example, fish, grated carrots and raw sausages are perishable foodstuffs.

Non-perishable foodstuffs can keep for a long time at room temperature and dry conditions. These include, for example, nuts, spices and flour.

Own-check plan

You must draw up an own-check plan before starting operations.

The purpose of the own-check plan is to help you describe your operations and manage the food hygiene risks associated with them.

The Finnish Hospitality Association, or MaRa ry, has drawn up best practice and own-check guidelines for restaurants, titled "Omavalvonta ravintoloissa - elintarvikkeet" (only available in Finnish).

The Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira has reviewed and approved the guideline.

Drawing up your own-check plan is easy with MaRa's own-check guidelines.

The guidelines provide a ready-made assessment of the risks associated with your line of business, along with methods for their management.

The in-depth questions will help you consider the functions of your own business. MaRa offers the own-check guidelines for free to its members and sells the document to non-members.

You can also draw up the own-check plan yourself. You can find materials for drawing up the plan in this guide and on the websites of many food control authorities.

Some sample links to such information are provided on the same web page with the link to this guide.

Drawing up the own-check plan will be discussed in more detail in the Own-check plan section of this guide.

Serving licence and other important issues not provided for in the Food Act

- **Are you planning to serve alcohol?**
Serving alcohol requires a licence. You must apply for the licence from the Regional State Administrative Agency. More information on serving alcohol is available on the website of Valvira. A link is provided on the same web page with the link to this guide.
- **Are you planning to sell tobacco?**
The sale of tobacco products and nicotine fluids is also subject to licence. If you intend to sell such products in the restaurant, you will need to apply for a permit from the municipality. More information is available on the website of Valvira.
- **Should the restaurant be accessible?**
Aspects such as the maximum number of customers and age of the building

can affect the restaurant's structural accessibility requirements.

Ask your municipality's building supervision authority about them.

- **Are you planning to include a terrace?**
You may need the consent of the municipality and housing company. Ask the building supervision authority about this.
- **Are there any other regulations concerning running a restaurant?**
The fire and rescue authorities also have their own safety requirements for restaurants. Links to additional information are provided on the same web page where the link to this guide.

Summary

When you are setting up a restaurant:

- ▶ Check with the municipal food control authority and building supervision authority to make sure that the premises are suitable for your restaurant.
- ▶ Notify the authorities of your operations by filing a food premises notification.
- ▶ Make sure that all members of the cooking staff have hygiene passports, health certificates and protective clothing.
- ▶ Take care of any other necessary matters and permits.
- ▶ Draw up an own-check plan.



Section 2, Premises

In this section you are introduced to the requirements for appropriate restaurant facilities and how they contribute to food safety and hygiene.

When planning your restaurant, take the sensible placement of the following premises and functions into account:

- Food processing, production and storage facilities
 - Cooking and cooling equipment and utensils
 - Cold storage facilities
 - Water fixtures and plumbing
 - Non-toxic, easy-to-clean and smooth surface materials
- Customer area
- Toilet facilities for customers and personnel
- Staff dressing rooms
- Smoking areas
- Waste storage facilities
- Facilities for the storage and maintenance of cleaning equipment
- Space for the cleaning and storage of dishes
- Floor drains in facilities whose cleaning requires washing
- Other necessary storage spaces, such as for delivery boxes and roller cages, if these are stored on the restaurant's premises

Food processing, production and storage facilities

When processing and storing food, it is vital to ensure that the foodstuffs are protected from dirt, harmful bacteria, viruses and harmful substances. This requires adequately sized facilities that enable the different functions to be placed in a sensible manner.

In addition, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be safe and may not leave harmful substances in the food.

For example, the facilities must be designed to permit the separation of cooked and uncooked foodstuffs.

It is particularly important to isolate food that is intended to be eaten unheated.

You must also be able to segregate allergens. They must be kept separate from each other as well as from food they are not intended for.

A list of substances and products that cause allergies or intolerances is provided in the "Food information management" section of this guide.

Examples of foods to be kept separate from each other

- Keep unpacked unprocessed meat preparations and fishery products separate from ready-to-eat foods. Ready-to-eat foods include all foods that are intended to be eaten as such, for example salads and gravad (cured) and smoked fish.

- Keep raw poultry meat separate from other foods.
- Keep unpacked unprocessed meat preparations separate from unpacked unprocessed fishery products. Unprocessed meat preparations include, for example, fresh and marinated meat and uncooked sausages. Unprocessed fishery products include, for example, fresh fish and live crayfish.
- Store and handle soil-covered root vegetables in a place reserved and equipped for this particular use. To keep the goods separated during storage, you can use, for example, separate refrigerators, storage containers, or spaces, or spaces separated by partitions.
- You can separate handling of soil-covered root vegetables from handling of other foods by time or operationally. If soil-covered root vegetables are not handled in a separate room, handle them clearly separate from other activities in the same room. Carefully clean the handling site before starting any other activity.
- It is allowed to gut fish and to skin, pluck, or gut wild game and game birds in a restaurant. These measures shall be carried out in a place reserved and equipped for this particular use. You can gut, skin, and pluck, for example, on a table or surface reserved for the use, or in a separate room. Reserve a waste bin with lid as well as the ability to wash hands and work equipment and to rinse fish in the immediate vicinity of this place. Clearly separate these actions from other activities and thoroughly clean the handling site after use.
- Keep ingredients and products that cause allergies and intolerances separate from each other and from foods they are not intended for. Significant work stages to consider with regard to separation of foods and handling of cross-contamination are for example: purchasing and accepting ingredients, labeling, storage and handling

of foodstuffs, planned order of work and cleaning.

- If the employees' own food is stored in the same storage areas as the food handled in the restaurant, own foodstuffs shall be clearly separated from other foods. This can be done, for example, by storing employees' own food on a separate shelf or in containers placed on a shelf.

Water fixtures and sinks

Food preparation and processing facilities must be equipped with a sufficient number of water fixtures.

You should consider the need for water fixtures when planning the facilities, since retrospective changes are both difficult and expensive to implement.

In new buildings, the normal rule is that the premises must have at least three washing points:

- one for washing hands
- one for rinsing foodstuffs, and
- one for washing dishes.

Several water fixtures

If the premises are large, they will require a number of water fixtures.

The processing of vegetables with dirt on them or gutting fish may require a separate washing point.

A dedicated fixture is usually also required for washing dishes and utensils.

Sufficient water supply and cleanliness

All sinks and washing equipment must have a sufficient supply of both hot and cold water. The sinks and cleaning equipment must be kept clean and disinfected when necessary.

One washing point for multiple purposes

Compromises may be required in older premises.

A washing point can be used to wash dirty vegetables in the morning and later to rinse dishes, for example.

The hand-washing point can be used to rinse utensils after closing.

Remember that the sink must be cleaned between different functions.

If you need advice on the number and locations of water fixtures, you can ask the food inspector when you are planning the premises.

Number and placement of hand-washing points

A sufficient number of hand-washing points must be reserved for washing hands.

They must be placed sensibly with regard to operations.

The hand-washing points must be located close to the food-processing areas.

What equipment is needed at hand-washing points?

- Running hot and cold water is required at an appropriate hand-washing point.
- Liquid soap is part of a well-equipped hand-washing point.
- Disposable towels are appropriate for a hand-washing point. In this case, a bin will also be required.
- A roller towel is also a good choice for a hand-washing point.
- A dirty cloth towel is not appropriate for a hand-washing point. Cloth towels can be used if everyone has their own towel that is replaced on a daily basis.
- The hand-washing point must also be clean. It must not be cluttered with unnecessary things.

Cold storage facilities for foodstuffs

Different foods require different storage temperatures. Therefore, you will need a number of storage spaces, and their temperature must be monitored with measuring equipment or thermometers.

