



**North
Herts**
Council



Advice on Preparing Cakes at Home

A guide for anyone who runs a home cake making business

Food Safety and Advice Cake Makers

This guide is for anyone who intends to run a food business from home making cakes. This might include preparing food to sell in shops, at a market, or selling to other businesses or consumers. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have produced a publication called 'Starting Up' which should be read in conjunction with this document. It can be viewed at www.food.gov.uk.

Before you get started make sure you have considered the following:

1. REGISTRATION

Your home will need to be registered with the Council as a food business. This is free, and there is only one simple form to fill in, but it is a legal requirement and you can be prosecuted if you do not register before starting. Please visit <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/food-premises-registration> to complete the online registration form.

You may need planning permission to run a business from home, so take advice from the planning department of the council. Contact them - planning.control@north-herts.gov.uk

2. BUSINESS RATES

You may have to pay increased rates if you use part of your property for a business. Contact the business rates at Revenues@north-herts.gov.uk

3. INSURANCE

Just in case things go wrong, we strongly recommend you to take out insurance to cover claims against you (third party insurance) in the same way as any other business. Unfortunately this can be quite expensive. You should consult your solicitor or insurance agent about this.

4. RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

Especially in older properties, you may find that the deeds contain clauses that prevent you from carrying out certain activities, and running a food business may be one of them. You should consult your own solicitor about this.

5. MORTGAGE/TENANCY RESTRICTIONS

If you have a mortgage on your property you must contact your lender and talk to them about your intentions. If you rent from home, it is a good idea to check with the landlord before registering, just to check they have no objections to your running a business from the property

6. FOOD SAFETY LAW

The laws on food safety apply in the same way to a business run from home as they do to all other commercial premises. You will be liable to regular inspections by officers from the Council's environmental health service, and you may face legal action if you are found to be breaking the food hygiene laws. This also applies if you use a kitchen somewhere else to prepare food, for example a village or community hall kitchen.

In addition you must also meet the requirements of the Food Information Regulations 2014. These Regulations state that all pre-packed foods must be labelled with certain information relating to ingredients, name of producer, use by dates, allergens etc. Further advice on these requirements can be found on the FSA website at www.food.gov.uk.



THE INSPECTION

Catering from home falls under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and Regulation (EC) No 852/2004. These Regulations lay down the requirements relating to persons engaged in the handling of food, the methods and practices used in food businesses and structural matters in food premises.

This is broken down into three areas: Management, Hygiene and Structure.

The standards you will have to meet depend upon a number of factors such as the type and quantity of food you intend to prepare, and what else the kitchen is used for, however the following has been produced as a guide on what is expected in most cases to meet the requirements of food law.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

This is a national scheme which rates a business based on compliance the three areas stated above. You will receive a rating following your inspection which will be published on a website at ratings.food.gov.uk. Your address will not be published.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

Eating out? Getting food in?
Check [food.gov.uk/ratings](https://ratings.food.gov.uk)

MANAGEMENT

FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

As a food business you are required to think about how you will prevent the food that you prepare from being contaminated and ensure it is safe to eat. Contamination falls into three categories: Chemical; Physical and Microbiological.

Hazard	Example
Chemical Contamination	Using cleaning materials that are not 'food safe' / storing chemicals around food
Microbiological Contamination	Not cooking food properly / leaving high risk food (such as fresh cream) out at room temperature / storing baked goods below raw foods causing cross contamination
Physical Contamination	Items falling into bakes (hair/nail varnish) / poor structure of the kitchen (peeling paint/damaged sink seals) / pest control

You are required to have a simple written system in place which shows how you will control these problems. The Food Safety team have produced a short document which you can use to meet these requirements, see pages 10-15. Complete the blanks in this document to form a food safety management system. A standard diary can then be used to record your checks.

TRACEABILITY

You need to make sure that you can show where all of your ingredients have come from and where your cakes have gone to. Keep a record of your supplier details for ingredients and keep a record of your customers and dates sold.

TRAINING

The law requires you to have suitable and sufficient knowledge to ensure that you prepare food safely. You may wish to undertake a food hygiene training course to help achieve this. Courses can be done on-line or in person. Details of in person courses can be found on our website at www.north-herts.gov.uk/food-hygiene-courses





USE BY/BEST BEFORE DATES

Cakes and biscuits sold in supermarkets are often full of preservatives and may have been specially packed to allow the products to have an extended shelf life.

Best before/use by dates can only be established by microbiological testing of a product.

