The Home Baker Food Hygiene Guide

Prepare with clarity. Bake with confidence.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

5★★★★★

The preparation behind my five-star food hygiene rating

A practical guide to preparing your kitchen and organising your evidence in readiness for your inspection.

01 Start with your council

Register at least 28 days before trading. Registration is free. Find your food safety authority through gov.uk/find-local-council and obtain its current home baker pack or recommended system.

02 Make the pack your own

Complete it with your actual recipes, storage, cleaning, checks and corrective actions. If already trading without registration, register promptly and contact your authority.

03 Know your local rules

This guide draws on North Northamptonshire Council's pack. Follow your own authority's advice: UK rules and schemes differ. England, Wales and Northern Ireland use 0–5 ratings. Scotland uses a different scheme.

NNC: North Northamptonshire Council
EHO: Environmental Health Officer
SFBB: Safer Food Better Business
PPDS: Pre Packed For Direct Sale
FSA Food Standards Agency

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Learn the essentials

Training helps you understand the risks. Your daily practice shows how you control them.

01 Level 2 catering course

Before inspection, complete a **Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering** course as part of the preparation recommended here.
It provides essential knowledge and a certificate to document training.

02 My preferred provider

As of October 2026, High Speed Training offers: £20 + VAT (£24 including 20% VAT), with digital and printed certification listed. Confirm current terms. Ask your council which training level suits your role.

03 Free FSA allergen training

Visit allergy training.food.gov.uk.
Study all six modules and pass all six tests for the educational completion certificate.
This does not constitute FSA approval of your business.

04 Keep your evidence ready

Save training records and your completed food safety plan. Inspectors assess handling practices, premises and management.
Be ready to explain what you do, show real checks and describe your response when a control fails.

THE FOUR CORE CONTROLS



Cleaning
Remove dirt, then disinfect.



Cooking
Ukill bacteria by cooking thoroughly



Chilling
Control time and temperature.



Cross-contamination
Separate raw food and allergens.

Learn. Apply. Record.

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A kitchen that protects food

01 Clean hands and clean habits

Wash with running warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds; rinse and dry with disposable towels.
Wash after raw eggs/flour, toilets, waste, phones, pets or touching your face.
Gloves are not compulsory but need changing between tasks as they could carry even more germs. Gloves never replace handwashing.

02 Prepare yourself and the space

Wear clean protective clothing, secure hair, keep nails clean and cover cuts with waterproof dressings.
Keep hand washing accessible. Depending on your local authority's recommendations, you may need a 1.5 sink / downstairs toilet / utility room for washing of hands.
Restrict pets, children and visitors during production and cooling. Separate family cooking by time or space.

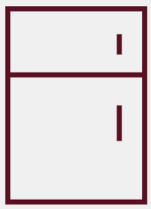
03 Check for illness and damage

With vomiting or diarrhoea, stop food handling and normally wait at least 48 hours after symptoms stop; some infections need longer or medical advice.
Replace damaged tools. Check for pests, remove waste and keep surfaces, water and washing facilities suitable for handling food.

04 Store with care

Protect ingredients, boxes and tools from dust, damp, pests and chemicals, including in out buildings.
A shared fridge needs enough capacity and effective separation.
Raw meat should always stay sealed below ready-to-eat food.

SEPARATE • PROTECT • CONTROL



READY-TO-EAT FOOD
Covered and stored above raw food.

RAW MEAT
Sealed and stored below.



Protect the workspace

Restrict pets and visitors.
Separate household activity.

A workspace that protects food

Sources: NNC pack; official personal hygiene and fitness-to-work guidance. Local advice takes priority.

Clean first, then disinfect

01 Choose a suitable product

NNC advises disinfectants/sanitisers meeting BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697.
Check food-area suitability, full wet contact time and final-rinse instructions.

Never mix chemicals or spray exposed food.

02 Preferred brand: OceanSaver

This brand is by TESCO and conforms to BSEN 1276. It has a 30-second to 2 minute contact time

Follow your exact bottle guidance and clarify any contradictions with the manufacturer

03 Remember the touch points

Include taps,sinks, fridge handles/seals,mixer controls, scales, switches, bins and phones.
Use disposable paper or an effective reusable-cloth washing/disinfection system.

Keep toilet and raw-food cleaning equipment separate.