Foods that require cold storage should not be left at higher temperatures, even for a short time. Only take the required amount of such food out of cold storage for preparation.

The cold chain may not be broken at any time. Also keep the cold chain in mind during delivery, acceptance of deliveries and transfer to cold storage facilities.

Examples of food storage temperature limits in a restaurant

- Fresh fish and thawed prawns and shrimp, boiled crayfish and cooked clams, mussels and scallops: no more than 2 °C (Celsius)
- Cold-smoked and cured fish: 0–3 °C
- Smoked fish packaged in a protective atmosphere or vacuum: 0–3 °C
- Minced meat and liver: at most 4 °C
- Chopped vegetables and sprouts: at most 6 °C
- Sushi and live clams, mussels and scallops: at most 6 °C
- Milk and cream: at most 6 °C
- Convenience foods, sausages, cold cuts, raw or marinated meat, cream and cheese cakes and pastries: at most 6 °C
- Yoghurt, sour cream and most cheeses: at most 8 °C

Fill the cold store or refrigeration appliance correctly!

Do not overfill the cold store or refrigeration appliance.

When you fill the cold store or appliance correctly, the air will circulate as intended and keep the food at the right temperature.

With good planning, your freezer will have enough room to freeze small samples of all served food as proof for use in suspected cases of food poisoning.

Staff dressing rooms

The staff must have a dressing room with space for storing off-duty clothes.

In exceptional circumstances, the supervisory authority may allow the dressing room to be located in a separate area or building.

For example, restaurants located in shopping centres can be permitted to have their dressing rooms in a separate area or building.

Toilet facilities

Employees must be provided with toilet facilities. If the establishment can cater for more than six customers, a customer bathroom must also be provided.

When designing and building new facilities, the starting point is that the staff and customers have their own separate bathrooms.

Customers can carry harmful bacteria or viruses that can spread into food and make other people ill. Food-poisoning bacteria and viruses spread easily through contact, for example through the handles of toilet doors and manually operated water taps.

For this reason, separate toilets shall be provided for staff and customers.

This principle must be complied with at least when building new facilities.

Exceptions to the regulations on toilet facilities

A staff restaurant at a workplace does not require a customer toilet if there are toilet facilities in other premises at the workplace. In some cases, such as in the archipelago, a dry toilet kept in good condition can be accepted.

An outdoor chemical toilet (i.e., bajamaja) can be permitted for temporary use.

On old premises, it may be necessary for the staff to use the same toilet facilities as the customers. This will require special care in order to avoid food poisoning.

Also in this case, the customers must have access to the toilet directly from the customer premises.

Any exceptions must always be discussed with the food inspector.

Requirements for staff toilets

The lavatory door may not open directly into food-processing premises. For this reason, staff toilets must either be located behind two doors or be placed at a greater distance from premises where food is processed.

In old buildings, this may not be possible.

Acceptable solutions will be found for such buildings on a case-by-case basis.

You should discuss the matter with the food inspector and ask for advice.

Toilet facilities located further away

If permitted by the supervisory authority, toilet facilities can be located in a separate area or building. This applies to both staff and customer toilet facilities.

This can be done, for example, in large shopping centres.

In this case, the public customer bathrooms will be available to the customers of more than one company.

The restaurant can be open even when the rest of the shopping centre is closed.

The shopping centre's toilet facilities will not be available at such times. In such a case, the restaurant must have its own customer toilets.

What will you do if your restaurant is located in an old building that cannot accommodate customer toilets?

You may be able to make an arrangement with another company for permission to use their customer toilets.

Cleaning equipment storage and maintenance facilities

Good storage and maintenance facilities for cleaning equipment

The facilities are equipped with:

- Adequate ventilation, preventing the growth of mould.
- Racks and shelves for cleaning equipment and detergents.
- A water fixture and drainage sink for rinsing and washing cleaning equipment.
- A drying rack for damp cleaning equipment.
- A floor drain facilitating cleaning of the storage space.

The cleaning equipment and agents should be stored hygienically and separated from the food preparation area.

Cleaning equipment should not be stored in toilet facilities, since it may be contaminated with harmful bacteria and viruses. Dirty cleaning equipment will spread dirt when you clean. A dedicated cleaning cupboard is not mandatory, however.

Where to store the equipment for cleaning food-processing surfaces?

The equipment for cleaning food-processing surfaces can be kept, for example, in the cupboard under the sink.

The cupboard must be able to accommodate the clean cloths and agents that are needed to clean the surfaces.

Storing cleaning equipment further away

The supervisory authority may also allow you to store and maintain your cleaning equipment in a separate area or building. This is a common practice in, for example, shopping centres.

You should discuss the matter with the food inspector in advance if necessary.

Waste storage facilities

A waste bin must be placed close to the food-processing area.

Spoiled foodstuffs and other waste must be kept separate from other operations and foodstuffs. Waste must be taken out sufficiently often, at least once a day.

Waste storage areas must be planned and managed so that they can be kept clean at all times.

Waste bins located outside must be enclosed to prevent the waste from attracting pests.

Smoking areas

Smoking is only permitted in a separate, dedicated area. Smoking should be arranged so that it will not pose a risk to food hygiene. Staff who go outside for a smoke should change or cover their work uniforms.

Summary

When planning to set up a restaurant:

- ▶ When you are looking for premises, consider their suitability for your business in advance.
- ▶ For example, are the premises sufficiently large to enable the hygienic placement of functions?
- ▶ Is there a sufficient number of separate storage facilities for different foodstuffs?
- ▶ Are there enough water fixtures, sinks and floor drains?
- ▶ Are dedicated changing and clothing storage facilities available for staff?
- ▶ Are the toilet facilities and plumbing appropriate?
- ▶ What is the correct way to store cleaning equipment?
- ▶ Has smoking been arranged in an appropriate manner?



Section 3, Operations

In this section, you will be introduced to these issues, for example:

- ▶ What kinds of surfaces will the premises require?
- ▶ What materials are permitted in packaging and dishes?
- ▶ How will you ensure the safety of water?
- ▶ What should be taken into account when buying raw materials?
- ▶ Why should you be aware of where your ingredients come from?
- ▶ What information do you need to give to your customers about the food you serve?
- ▶ What should be taken into consideration when transporting foods?

Cleaning and cleanliness of surfaces and equipment

The surface materials of the facilities, utensils and appliances must be non-toxic and easy to clean.

If necessary, such as in food-processing premises, the materials must be able to withstand washing with water and mechanical cleaning, such as with a brush.

Materials that do not have a smooth, water-repellent and hard surface absorb dirt and odours and cannot be kept clean in practice. Such materials are not suitable for food preparation, processing or storage facilities, in which cleanliness is particularly important.

Broken and rusty surfaces are also difficult to clean. This is why you should favour durable and rustproof materials.

The condition of the surfaces must be monitored and broken surfaces repaired or replaced.

Only use clean cleaning equipment

Cleaning equipment must be cleaned or changed frequently enough.

If this is neglected, they will spread dirt, bacteria and viruses between surfaces.

Dedicated cleaning equipment for premises in which food is prepared or processed

Food preparation and processing premises need their own cleaning equipment.

The equipment may not be used to clean other premises.

This prevents the spread of bacteria and viruses that cause food poisoning through the cleaning equipment.

Toilet facilities also require their own cleaning equipment.

Label your cleaning equipment – and consider using disposable equipment

It is a good idea to label cleaning equipment with its purpose and area of use. In this way, the equipment for different premises and surfaces will not get mixed up.

Disposable cleaning equipment can be a safe solution for cramped premises in which it is difficult to set apart an appropriate storage area for cleaning equipment.

Cutting boards

Plastic cutting boards are easy to clean and thus appropriate for cooking.

You should have a dedicated cutting board for each food group.

Plastic boards can be washed conveniently in the dishwasher, where they are cleaned better thanks to the high temperature.