As this is something which is costly, we suggest a short shelf life erring on the side of caution. Whilst most cakes are generally a low risk product, there could be mould growth and loss of cake quality. You may wish to do some trials (taste and quality) which will help you to confirm this, although you must bear in mind the fact that you can not see bacteria. As a general rule, we would recommend that high risk products are given a shelf life of day of production +2. If you need further information regarding best before dates, please contact Hertfordshire Trading standards at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/business/business-advice/business-advice.aspx

LABELLING

If you need information regarding labelling, you need to contact Hertfordshire Trading Standards. This may include the need to provide information on the 14 ingredients or products causing allergies or intolerances are the following: Cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut), crustaceans, molluscs, eggs, fish, peanuts, soybeans, milk (including lactose), nuts, celery, mustard, sesame seeds, lupin and sulphur dioxide and sulphites (at concentrations of more than 10mg/kg). Food allergy training is available online at www.food.gov.uk/allergy-training.



HYGIENE

SINKS AND HAND WASHING

Most people do not have a separate wash hand basin in their kitchen. You must ensure that you do however have "adequate facilities for the cleaning of utensils and maintaining adequate personal hygiene". If you are fortunate enough to be having a new kitchen or sink fitted, we recommend that you install a 1½ or double sink unit. One of these units can then be designated solely for hand washing.

If you only have one sink, you need to consider how you can meet this requirement.

As you will be using your sink in your household's day to day activities, you must ensure that before you start undertaking any baking that you thoroughly clean and disinfect the sink, taps and surrounding area. It can then be used for hand washing whilst you bake.

If utensils are washed in the sink, you must ensure that again the procedure for cleaning and sanitising the sink after use are implemented.

Food Safety and Advice Cake Makers



NOROVIRUS AND FITNESS TO WORK

You do not want to be the cause of an outbreak of norovirus or food poisoning

(sickness and diarrhoea illness) at a function you have prepared cakes for!

If you suffer from sickness and/or diarrhoea you must ensure that you are symptom free (no sickness and/or diarrhoea) for 48 hours before you undertake any baking or cake preparation.

Take the time to consider now what you would do if you had a large order to fulfil and came down ill.

HIGH RISK BAKING

Although most cakes and biscuits are classed as low risk products, some fillings and finishes are more high risk. Fresh cream, some cheese cakes and royal icing made from raw egg whites are all high risk and require extra thought to ensure they are prepared safely.

Cakes that require refrigeration must be kept at or below 8°C at all times with limited time out of temperature control (maximum 4 hours in total)



FRIDGE

Any items being kept in the fridge must be stored in a way which does not cause contamination. Raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables must be stored below ready to eat foods at all times.

You must ensure that your fridge is well organised and running at a temperature of 8°C or below. Use a fridge thermometer to check the temperature regularly.

Don't overload your fridge. The efficiency of the fridge will suffer if the cooling air circulating within it cannot flow freely.

Keep the fridge door closed as much as possible. Leaving the fridge door open raises the temperature.

If you prepare a large amount of food that needs to be kept in the fridge you may need a separate fridge which is only used for your business.

E. COLI

Making cakes is a low risk activity, however if you prepare raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables in your home you could be causing an E. coli risk. You must take care when preparing your food at home to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

You must make sure that before you begin work that your kitchen is prepared to be your "working kitchen". This will generally mean removing anything not required in the kitchen and thoroughly cleaning and sanitising the surfaces.

E. coli bacteria and other food poisoning bacteria can grow on the smallest food source on a dirty work surface. Proper cleaning and sanitising should also remove all the bacteria from surfaces and equipment involved in food preparation.

CLEANING CHEMICALS

You must ensure that you have appropriate cleaning chemicals to keep the kitchen clean and sanitise surfaces and equipment. Antibacterial sprays and sanitisers should meet a certain British Standard (BS EN: 1276 or 13697) if you are unsure whether your current sprays meet this requirement you may wish to visit: www.disinfectant-info.co.uk.

Different types of disinfectants require different dilutions and contact times. These are specified and validated by the manufacturer and you must follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and contact time to ensure the product is effective.



STRUCTURE

YOUR KITCHEN

You must ensure that the structure of your kitchen is kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition as to avoid the risk of contamination.

Walls	need to be a smooth impervious finish (for example tiled or smooth plaster painted with a gloss or silk vinyl paint)
Floors	need to be smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material (for example sealed lino or sealed floor tiles with water proof joints)
Ceiling	need to be smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material

Food Safety and Advice Cake Makers



TOILETS

Toilets should not open directly into your kitchen. However in some houses the toilet leads straight from the kitchen and can not be avoided. In these situations you must ensure that the toilet is well ventilated and the door to the toilet kept shut. People should not use the toilet whilst you are baking.

VENTILATION

You must ensure that you have adequate ventilation in place in the kitchen to prevent condensation, mould growth, and damage to decoration – but make sure open windows don't create a problem with flies and pests!

EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be in good condition and not be a potential source of contamination due to its condition or cleanliness.