04 Write a simple schedule

Record what, when, product, method, dilution/contact time, rinsing, responsible person and completion.

Keep labels available. Disinfectant alone does not remove allergen proteins: effective cleaning is essential.

EFFECTIVE CLEANING / THREE STEPS



01 Clean

Remove debris and grease.
Use detergent; rinse as instructed.



02 Disinfect

Spray surface (exclude foods)
Adhere to wet contact time.



03 Finish

Rinse if required.
Dry hygienically.

Clean thoroughly. Disinfect correctly.

Sources: NNC pack, supplied Level 2 cleaning module, GOV.UK .

Keep ingredients and cakes safe

01 Buy, label and trace

- Use reliable suppliers. Check packaging, dates and chilled conditions.
- Retain receipts, ingredient/allergen labels and batches; link production to orders.
- Decant into food-grade lidded containers without losing original date marks or opening instructions.
- Use-by concerns safety; best-before mainly concerns quality.

02 Assess each recipe

- Fresh cream, cream cheese and custard normally need refrigeration.
- Chocolate ganache and swiss meringue buttercream are not automatically shelf-stable.
- Set a supported, product-specific shelf life; seek technical advice/testing when needed.
- Taste, smell and sugar content do not prove safety.

03 Bake cool and thaw safely

- Avoid tasting raw batter/flour.
- Cool cakes promptly and hygienically; NNC normally expects 90 minutes, so agree suitable controls with your EHO.
- Use pasteurised eggs to reduce infection risk
- label frozen stock and thaw perishable foods in the fridge.

04 Monitor and act

- Check fridge temperatures whenever business food is stored, including non-baking days.
- If a limit fails, assess food time/temperature, record the decision and discard if safety cannot be established.
- Freezing or resetting the fridge cannot make unsafe food safe.



5°C

FRIDGE OPERATING TARGET

Check → Record → Investigate → Act

Use a checked thermometer.
Follow the limits in your plan.
The whole recipe determines storage.

Assess the whole recipe.

8°C is generally the chilled-food legal limit in England, Wales and NI; recommended in Scotland. Follow stricter product limits.

Allergens without guesswork

01 Keep recipe information current

Record ingredients, brands, labels and allergens foreach recipe version. Update when a brand, recipe or supplier changes. Control cross-contact through storage, utensils, hands, cleaning and production order; manage airborne flour and nut dust.

02 Make safe promises

Vegan does not automatically mean milk-free or egg-free. Only make free-from claims with reliable supporting controls. May-contain wording needs a real risk assessment and never replaces hygiene. Decline allergy requests you cannot meet safely.

03 Match information to the sale

Provide accurate allergen information for non-prepacked cakes; written information is clearest. Qualifying PPDS food needs its name and full ingredients list with regulated allergens emphasized in **bold**;
Other prepacked food needs further information.

Confirm classification and labels with Trading Standards.

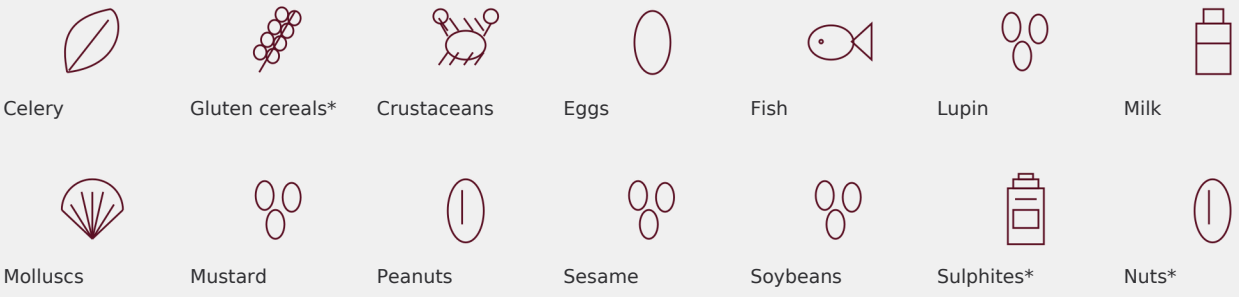
04 If unsafe food has been supplied

Stop sale, isolate stock and trace batches/recipients.

Withdraw or recall as appropriate, notify your food authority promptly and follow official advice. Food Standards Agency (UK)

Record the action and how you will prevent recurrence.