The washing temperature should be at least 65 degrees Celsius.

Worn and grooved cutting boards must either be ground smooth or disposed of, since they may not be cleaned completely even in a dishwasher.

Wooden cutting boards are only suitable for dry foodstuffs and baking

It is advisable to avoid the use of wood as a surface material.

Wood is a porous material and can absorb water, dirt and detergents and remain damp for a long time.

However, wooden cutting boards are suitable for dry foodstuffs such as bread and other bakery goods.

Wood is also an acceptable material for a baking surface.

Do not forget the ceiling and other high surfaces

Dirt, harmful bacteria and viruses may contaminate unprotected foodstuffs and processing surfaces from many places and for many reasons.

Dirt, bacteria, and viruses may originate from, for example,

- human hands
- the air, or
- high surfaces, such as the ceiling or shelves with flaky paint or mould.

For this reason, unprotected food should not be processed in premises whose high surfaces are in poor condition.

Sufficiently effective ventilation

The ventilation in food premises must be powerful enough to prevent humidity from accumulating in the structures, leading to the growth of mould.

Mould can easily enter foodstuffs, either directly or via the processing surfaces. Dripping moisture from roof structures can contaminate food and processing surfaces.

Efficient ventilation also removes heat, which is important for the operation of refrigeration equipment.

Different activities require different kinds of ventilation. You can ask the building supervision authority for more information.

Design and maintenance of ventilation equipment

Ventilation systems must be designed with easy access to filters and other parts that require cleaning or replacement.

Ventilation equipment must be kept clean and serviced on a regular basis.

Pests must be kept from food premises

Pests, such as rats, mice, cockroaches, flies and silverfish bring dirt, bacteria and viruses with them.

It is important to prevent pests from entering premises where food is processed.

The dirt, bacteria and viruses carried by pests frequently originate from outside or from the sewers.

They can cause food poisoning if allowed to contaminate foodstuffs.

Animals on the customer premises

Guide dogs for the visually impaired, the service dogs of people with impaired mobility and the hearing dogs of people with hearing disabilities are always welcome on the customer premises.

A restaurant is free to decide whether it allows pets, that is, animals other than guide, service and hearing dogs onto its premises.

If a restaurant allows pets on the customer premises, this should be indicated by a sign on the front door. In this way, for example, people with strong allergies will know to avoid the restaurant. The permission can also be limited to certain types of animals.

Materials suitable for use with food

All materials coming into contact with food must be suitable for use with food and for their intended purpose.

This ensures that harmful chemicals will not migrate from the materials into the food.

In the industry, we talk about 'contact materials'. This refers to all materials that come into contact with foodstuffs, such as work surfaces, dishes, utensils, appliances and packaging materials.

How do I know whether a material is suitable for use with food?

The purpose of use of the material can be indicated by its trade name, such as cheese film, coffee cup, food plate, frying pan, bread bag or baking surface.

If the package or item bears the wine glass and fork symbol, it is suitable for use with food.



Wine glass and fork symbol

What other, specific restrictions have been issued?

The use of a material can be subject to further restrictions regarding, for example, the temperature, fat content, acidity or usability period of the food.

In such cases, the wine glass and fork symbol may not be sufficient by itself to tell what kind of contact the material is suitable for.

What will I do if a product's purpose is not indicated by its packaging or instructions?

If the purpose or conditions of use are not indicated by the trade name or instructions in the package of a contact material, you should confirm them from the supplier.

Which characteristics of food can contribute to the transfer of harmful chemicals?

Especially fat content, heat and acidity can contribute to the migration of harmful chemicals from materials to foodstuffs. For this reason, it is important to use materials according to instructions and only for the purposes for which they are intended.

How can you ensure that the material is suitable for your purposes?

As a rule, the wine glass and fork symbol is a sufficiently clear indication of a product's suitability for use with food.

When you buy products from a wholesaler, the product's trade name can indicate the purpose of the item or material.

Such trade names can include a grill bag, meat wrap or marinade bowl.

If the purpose of use is not clear, it should be checked from the wholesaler.

In this case, for example, additional information obtained by e-mail will be sufficient.

If you buy your materials/articles directly from manufacturers or importers, request them to provide compliance documents that include instructions.

Which dishes can be put into a microwave oven or microwave?

Materials such as ceramics and glass are suitable for microwaving.

However, ceramic dishes with gold inlays are not suitable for use in a microwave.

Plastic dishes may be used in microwaves only if they bear markings that indicate suitability for microwaving.

Dishes containing metals may not be put into a microwave.

Why can't you put any plastic dish or bowl into a microwave?

If a plastic dish does not have a marking that indicates suitability for microwaving, it should not be used to heat food in a microwave.

It is common for food to be heated unevenly in the microwave.

In this case, the plastic can soften and cause substances to migrate into the food.

Protect foodstuffs from aluminium

Do not prepare or store acidic foods, such as juices, in aluminium dishes.

Steel utensils must not be used with aluminium dishes, since steel is harder and scrapes off aluminium which is then transmitted into the food in the dish.

Aluminium foil may not be used to protect steel dishes because the steel will make holes in the aluminium, leaving traces of it in the food.

Opened tins

When you have opened a metal tin, transfer the contents to another container for storage.

Why?

An opened tin will come into contact with oxygen. That can cause tin or other metals to come off into the food.

Choose appropriate disposable gloves

Vinyl plastic disposable gloves are not always suitable for the processing of fatty foods.

Regular vinyl gloves, for example, are thus not suitable as general-purpose gloves for working with food.

If the glove package does not indicate which foods the gloves can be used with, confirm this from the supplier.

Water source

Most companies use water from the public utility network. The waterworks monitor the quality of public water. If you use water from your own well or another water source or install water filters on taps, you must take samples of the water.

Alternatively, you may use the water-quality monitoring services of the health protection authorities in your own-check activities.

Purchasing ingredients and accepting deliveries

Restaurants often acquire ingredients directly from the food industry or from wholesalers. You must be prepared to check accepted ingredient deliveries at the intervals specified in your own-check plan.

Initially at least, you should keep track of the reliability of deliveries and, especially, the temperature of the cargo. It is sensible to unload ingredients directly into cold storage and frozen products into a freezer so as not to break the cold chain.

The operations of a restaurant can also be based on an ethical choice, such as locally produced or organic ingredients.

If you purchase ingredients directly from the farm, the producer or the kitchen of another restaurant, you should be aware of the rules and restrictions applying to such purchases.

Meat

The meat you use must be inspected by an official veterinarian in a slaughterhouse. This also applies to meat purchased directly from the producer.

There are certain exceptions to the inspection obligation for meat, such as for certain species of game.

■ **Deer meat**

You can buy deer meat with the skin and fur on directly from a hunting club if your restaurant is equipped with facilities for skinning and cutting the meat hygienically. You can buy uninspected, cut deer meat from a hunting club or hunter if they have notified their local supervisory authority of their operations.

■ **Hare and game bird meat**

The same rules apply to caught hares and game birds as to the meat of deer animals. The Hunting Act prohibits the sale of certain species of wild grouse, such as capercaillie.

■ **Poultry and rabbit meat**

You can buy uninspected poultry or rabbit meat directly from the producer.

NOTE! You may not use uninspected bear or seal meat.

Buying fish directly from the fisherman

You can buy ungutted fish from professional fishermen if your restaurant has facilities suitable for gutting fish.

Purchasing salt-water fish directly from a professional fisherman requires you to register as a first-purchaser of fish at a Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment or ELY Centre.

The addresses of ELY Centres are provided in the links on the same web page with the link to this guide.

Buying eggs straight from the farm

You can only buy eggs directly from the farm, without grading and X-ray scanning, if your restaurant is located in one of the exemption areas. The exemption areas consist of the former provinces of Lapland, Oulu and Åland and the regions of Northern Karelia and North Savonia, located in the former province of Eastern Finland.