All equipment should be carefully cleaned, sanitised and stored. You must regularly check equipment and repair/replace anything damaged.

PEST CONTROL

You must ensure that your kitchen is always pest free. This can be achieved with regular checking of the kitchen for evidence of pests (droppings/nibbled food). Making sure that no food is left out and that the kitchen is kept in a clean condition at all times.

Any signs of pest activity should be treated straight away. It is a good idea to record any problems you have and what you did about the problem.

STORAGE

You need to ensure that at all stages of storage, production and delivery the cakes that you produce are free from microbiological, chemical and physical contamination.

Storing equipment, tins and ingredients should be kept separately from your day to day items wherever possible. Lidded containers are useful for preventing contaminants falling into tins/equipment whilst it is being stored.

Food in the fridge should be wrapped/covered to prevent items falling/dripping onto others.



TRANSPORT

When transporting food it is important that it is protected from the risk of contamination e.g. pet hair, dust and dirt, insects. If the cakes contain high risk ingredients e.g. fresh cream they should be transported in cool boxes to maintain the temperature at 8°C or below.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

PETS

Having pets is absolutely fine! However you must consider this as part of how you prevent any animal hair etc from ending up in the food you prepare.

Pets must not be allowed in the kitchen when you are preparing food.

All surfaces/equipment that they may have come into contact with must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised prior to you beginning a baking session.

WASHING MACHINES

A common query is that of having a washing machine in the kitchen. We understand that washing machines are generally in domestic kitchens, you therefore need to consider this and ensure that no washing is undertaken at the same time as you prepare food for the business.

EDIBLE DECORATIONS

The Food Standards Agency have issued guidance on the use of glitters and dusts on cakes. Only glitter or dust clearly labelled as 'edible' should be applied to food for consumption. Further advice can be found on the FSA website: www.food.gov.uk.

EGGS

We all know that cake makers prefer to use eggs that are at room temperature. It is best to keep eggs in the fridge and to get them out a few hours prior to baking to bring them up to room temperature. Leaving eggs out at room temperature in your kitchen exposes the eggs to lots of changes in temperature, keeping them in the fridge keeps them at a constant temperature.

Eggs which are Lion Marked meet a specific safety standard. We recommend that you use eggs with this marking.



Food Safety and Advice Cake Makers

FOOD SAFETY HAZARD ANALYSIS FOR CAKE MAKERS AND GENERAL HOME CATERERING

Name of business:	
Address from which business ordinarily operates:	
Postcode:	
Name of business owner/food business operator:	
Signature of business owner/food business operator:	
Date this pack was first completed:	
Review date:	
(This document should be reviewed every year and amended when necessary, particularly if you start making a new product or use new methods of preparation)	

How to complete

All food businesses are required by law to have a documented food safety management system in place to show how they are producing safe food. This document can be used to meet this requirement for small scale caterers. You should examine each safety point in turn and complete the right hand column of the table to indicate how you, as the food business operator, will ensure that the food you produce is safe. Ensure that you consider any additional hazards specific to your business, for example if you also make jam etc.

Monitoring

Some aspects of your food preparation will require monitoring, for example ensuring your fridges are running at a temperature below 8°C. Where you need to record data a simple daily diary will suffice.

Traceability

Where you sell products to other businesses you must be able to trace them. You should consider what labelling and record keeping is required.

● **Safety point**—cross contamination

Why it is critical to food safety?	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>Food handlers should wash their hands thoroughly using hot water and soap before commencing work, and after handling potentially contaminated foods such as raw eggs or raw vegetables/fruits/salads. Bacteria and dirt can spread from the hands of food handlers to the product they are making.</p>	
<p>Clean aprons or clean clothing should be changed into prior to starting work. Dirty overalls or clothing can contaminate food with anything from bacteria to pet hairs.</p>	
<p>Hair should be tied back and excessive jewellery should be removed prior to commencing work. Loose hair can contaminate food and jewellery can trap dirt and bacteria and could also fall off into the food.</p>	
<p>Food handlers who are ill or have been unwell within the last 48 hours should not handle foods. This includes diarrhoea and vomiting illnesses and colds/flu. Some illnesses are contagious and can be passed on to customers through food handling. You should make sure that anyone who handles food has been symptom free for 48 hours before resuming work. (You should also have a back up plan to ensure orders are met if you are unwell.)</p>	
<p>Where finished products are stored in the fridge, raw meats and unwashed vegetables should either be stored elsewhere or on the bottom shelves of the fridge to prevent cross contamination. Cross contamination can easily occur during storage. Finished products and ingredients should be covered whilst in storage and during transit. Finished products should be boxed or wrapped in clean, food grade packaging.</p>	
<p>Fresh raw salad/fruit/vegetables must be washed thoroughly before use (particularly where they are to be eaten raw.) These foods are grown outside, often in the ground and could have soil/fertilizers on them. Both can contain bacteria sufficient to cause illness.</p>	