THE 14 ALLERGEN GROUPS



The 14 groups are shown above. Specify the cereal (e.g. wheat) and nut (e.g. almonds). Declare sulphites above 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/litre in the finished product.

Colours, decorations and handover

01 Check the Southampton Six

• E102 Tartrazine • E104 Quinoline yellow
• E110 Sunset yellow FCF • E122 Carmoisine
• E124 Ponceau 4R • E129 Allura red.

For relevant foods containing these colours, provide the colour name or E number with: “May have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children”. This is separate from allergen information.

02 Apply the warning correctly

Check gels, pastes, dusts, sprinkles, fondant and edible images.
A small decorative quantity is not a reason to ignore the requirement. Put required warnings on packaged products. FSA advises a displayed warning for loose stall sales and an on-pack warning when supplied through another retailer. Check food colour warning requirements with your local council’s Trading Standards team; provide clear written information with bespoke orders.

03 Use suitable decorations

Non-toxic does not mean edible. Use permitted food-safe glitters, dusts and colours, keeping original labels; check imported products before use. Assess flowers for toxicity, pesticides and contamination. Do not insert florist wire directly into cake; use suitable food-contact barriers. Tell customers which dowels, stems, toppers and other non-edible parts must be removed.

04 Control decorating and transport

Takeout only the perishable ingredients needed and minimize time outside refrigeration.
Track relevant exposure across stages; returning food to the fridge does not automatically reset the clock. Use clean packaging and vehicles and appropriate cold transport.

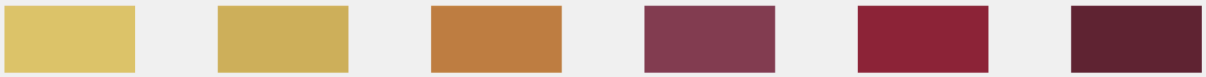
Plan for delays and venue refrigeration.

Give a safe handover

Provide written storage, display,serving and non-edible decoration instructions based on the actual recipe.

NNC’s pack describes a single period of up to four hours during service for high-risk chilled foods. This is not unlimited time for decorating, travel and display; agree any exemption procedure with your officer and record its start and end. Change the filling, design or schedule if safe storage cannot be provided.

CHECK THESE SIX COLOUR ADDITIVES



Required warning: “May have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children”.

Sources: NNC pack; GOV.UK Food and drink warnings and food hygiene guidance. Links on page 8.

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Your inspection readiness checklist

Safe routines, clear evidence and honest records are your strongest preparation.

CHECK BEFORE THE VISIT

- ☐ Business registered; current local SFBB pack completed.
- ☐ Suitable training completed and understood.
- ☐ Handwashing accessible; illness and household controls in place.
- ☐ Kitchen, equipment and protected storage clean and sound.
- ☐ Correct cleaning products and full instructions available.
- ☐ Recipes, shelf lives, allergens and colour warnings checked.
- ☐ Chilled storage monitored; transport and handover controlled.
- ☐ Supplier, batch, production and corrective-action records ready.

Keep records short and useful

Production Day: date, orders/batches, hygiene and cleaning checks, ingredients/allergens, cooking/cooling checks where relevant, storage/handover and initials.
Temperature log: date/time, unit or food, reading, initials, deviation, affected food and action.
Use the templates in your council's pack.
Record real checks as you work; never invent or backfill them.
Ask your council about appropriate record retention.

Be ready to explain

- How do you prevent contamination?
- Why is this filling safe under its storage conditions?
- How long must your disinfectant stay wet for?
- How do you handle allergy requests?
- What happens if your fridge fails?
- Show the matching method and evidence
- Complete inspection report actions by their deadlines

Essential links

Council finder: https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council
Registration: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/food-business-registration
NNC packs/advice: https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/food-businesses
Free FSA training: https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/
Level 2 provider: https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/ — search Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering.
Official guidance hub: https://www.gov.uk/food-hygiene-businesses
Allergens and colour warnings: search GOV.UK for Allergen guidance for food businesses and Food and drink warnings.
Scotland: https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/

About this edition

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Sources: NNC Home Bakers Pack v1 (January 2024), Supplied Level 2 cleaning module, FSA/GOV.UK, High Speed Training, Check for updated local council advice.
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