If you are not located in one of these areas, you may only use eggs packaged in an egg-packing facility. Such eggs are sold by wholesalers and shops.

Raw milk

Raw milk can be bought directly from the dairy or in retail packages.

Milk producers can sell raw milk and frozen colostrum for products that will be heated during preparation directly from their farm.

Acquisition of organic ingredients

If you serve organic products, you will be subject to control of organic origin in addition to regular food control.

Links to additional information on the control of organic origin are provided on the same web page with the link to this guide.

Own beehives

If you want to keep your own beehives for producing honey for your restaurant, you need to file a primary production notification with the municipal food control authority.

The notification form is available on the website of the municipality.

In addition, Evira's website contains information on how to register as a beekeeper and how to report the locations of the hives to the agricultural authority.

This registration is mandatory.

Links to this additional information are provided on the same web page with the link to this guide.

Cultivation of herbs and sprouts

If you are only growing herbs and sprouts for your own restaurant, you do not need to make a primary production notification.

However, you must comply with the hygiene requirements for primary production.

Also, if you have your own well, the water must be inspected at least every three years.

Foods that are uncommon or unknown in Finland

You may want to use a plant or animal product whose use is not known in Finland.

In that case, before using the product, you must find out whether or not it has been used as food in another EU Member State.

If the product has not been used as food, its use may require [a novel food authorisation](#).

Additional information is available from the links provided on the same web page with the link to this guide.

You can also contact the municipal [food inspector](#).

The import of food products

The import of many foodstuffs is subject to special requirements.

You must determine such requirements before starting to import the products.

Additional information is available from the links provided on the same web page where the link to this guide is found.

Selling foodstuffs to other companies

You can also deliver the food you prepare to other restaurants or shops.

The resale of products made of certain ingredients such as fresh meat, fish or raw milk is restricted.

Other purchases

You can buy honey and cultivated plant products, along with eggs of other birds than chicken directly from the producer. Wild produce such as berries can also be bought directly from the gatherer.

Traceability

It must be possible to trace the origin of foodstuffs and their ingredients. Traceability means that you will need to be able to demonstrate from where ingredients and other products were purchased and where the finished products were delivered.

You must also know the purchase and delivery times of ingredients and products.

Efficient tracing enables the effective limitation of issues related to food safety. For example, poor-quality ingredients or ingredients that cause food poisoning can be removed from the food chain when their origin or place of delivery is known.

The better you are able to connect the information of ingredients you have purchased and food you have delivered, the better you will be able to limit financial losses and health hazards in the event of an incident.

Food information management

Food information management means knowing the ingredients of food and meals. In addition, you must be able to provide customers with the required information on food and meals.

It is very important and essential with regard to safety that customers are informed of any ingredients that may cause [allergic](#) or [intolerance](#) reactions.

Food is divided into non-prepacked and prepacked foods.

Non-prepacked foods

Non-prepacked food refers to foodstuffs offered as they are to consumers.

Non-prepacked foods are

- served to consumers for immediate consumption or,
- to make sales quicker and easier, packaged for immediate sales, such as [take-away](#) sandwiches or salads, or
- food packaged by the consumer or
- food packaged at the request of the consumer.

Prepacked foods

Nearly without exception, food served in restaurants is non-prepacked.

If you sell prepacked food, you will need to comply with specific, detailed labelling requirements.

More information on these requirements is available from the food inspector and Evira's guide on food information.

A link to the guide is provided on the same web page with the link to this guide.

What information you need to tell customers about their meals?

- Name of the food
- The country of origin must be indicated if necessary
- Ingredients and products that cause allergic and intolerance reactions

The food's country of origin, or the country in which the food was manufactured or produced, must be indicated if omitting the information could mislead the consumer. For example, if the information in the menu could give the impression that the food's country of origin is different than its actual country of origin.

For the time being, the origins of meal components do not have to be stated. For example, the countries of origin of the meatballs in a lunch or fruit in a breakfast buffet do not have to be stated.

Customers shall be notified of the presence of ingredients and products that can cause allergic or intolerance reactions, listed in the [food information regulation](#).

Customers must always be notified of the following substances and products that cause allergies or intolerances

- cereals containing gluten, i.e., wheat, barley, rye, oats and products made of these cereals;
- crustaceans and crustacean products;
- eggs and egg products;
- fish and fish products;
- peanuts and peanut products;
- soy beans and soy bean products; and
- milk and dairy products.
- nuts and nut products;
- celery and celery products;
- mustard and mustard products;
- sesame seeds and sesame seed products;
- sulphur dioxide and sulphite in concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/l;
- lupin and lupin products; and
- molluscs and mollusc products.

When preparing meals for special diets

When you prepare gluten-free, lactose-free, milk-free or other similar food, you must know the ingredients that cause these allergies or intolerances.

For example, a milk-free meal may not contain milk or products made of milk, such as cheese, curds or butter.

Information of non-prepacked foods

The information of non-prepacked food must be displayed in writing in a brochure or on a blackboard. The information must be easily discernible and presented in a clear manner.

The information can also be provided verbally, provided that there is a visible notice stating that the information is available upon request. As the operator of the restaurant, you are then responsible for the information and its accuracy.

Home deliveries

If the meals served by the restaurant can be ordered home, for example through the internet, the above-mentioned information must be made available to customers before ordering.

In other words, the customer must be notified of the following:

- Name of the food
- If necessary, the country of origin
- Ingredients and products that can cause allergic or intolerance reactions

Food transport

If you deliver food to customers, you must make sure that its safety is not compromised during delivery.

The means of transport and containers must be clean and they must protect the food from dirt, harmful bacteria and viruses and other harmful substances.

Food must also be maintained at a safe temperature during transport. Foods requiring cold storage must be transported refrigerated and food delivered hot must be transported so that it will not cool.

Summary

- ▶ Surfaces and utensils must be clean, intact and easy to clean.
- ▶ Make sure that materials that come into contact with foodstuffs are suitable for your purposes.
- ▶ Keep pests away from the premises.
- ▶ Each area needs its own, clean cleaning equipment.
- ▶ Monitor the reliability of deliveries and the temperatures of delivered goods.
- ▶ Do not break the cold chain.
- ▶ Follow the regulations issued on the purchase of foodstuffs.
- ▶ Keep cooked and uncooked foodstuffs separate from each other. Also, keep ingredients that cause allergies or intolerances separate from each other and from foodstuffs for which they are not intended.
- ▶ Ensure the traceability of food and ingredients and keep their documentation.
- ▶ Provide customers with accurate and sufficient information on foodstuffs.
- ▶ If you deliver food to customers, maintain the correct temperature during transport.



Section 4, Staff

In this section, you will learn

- ▶ Who needs a hygiene passport?
- ▶ How should the state of health of employees be examined?
- ▶ What kind of protective clothing is needed?
- ▶ When and how to wash your hands?

Persons who process perishable foods professionally must have a hygiene passport and wear appropriate protective clothing. A hygiene passport is a certificate of competence for demonstrating familiarity with food hygiene.

If necessary, the employees must also be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have salmonella infection.

The purpose of all these requirements is to ensure the safety of foodstuffs.

A hygiene passport

Personnel processing perishable foodstuffs must demonstrate an adequate working knowledge of food hygiene.

This can be demonstrated by a hygiene passport received through a competence test or as part of a food industry degree.

The employer must ensure that all persons who process perishable foods have a hygiene

passport. The hygiene passport must be obtained no later than three (3) months from the start of employment. Competence tests are organised and hygiene passports issued by competence testers approved by Evira.

Employees' state of health

Persons who process food that will be served unheated must provide a health certificate or, in practice, proof that they do not carry salmonellosis. The aim is to find carriers of the salmonella infection and to prevent the spread of salmonella through food-processing personnel.