Food Safety and Advice Cake Makers

● Safety point- Cleaning

Why it is critical to food safety?	What I do to meet this safety point:
Domestic pets should be removed from the food preparation area before commencing work. Animals can carry potentially dangerous bacteria which could contaminate work surfaces. Their hair/fur can also be a source of contamination.	
Domestic kitchen equipment and surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised prior to use. Bacteria from raw meats or unwashed vegetables can contaminate work surfaces, fridges and equipment, which can then be spread onto the food (eg. cakes) being prepared.	
Specify the type of cleaning chemicals used. Reusable cloths should be changed regularly and washed at a hot temperature (boil washed). Alternatively single use, disposable cloths may be used. Bacteria can easily survive and spread from cleaning cloths onto food or work surface.	
Check your working area for anything (particularly very small items), that could drop into your products. Food could become physically contaminated, posing a risk to customers.	
Fridge shelves must be cleaned regularly. Fridge shelves can become contaminated with bacteria. This can easily pass onto hands and other products stored in the fridge.	
The kitchen must be generally clean and tidy, with no evidence of pests such as rodents or insects. Pests can contaminate foods and ingredients. Attention should be paid to cupboards where dry goods such as flour are stored as these foods may attract pests.	

● **Safety point**—cooking and temperature control

Why it is critical to food safety?	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>Please specify the different types of food that you make.</p>	
<p>Raw egg products, such as some chocolate mousses and cheesecakes should be avoided (unless you can demonstrate how you are making them safely). Products made with uncooked or lightly cooked eggs can carry Salmonella bacteria which can cause food poisoning.</p>	
<p>Bacteria can survive and grow in foods such as dairy items if they are not properly refrigerated. This then has the potential to cause food poisoning. Ingredients requiring chilled storage must be therefore be kept at correct refrigerated temperatures Indicate here, how you will be able to monitor the temperature of the fridge to ensure it is 8°C or colder.</p>	
<p>Indicate here how often you will check your fridge temperature. Will you write the temperatures down?</p>	

Food Safety and Advice Cake Makers

● **Safety point**—cooking and temperature control

Why it is critical to food safety?	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>If you are working on a market stall and have high risk products that require refrigeration (such as fresh cream cakes or cheesecakes) you must have suitable refrigeration available to store them. This could include cool boxes with ice packs or portable refrigerators. How will you check that the temperature is ok?</p>	
<p>High risk foods can be kept unrefrigerated for a single period of 4 hours during service. If you are relying on this exemption you must be able to demonstrate what time the food was first put out.</p>	
<p>If you are working on a market stall and supply open foods, such as slices of cake that are not pre wrapped you must take along a supply of water and cleaning materials for hand washing and equipment. Facilities for hand washing will enable personal hygiene to be maintained. (Antibacterial hand gels alone are not sufficient.)</p>	

● **Safety point—other**

Why it is critical to food safety?	What I do to meet this safety point:
<p>Catering premises should be using good quality, fresh, Grade A eggs. Lion marked eggs are from flocks that have been inoculated against Salmonella and are recommended. Ungraded eggs can be from flocks at risk of avian diseases and Salmonella which can contaminate eggs and the foods produced with them.</p>	
<p>Allergenic products should be used in specific batches and care should be taken to avoid contaminating other foods. Some people have severe allergic reactions to allergens and cross contamination must be avoided.</p>	
<p>Where foods are prepared in large quantities and then stored, you should have some method of being able to identify their shelf life. This includes foods placed in the freezer. Usual methods include date labels.</p>	
<p>Stock rotation will ensure that foods beyond their use by date are not consumed. Follow the FIFO rule- first in first out.</p>	

Food Safety and Advice Cake Makers

Daily checklist

Sink in a clear, clean condition with soap and paper towels for hand washing?

Fit and well, wearing a clean apron, hair tied back and jewellery removed?

Temperature of fridge checked to ensure <8°C (If storing high risk food)?

Surfaces all clean and disinfected?

Raw meat and unwashed vegetables are kept well away from cake area?

Pets kept out of the kitchen and windows/ doors closed to prevent flies?

Dates checked on food to ensure that they have not passed their shelf life?

Aware of any allergy requirements for the customer?

Please list any other checks that you feel should be made suitable to your business

Once these have been checked, mark in your diary that opening checks have been completed

Once finished, write in the diary the products that have been made and to whom they have been supplied.

For further information please contact:

Commercial Team
Environmental Health
North Herts Council

Email: env.health@north-herts.gov.uk

Tel: 01462 474000

This document has been reproduced (with amendments) with permission from Coventry City Council, www.coventry.gov.uk and LB Hammersmith& Fulham