



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.