If the employee only works the cash register, serves ready meals, or washes dishes, a health certificate or salmonella test will not be required.

What is salmonella?

Salmonella is an intestinal bacterium that can be transmitted through contaminated food or water and causes food poisoning.

The symptoms of a salmonella infection or salmonellosis can include

- nausea;
- abdominal pain;
- diarrhoea;
- fever; and
- headache.

How does salmonella spread?

Salmonella is most commonly transmitted through raw or poorly cooked poultry or pork, or through raw milk and vegetables.

Salmonella can also spread through foodstuffs contaminated by an infected worker.

Health examination at the start of employment

New employees require a health examination at the employer's occupational health care provider. This ensures that the person will not pose a risk of infection at work.

If necessary, a salmonella test will also be taken.

Salmonella tests should also be taken immediately if there is cause to suspect a Salmonella infection.

For example, if the employee has been travelling abroad and manifests symptoms of a stomach disorder.

Employees with a stomach disease are not permitted to process food.

In addition to Salmonella, many other bacteria and viruses can also cause stomach disorders.

More information on stomach disorders transmitted through food is available on the website where the link to this guide is found.

Protective clothing

Employees who process food must wear protective clothing.

The recommended protective clothing includes an appropriate uniform, hat or other headgear and work shoes.

The purpose of protective clothing is to prevent the contamination of foods being processed.

Waiters do not need to wear protective clothing.

If employees go outdoors, they should change out of or cover their protective clothing. This can be achieved, for example, by putting on a jacket.

Protective clothing must be changed and washed sufficiently often.

The staff can also wash and take care of their protective clothing at home.

Protective gloves

Employees can also wear protective gloves. Protective gloves are intended to protect food from dirt and harmful bacteria and viruses, which may spread through the hands of employees.

When must protective gloves be used?

Protective gloves must be used at least by employees with

- artificial nails;
- jewellery; or
- cuts on their hands.

Personnel who use protective gloves must change them often enough and wash their hands sufficiently often.

There are different kinds of protective gloves. You will need to select gloves appropriate for your purpose.

The processing of fatty foods requires different protective gloves than processing dry food.

Working at the cash register and unprotected food

Working at the cash register and processing non-prepacked foodstuffs is not a good combination.

If you nevertheless have to both process food and work at the cash register, be especially careful about washing your hands and changing protective gloves.

Use of jewellery and working with food

■ What is the principal rule regarding the use of jewellery?

Employees working with food, especially ones processing non-prepacked foodstuffs, should not wear jewellery.

The use of jewellery can be allowed, however, if they are covered with protective clothing.

■ Why is jewellery a risk?

Wearing jewellery can pose a food hygiene risk.

For example, moisture and dirt can accumulate under a ring.

A piece of jewellery or part thereof can break off and end up in the food.

■ Are false eyelashes permitted?

Use of false eyelashes is not recommended.

They can be permitted if there is no possibility of them falling into the food.

■ Why are piercings forbidden?

The use of visible piercings is forbidden if they cannot be covered with protective clothing.

■ Why are piercings a risk?

Piercings break the skin and mucous membranes and pose a hygiene risk.

A large number of bacteria live on the skin and mucous membranes and can be transmitted into food through the hands.

■ Are piercings permitted on the inside of the mouth?

Piercings inside the mouth can be permitted.

Washing hands

Hands have their own natural bacteria and can pick up bacteria from dirty surfaces. Some bacteria are harmless, but others may cause food poisoning.

For the prevention of food poisoning, it is essential to wash the hands sufficiently often when processing foodstuffs.

Wash your hands carefully:

1. always before starting work;
2. during work if necessary;
3. between work stages, for example, after processing ingredients and soil-covered, dirty or spoiled food;
4. after visiting the bathroom;
5. after handling money;
6. after smoking; and
7. after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

A cut on your hand? Follow this procedure:

1. Protect the wound with, for example, a plaster.
2. Wear protective gloves.

When you use protective gloves, you prevent the spread of bacteria from the wound to non-prepacked food.

Summary

- ▶ Employees who process food must be able to demonstrate the ability to process it hygienically. This is demonstrated with a hygiene passport.
- ▶ Personnel who process food must provide a health certificate at the start of employment and whenever necessary after that. The certificate demonstrates that the employee does not carry Salmonella or other infectious diseases.
- ▶ Employees who process food must wear protective clothing. The recommended protective clothing includes an appropriate uniform, headress and work shoes.
- ▶ Protective gloves are used if necessary.
- ▶ Follow the instructions on hand-washing.



Section 5, Own-check plan

In this section, you will be introduced to the own-check plan.

- ▶ What is it and why is it necessary?
- ▶ How is it drawn up?
- ▶ What do you need to take into account in the plan?
- ▶ How is its implementation monitored?

You must draw up an own-check plan before starting operations.

The purpose of the own-check plan is to help you describe your operations and manage the food hygiene risks associated with them.

What is the own-check system and what is it needed for?

As an operator in the food industry, you are responsible for the safety of your food. In addition, you must ensure that accurate and sufficient information is provided on your food.

In practice, you will ensure this through own-check activities. The own-check system is your own system. In it, you plan in advance how to manage the risks posed by your operations and how to correct any mistakes if necessary.

Through own-check activities, you can ensure, for example, that the storage, heating and cooling temperatures and times of foodstuffs are in order. In addition, you can ensure that food is processed hygienically at every stage.

Through own-check activities, you can also ensure that your customers obtain the required information on meal ingredients that can cause allergies or intolerances.

Own-check activities are mandatory, but a well-designed own-check system will also provide direct benefits to you:

- It reduces the likelihood of food poisoning.
- It helps keep customers happy.
- It reduces the need for costly official supervision.
- It will reduce waste and errors.

What must the own-check plan include?

The own-check plan covers all work stages essential to food safety.

You must also indicate how and through what measures you will manage risks.

Work stages essential to food safety can include:

- the purchase and acceptance of foodstuffs;
- storage;

- cooking and heating;
- cooling; and
- presentation and serving.

Risks include everything that can compromise product safety and the management of conditions.

Once you have identified the risks, you can think about means and measures for their management.

Where can I get help drawing up the own-check plan?

Contact your municipal food control authority or advisory organisations.

You can ask them for more detailed instructions or templates for drawing up the own-check plan.

You can also order the best practice and own-check guidelines for restaurants published by the Finnish Hospitality Association MaRa (titled “Omavalvonta ravintoloissa - elintarvikkeet”, only available in Finnish). The association charges a fee for the guidelines from non-members. Drawing up the own-check plan is easy with the guidelines. In addition, you can find material for drawing up the own-check plan in this guide.

What do you need to take into account in the own-check plan?

The contents of the own-check plan are always dependent on the extent and nature of operations. The most challenging preparation methods in terms of food hygiene (such as sous vide) require a more detailed description in the own-check plan.

In some cases, the plans can be very simple, such as work instructions. In such cases, it is not always necessary to present the plans in written format.

In companies with one or two employees, for example, all parts of the own-check plan do not need to be drawn up in writing. It will suffice if you can describe your procedures verbally.

Companies whose operations entail few risks can also present the own-check plan verbally. Such companies can be termed low-risk companies.

These companies do not serve many varieties of food and only process small quantities of foodstuffs.

A company that prepares food by taking it out of the freezer and heating it in the microwave is a low-risk company, for example.

The own-check plan may be drawn up partially or entirely in electronic format.

You can sign an agreement with another company for parts of the own-check plan

Some sections of the own-check plan, such as “Pest Control”, can be managed through an agreement with another company.

Even in such cases, however, the responsibility for compliance with the law remains with you.

Lightening/reducing own-check activities

In some cases, own-check activities can be lightened/reduced. Examples:

- The temperatures of the supplier’s products have consistently complied with regulations. In this case, you can decide to measure the temperature of this supplier’s products less frequently.
- The results of purity samples taken from surfaces have been good for a long time. In this case, you can reduce the sampling frequency.

When you have drawn up the own-check plan:

- Keep the own-check plan up to date.
- Update the own-check plan after significant changes in your operations.

How will the realisation of the own-check plan be monitored?

The implementation of own-check activities should be monitored and recorded.

In some cases, it may be to your benefit if you can demonstrate through own-check records that you have acted correctly.

Such situations include, for example, suspected cases of food poisoning and customer complaints.

You will be able to demonstrate that the products have been prepared and stored in compliance with requirements.

In your own-check plan, you will specify the frequency of recording the various aspects. For some parts, it can be quite sufficient to only record deviations and the measures taken to correct the situations.

Examples of record-keeping

For example, you need to check the cleanliness of the premises and surfaces each day.

In terms of recording these cleanliness inspections, it is usually enough to note any dirty surfaces and the fact that they were washed again.

You should monitor and record the storage temperatures of foodstuffs on a regular basis.

Own-check records must be archived

You must archive the records of your own-check activities so that the inspector can inspect them.

The records may be kept entirely or partially on a computer, or you can note the records down on paper.

The records must be stored for at least one year from the date of processing the foodstuffs.

In the case of food marked with a date of minimum durability, you must store the records longer.

In such cases, the own-check records must be stored for a minimum of one year from the date of minimum durability.

Responsibilities

Employees must be familiar with the instructions and methods related to their own tasks and with an impact on food safety. These instructions and methods must also be complied with.

Every employee is responsible for the safety of food.

You must appoint a person responsible for the own-check system. The person must have the knowledge and skills required by the task. This person must be familiar with the operations of your business and with the own-check system.

The own-check plan and the authorities

An inspector will check the restaurant's own-check plan. This is usually done during the first inspection visit.

Later on, the inspector will assess during regular inspections whether your own-check system is functional and well implemented.

The restaurant must ensure that the inspector will be able to inspect the own-check plan and the restaurant's bookkeeping in connection with the inspection.

If this is not possible during the inspection, the own-check plan and books must be delivered to the inspector within a reasonable time after the visit.

More information on official supervision is available via the links on our website.

Summary

- ▶ You are responsible for the safety of food that you produce and serve.
- ▶ You are also responsible for ensuring that customers receive accurate information about your products, such as with regard to ingredients that can cause allergies.
- ▶ The own-check system is a way of ensuring the safety of food.
- ▶ In the own-check plan, you will consider and plan in advance how to manage the risks in your operations and rectify any mistakes.
- ▶ The inspectors will also monitor the functioning and implementation of your own-check activities.

5.1 Contents of the own-check plan

Observe these minimum considerations that need to be taken into account in the own-check plan.

Monitoring the health of employees

At the start of employment and whenever required after that, you need to ensure that employees who process food are free of salmonella infection. The necessity of a test is determined on a case-by-case basis for each employee.

The own-check plan must specify how records of tested personnel are kept and where those records are stored.

The actual health information of the personnel does not have to be stored at the workplace. The information can be managed by, for example, the occupational health care provider.

Orientation, guidance and training

Employees require orientation in subjects such as work hygiene and the requirements for protective clothing and own-check activities.

Plan the following:

- How to introduce employees to hygienic working methods and own-check activities?
- How to record orientation and training?
- Who will be in charge of orientation?
- What kind of protective clothing will the employees wear?
- Where will the protective clothing be stored and how will it be washed?

Ensuring the hygiene competence of personnel

The employer must ensure that personnel who process unpackaged, perishable food hold hygiene passports.

How and where are records kept of hygiene passports?

The records can consist of:

- copies of the hygiene passports; or
- a list of persons who have presented original hygiene passports.

In small restaurants, it can suffice for the employees to present their original hygiene passports to the inspector.

Purchasing ingredients

Plan how you will handle the purchase of ingredients subject to special restrictions. The purchase of such ingredients should be addressed in the own-check plan.

Acceptance inspections of ingredients

Plan the following:

- How frequently will you carry out acceptance inspections on items delivered to your restaurant?
- How will you monitor the temperatures of refrigerated and frozen deliveries? They should be monitored.

Food production methods

If you adopt them, how will you manage methods that are challenging with regard to food hygiene risks, such as *sous vide*?

Any special arrangements for the use of premises

Separation in time means that different operations are performed in the same premises, but at different times. The premises must be washed carefully between different operations.

Make plans for the careful management of separation in time and washing the facilities and appliances.

Separation

Where necessary, ensure the isolation of different foodstuffs or ingredients during all work stages.

Plan how to avoid contamination when purchasing, accepting, labelling, storing and processing foodstuffs and ingredients.

Examples of segregation

- How can you avoid contaminating cooked and other ready-to-serve foods with raw or soil-covered foodstuffs?
- How will you keep substances and products that can cause allergic and intolerance reactions separate from each other and from food for which they are not intended?

A list of substances and products that can cause allergies or intolerances is provided in the “Food Information Management” section.

Also take into account the order of work and cleanliness of premises, appliances and utensils.

Plan the following:

- Will the processing premises have dedicated work stations and tools for foodstuffs that must be separated completely? Or will you use the same utensils and work stations and clean them between different applications?
- Will you also prevent contamination through the division of duties and work instructions?

Temperature management

Plan the following:

- How will you monitor the temperatures of food and its storage facilities?
- What will you do in the event of problems with temperature management?
- From where will you measure the temperatures?
- How often will you take the measurements?
- How often will you record the results?
- What will you do if the temperature is not within the limits specified by law?

At a minimum, confirm the temperatures during these work stages

- When accepting food deliveries
- During cold storage and other storage
- When heating food
- When cooling heated food
- During display

Traceability

How will you demonstrate the traceability of food and its ingredients

- from where and when was it acquired; and
- to where and when was it delivered?

How will traceability information, such as delivery lists and purchase receipts, be stored?

Please remember that traceability also applies to materials and supplies such as dishes, utensils and packaging materials.

How will you ensure that the customer gets the right information?

How can you ensure the accuracy of the information you provide to customers about meals?

You must be familiar with the ingredients used to prepare the food.

You are not required to disclose the precise recipes, but you must be able to provide product information if necessary.

Describe how the following information on meals will be provided to customers:

- name of the food,
- ingredients and products that cause allergic or intolerance reactions, and,
- if necessary, the country of origin.

If you sell prepacked food, how can you ensure sufficient and accurate labelling?

Withdrawals

Withdrawal means that food products that are found not to comply with the requirements for the safety of foodstuffs shall be withdrawn from the market.

Your own-check plan should include a plan for the possibility of withdrawals:

- Stop serving and selling the food in question.
- Act according to Evira's withdrawal instructions and contact the food inspector.

Suspected cases of food poisoning

If you receive customer complaints of food poisoning from food you have prepared, you must notify the local food control authority of them.

For the possibility of suspected food poisonings or other complaints, you should freeze samples of food you have served. Store such samples for at least three weeks.

Record the contact information of the food inspector in the own-check plan.

Management of packaging and contact materials

Plan the following:

- From where will you acquire your materials?
- How will you confirm the materials' suitability for use with food?
- Is the purpose of the materials and articles indicated by the names or packages of the products?
- If necessary, how will you confirm the purpose or conditions of use of materials from the supplier?
- Where will you store certificates of suitability for use with food or declarations of compliance?

Cleaning of premises and appliances

Plan the following:

- How will you ensure the cleanliness of premises, appliances and utensils?
- How often will each area, appliance or utensil be cleaned?
- Who will do it?
- What tools and materials will be used for cleaning?
- Where will the cleaning equipment be stored?

If the cleaning is handled by an external company, ask it to provide this information.

Water quality

Plan how you will manage the quality of water if you draw it from your own well or through filters.

Sampling plan

Plan the following:

- How will you monitor the microbiological purity of surfaces that come into contact with food?
At a minimum, you should carry out quick tests.

- How will you manage microbiological analyses?

If you keep food or convenience foods for several days, you will also have to evaluate the need for the microbiological analysis of food samples.

Maintenance of premises and appliances

Plan the following:

- How will you take care of the functionality and maintenance of premises, appliances and utensils?
- Who will be responsible for it?
- What scheduled maintenance or inspections will be performed?
- What will you do in case of problems?

Foreign object risk management

Plan the following:

- What kind of light bulbs will you choose for the facility? Will you choose lamps and bulbs that will not spoil the food if they break?
- What will you do if a glass container breaks during food processing?
- How will you prevent humidity and the flaking of paint in order to avoid flakes of paint ending up in the food?

Pest control

Plan the following:

- How will you prevent pests such as rats, birds and cockroaches from entering the premises?
- What will you do if pests do find their way into the premises?

Waste management

Append the following reports to your own-check plan:

- How will you handle waste?
- Where will you collect different types of waste?
- How often will you empty and wash the bins?
- Who will do it?

Food transport

If you transport food yourself, plan the following:

- How will you ensure the safety of foodstuffs during transport?
- What means of transport will be used?
- How will the food be packaged for transport?
- How long will the deliveries take?
- How will temperatures be managed during transport?
- What will you do in case of problems?

If another company is responsible for your deliveries, the above-mentioned points can be addressed in that company's own-check plan.

Organic products and import

If your selection includes organic products, your own-check activities will entail special requirements with regard to organic production. If you import animal products such as meat or cheese, it will entail special requirements on your own-check activities.

Section 6, Terminology

Some words have been underlined in the text.
These words have been explained in this section.
Terms are listed in alphabetical order.

Accessibility

Accessibility means that people with disabilities and other people with mobility difficulties have equal access to buildings, premises and services. Such people must also be able to function and receive services equally to others.

Allergen

An allergen causes an allergic reaction. Allergens include, for example, pollen, mould spores, pharmaceutical substances (such as penicillin), foodstuffs (such as peanuts, fish, egg whites and milk).

Almost any food can cause an allergic reaction.

Allergy

In food allergies, an ingredient of the food causes an allergic reaction. This can manifest as a rash, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, itching of the mucous membranes of the mouth and throat, swelling of the pharynx or nasal discharge.

In severe cases, the allergy may be life-threatening and requires immediate treatment.

The most common allergies in children are to milk, cereals, nuts/seeds, eggs and fish.

In adults, the symptoms are often caused by intolerance of certain root vegetables, fruits and spices.

Typical causes of food allergies in adults also include nuts and fish.

Any food can cause an allergic reaction if the person has become oversensitive to the food or one of its ingredients.

Bacteria

Bacteria are small organisms or microbes.

Some bacteria are harmful to humans, while others are useful.

Bacteria are present almost everywhere: in waters, in the soil, on people's skin and in the intestinal tract.

Some bacteria are unpleasant or even dangerous, since they cause diseases.

Bajamaja

A Bajamaja is a portable chemical toilet suitable for outdoor use.

Building permit

All new buildings and major renovation projects require a permit.

This permit is called a building permit.

In the first instance, the permit is applied for through the electronic permit service, but can also be applied for in writing from the building supervision authority of the municipality in which the building is located.

Building supervision authority

Municipal building supervision authorities grant building and minor construction permits and have a role in the supervision of construction work.

They also provide assistance and guidance for building and repairs.

Every municipality has a building supervision authority.

Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment

The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment are responsible for the regional implementation and development tasks of the central government in Finland.

There are 15 Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, and they are referred to with the abbreviation ELY Centre.

More information about your local ELY Centre is available at the address

www.ely-keskus.fi.

Cold chain

The cold chain means keeping the temperature of food sufficiently low for the entire duration of transport from the place of production, through the point of sale all the way to the consumer's refrigerator.

An unbroken cold chain is one of the most important factors in safe food production and self-monitoring checks.

Colostrum

When a cow has given birth to a calf, it will produce colostrum for a few days. Colostrum is usually sold frozen since it is highly perishable.

Compliance documents (of contact materials), declarations of compliance

These are documents that indicate the purpose of use for which materials and articles are suitable and which statutory requirements they comply with.

Contaminate, contamination

Food is contaminated when it contains a substance harmful to humans or a cause of food poisoning or spoilage.

Contamination can take place directly from one food or ingredient to another.

It can take place through dirty utensils and surfaces, the air or the hands of employees.

Vegetables can be contaminated during cultivation by coming into contact with contaminated irrigation water.

Airborne contamination as a result of coughing or sneezing is also possible.

Date of minimum durability

The date of minimum durability or best before date refers to the date until which the food, properly stored, retains its typical characteristics, such as taste or colour.

Products can be sold or used even after this date, provided that its quality has not deteriorated materially.

Declarations of compliance

See “Compliance documents”.

Deer

Deer include elk, deer and wild reindeer, among others.

Deviation

A deviation can be, for example, an overly high temperature in a refrigeration appliance.

Through your own-check activities, you can ensure that you will notice deviations and can rectify the situation.

This may mean, for example, fixing the refrigeration appliance and disposing of the foodstuffs if the deviation has lasted for a long time.

Disinfectants

Disinfectants are used to kill microbes, clean surfaces and both human and animal hygiene.

Food companies use disinfectants for purposes such as cleaning facilities and equipment after they have been washed with detergent.

In addition, disinfectants are used to clean the hands after washing them with soap.

Evira

The Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira plans, directs, develops and carries out food control at the national level.

The goal of Evira's operations is to ensure the safety and quality of foodstuffs and the health of plants and animals through research and control.

Final (decision, permit)

A decision made by an authority is final when the deadline specified in the decision for submitting an appeal or complaint has passed.

Final inspection

The final inspection checks whether the building corresponds to its building permit and that it has been built in accordance with the law.

A record will be made of the final inspection.

The final inspection must be requested while the building permit is still valid.

Food group

Food can be divided into groups based on its characteristics.

Food groups include, for example, raw meat and raw meat products, raw fish and raw fish products, dry bakery goods and ready-to-eat foods.

The segregation of different food groups is important in order to ensure that, for example, bacteria that cause food poisoning or allergens are not transmitted to the food.

Food control authority, food inspector, supervisory authority

The municipal food inspector can be a veterinarian, a health inspector or other municipal food inspector.

Food inspectors work for food control authorities, which can include, for example, environmental centres.

The purpose of food control is to ensure the safety of food and ensure that it has been labelled with the correct information.

The majority of food control is performed by the municipalities.

Smaller municipalities have organised their food supervision jointly through dedicated co-management areas.

Evira is responsible for the monitoring of slaughterhouses and facilities connected to them and for meat inspections.

Food establishment notification

A food establishment, such as a restaurant, is required to file a notification of starting business operations.

A notification is also required for any material changes, suspension or termination of operations and when the operator changes.

The notification is filed with the food control authority of the municipality in which the establishment is located.

A written or electronic notification must be filed no later than four weeks before the start of operations or any material changes to them. Additional information is available from the municipal food control authority.

Food hygiene

Food hygiene refers to all measures intended to ensure the safety, healthiness and purity of foodstuffs from primary production to consumption, in other words, from the field to the table.

Food information regulation

The food information regulation refers to the regulation of the European Union on the provision of food information to consumers.

The food information regulation specifies the consumer information that must be stated on the food's packaging or otherwise conveyed to the consumer.

The official title of the regulation is Regulation (EU) NO 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Food inspector

See "Food control authority".

Food poisoning

Food poisoning is a condition contracted from drinking water or food.

What is normally called food poisoning is an intestinal infection contracted from food.

Typical symptoms include diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and stomach ache.

In the worst case, food poisoning can lead to death.

Foreign object risk

Foreign object risk refers to the risk of objects or materials, such as glass, metal or jewellery worn by employees, being left in the food.

Hygiene

Hygiene refers to the promotion and maintenance of health.

In food companies, good hygiene ensures that disease-causing microbes, dangerous chemicals or other factors that can cause diseases do not end up in food.

Good hygiene includes, for example, washing one's hands and surfaces.

Hygiene passport

The hygiene passport is a certificate of competence.

It proves that you know how to process food hygienically.

You will need a hygiene passport if you process perishable, unpackaged foodstuffs in, for example, cafés, restaurants, institutional kitchens, food shops or bakeries.

Initial inspection

The first inspection carried out by the municipal food inspector is called the initial inspection.

With the initial inspection, the supervisor ensures that the facilities and equipment are suitable for their purposes.

At the same time, the inspection verifies that the operations and their scope correspond to the notification.

The own-check plan will also be checked in connection with the initial inspection.

Intolerance (food intolerance or food hypersensitivity)

Food hypersensitivity that does not fulfil the criteria of an allergy is called food intolerance.

Lactose intolerance, for example, is caused by the inability of the body to digest milk sugar, i.e., lactose.

In coeliac disease, on the other hand, a protein contained in rye and barley, gluten, causes an inflammatory reaction in the mucous membrane of the small intestine, which interferes with the absorption of nutrients.

Microbes

Microbes refer to micro-organisms that are not visible to the naked eye.

Microbes include bacteria, viruses, fungi or moulds, yeast, along with parasites or protozoa, tapeworms and nematodes.

The growths caused by moulds and yeast on the surface of food can, however, be seen with the naked eye.

Microbes in food can cause the food to spoil or can cause food poisoning in humans.

Microbiological analyses

Laboratory tests for ensuring the quality, safety and shelf-life of food or ingredients.

Microbiological purity

A surface is microbiologically pure if it does not contain microbes.

A surface that appears clean to the eye is not necessarily microbiologically pure.

For this reason, food companies, for example, use disinfectants in addition to detergent.

Disinfectants kill microbes.

Microbiological purity is tested with tests specifically designed for this purpose.

Microwave, microwaving

A microwave oven is an appliance for heating food and drink with the help of microwaves.

A microwave oven can also be referred to as a 'microwave' or 'micro'.

Mould

Mould creates growths on the surface of food, spoiling it.

Mould can be seen with the naked eye.

Mouldy food must not be used.

Do not eat or use, for example, bread if mould can be seen on its surface.

Novel food authorisation

A novel food authorisation is required if the product or ingredient has not been used as a foodstuff in the EU before May 1997.

The authorisation is applied for from the European Commission.

The application must include an account of the new food product's or ingredient's safety.

Organic products

Organic production generates products without causing harm to the environment or the health and well-being of humans, plants or animals.

In the production of organic food, the permitted additives and processing agents have been limited to the absolutely necessary.

For example, artificial dyes and sweeteners are not allowed.

Own-check plan

The own-check plan is a document in which are recorded the measurements taken by food entrepreneurs themselves to control the safety and quality of food products.

Perishable foods/foodstuffs

Perishable foodstuffs refers to food in which bacteria that spoil the food or cause food poisoning can grow rapidly if the food is not stored at/in the correct temperature and conditions.

For example, meat, fish, grated carrots and raw sausages are perishable foodstuffs.

Non-perishable foodstuffs can keep for a long time at room temperature and dry conditions.

These include, for example, nuts, spices and flour.

Pests

Pests include rats, mice, cockroaches, flies and silverfish.

Pests can spread diseases and spoil or soil foods or their packaging.

Primary production

Primary production produces foodstuffs and raw materials, which are then delivered to, for example, shops, the food industry for processing, or directly to consumers.

Primary production includes farming such as dairy production, egg production, beef cattle breeding, and the cultivation of fruits, vegetables and cereals.

Primary production also includes the exploitation of wild produce, such as collecting berries and mushrooms, fishing and fish farming.

Primary production notification

A primary production notification must be filed for a farm engaged in primary production.

The notification is filed with the municipal food control authority.

There is a specific form for the notification.

Process, processing

Processing food can consist of chopping, flavouring or cooking it.

Processing food in a food company requires a hygiene passport and health certificate.

Serving prepared food or moving packaged food from one place to another does not constitute processing that would require a hygiene passport or health certificate.

Raw milk

Raw milk is the milk of domestic animals which has not been heated to over 40 degrees Centigrade or processed in any other way.

Nothing has been taken away from or added to raw milk.

Raw milk is also known as farm milk.

Regional State Administrative Agency

Regional State Administrative Agencies carry out executive, steering and enforcement tasks laid down in Finnish law.

There are six Regional State Administrative Agencies.

In addition, Åland has its own agency.

Regional State Administrative Agencies are referred to with the abbreviation AVI.

You can find more information and your area's Regional State Administrative Agency at the address www.avi.fi.

Salmonella

Salmonella is an intestinal bacteria that can be transmitted through contaminated food or water and causes food poisoning.

The symptoms of a salmonella infection or salmonellosis can include nausea abdominal pain diarrhoea fever and headache.

Salmonella infections may also cause permanent damage, such as severe joint pain.

In addition, salmonella can cause serious conditions, such as blood poisoning.

Salmonella is most commonly transmitted through raw or poorly cooked poultry or pork, or through raw milk and raw vegetables.

Salmonella can also spread through foodstuffs contaminated by an infected worker.

Salmonellosis

Salmonellosis is the name of the disease caused by the salmonella bacteria. Salmonellosis most commonly affects the digestive tract, manifesting as diarrhoea.

Separation in time

Separation in time means that different food groups are processed on the same work surfaces or with the same tools, but at different times.

Temporal segregation requires the surfaces and tools to be carefully cleaned between different applications.

For example, handling unwashed root vegetables and gutting fish must be temporally segregated from other processing, if they cannot be processed on dedicated surfaces with dedicated tools.

Ingredients that cause allergies and intolerance reactions can also be temporally separated from each other and foods for which they are not intended.

Sous vide

Sous vide refers to cooking vacuum-packed food at low temperatures.

Supervisory authority

See "Food control authority".

Take away

Take-away meals are packaged by the restaurant for the customer to enjoy elsewhere.

Traceability

Traceability means that you will need to be able to demonstrate the place of purchase of ingredients and other products. Similarly, you must know where the finished products have been delivered.

Use-by date or expiration date

Instead of the date of minimum durability, the packaging of microbiologically perishable food products must indicate an expiration date.

This refers to the date until which the foodstuff is safe to use, provided that it has been stored appropriately.

A foodstuff may not be sold after its expiration date or used in the manufacture of foodstuffs for sale or service.

Valvira

Valvira or the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health steers, monitors and manages the licensing of Finland's social welfare and healthcare services, alcohol administration and environmental healthcare.

Viruses

Viruses are small particles which cause infections in, for example, the respiratory or digestive tract.

Viruses can cause colds, cough, diarrhoea or vomiting.

Viruses can infect humans through food, for example, or via surfaces touched by humans.

Wholesale

Wholesalers sell goods in large quantities.

They sell their products and services to shops, restaurants and other companies.

Wine glass and fork symbol

Packaging or utensils bearing the wine glass and fork symbol are made of material suitable for use with foodstuffs.

The wine glass and fork symbol indicates that the product fulfils the requirements

set for items and materials that come into contact with foodstuffs.



Wine glass and
fork symbol

Withdrawal

If it is discovered that a food product does not comply with the requirements for the safety of foodstuffs, the product shall be withdrawn from the market.

This is called withdrawal.

