

Alternatively visit our web pages on:

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20004/business/289/food_safety

Further useful contacts and information can be obtained from:

'Health and Hygiene in Village Halls', information sheet 20. Published by Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE). www.acre.org.uk ACRE telephone number 01285 653477

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Food Safety & Hygiene

**In Village Halls, Community
Centres & Similar Premises**

This advice note is designed to promote a greater understanding of food safety and hygiene within community and village halls. To prevent possible confusion between advice which represents good practice, and a specific legal requirement, the word **must** has been used to denote a legal obligation, whilst the word **should** is used to indicate matters of good practice.

1. Introduction

A well-used village hall is the centre for a variety of meetings and activities. Most halls have facilities for providing drinks and light refreshments and in some it is possible to prepare full meals. Whatever the level of provision, it is vitally important that standards of maintenance and hygiene in kitchens and food service areas are as high as possible. In a building used by different groups of people this is never an easy task and needs real commitment by the hall management committees. This advice note aims to explain the relevant legislation and to suggest a range of standards appropriate to different circumstances.

Those managing premises where food or drink is prepared or handled must identify and control food safety risks. It is up to the hall management committees to assess food safety risks and take all necessary steps to minimise them.

It is important to match the level of facilities to the way in which the hall is used, both in terms of the numbers of people and the type of activities. In many instances it will be best for the hall management committees to provide basic facilities which are clean and well

maintained and to let hirers provide more sophisticated equipment if this is needed.

Hall management committees are strongly advised to have one of their members present when the LA Officer visits to explain the use of the hall, and to consult the officer at an early stage when planning an alteration or new hall.

2. Responsibility

Where food is handled or prepared in the hall on a regular basis, the person, group or organisation preparing the food is responsible for ensuring that they are registered as a food business with SBC at the premises, and that the premises is adequate for the service of food or drink. Those hiring the hall and anyone preparing or handling food or drink are also responsible for safety and hygiene precautions and they must observe the relevant regulations to ensure that the food is safe to eat.

It is recommended that these responsibilities are drawn to the attention of the hirer either in the written hire agreement or at the time that the booking is made.

3. Legislation

The principal legislation affecting community and village halls is outlined below.

3.1 Food Safety Act 1990

This act aims to ensure that all food is fit for human consumption.

H) There should be a sufficient and suitable ventilation system.

I) There must also be a permanent source of fresh air where gas equipment is used in the kitchen.

J) Suitable and sufficient lighting must be provided, including in storerooms and passageways.

K) Toilets must be provided. There must be an intervening space between the toilets and the kitchen or other food rooms.

L) Outdoor clothing and shoes may only be stored in the kitchen if dedicated lockers or cupboards are provided for this purpose.

M) There should be at least one sink, and in many cases, a double sink with an integral drainer. Sinks must have hot as well as cold water supplies, unless they are to be used only for washing fish, fruit or vegetables.

N) There must be a separate wash hand basin with hot and cold water. Soap (preferably liquid) and paper disposable towels must be provided when the kitchen is in use. All sinks and wash hand basins must be maintained in a clean condition and good working order.

O) All cutlery, crockery, equipment and surfaces with which food comes into contact must be kept clean and in good condition and where necessary must be disinfected.

11. Allergens

If you are operating on a regular basis and therefore are registered as a food business, you must provide accurate allergen information about the ingredients that are in the food that you

are providing should a consumer request it.

Allergen information can be provided by keeping a copy of the labels of the ingredients used to make the food or by completing the record sheet "Dishes and their allergen content" which is available from www.food.gov.uk/allergy on the "Resources for allergen information page".

The presence of allergens in food will be highlighted in the list of ingredients on the label of the food served or the on the label of the ingredients used to make the food.

If you are a charity or community food operation which is not required to be registered as a food business, you don't have to provide information for consumers about allergens present in the food as ingredients. However we strongly recommend that you or anyone else responsible for providing the food has allergen information available for the foods that are being provided for the event.

If someone asks about allergens in the food being provided but accurate allergen information is not available, **do not guess.**

The provision of allergen information can appear to be a daunting task, further help and information regarding this, or any other food safety issues can be obtained by contacting the Food, Health and Safety Team who will be pleased to help.

A stepped approach to food safety training should be adopted. Those handling open high-risk food on a regular basis should be trained to elementary food hygiene level or its equivalent.

The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland's Level 2 Elementary Certificate in Food Hygiene course, or its equivalent is recommended. These courses are available from the REHIS, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), the Royal Society of Health (RSH) or the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene (RIPHH).

8. Transport

Where food or drink is being transported to a hall it **must** be protected against the risk of contamination. For example, it must be kept in clean, sealed containers such as cool boxes that are only used for food/drink or well wrapped in clingfilm.

9. First aid

A first aid kit for use where food is prepared should contain waterproof dressings. It is advisable to use blue coloured plasters.

10. Kitchen guidelines

The following guidelines are intended as a summary for kitchens where some food preparation/cooking is carried out. More detailed information is available from the Council's Food and safety Team

A) Floors should be in good condition, without crevices or splits, durable, non-absorbent, slip resistant and easy to clean. Carpeting or unsealed wood floors are not acceptable.

B) Walls should be light in colour, smooth, impervious, non-flaking and in a good state of repair and condition. Sinks, wash hand basins and worktops should have a tiled, stainless steel or similar material provided to the rear to act as a splashback.

C) Ceilings should be constructed to a smooth finish, be impervious and easy to clean. They should be well insulated to avoid condensation and mould growth.

D) Woodwork, e.g. door and window frames should be sealed so that it is smooth, impervious and easy to clean.

E) Work surfaces must be impervious and easy to clean. There should be sufficient work areas to allow the separation of raw and cooked foods.

F) Electrical sockets should be provided in sufficient numbers and suitably located so as to avoid the need for trailing flexes and extensions.

G) Water supply and drainage. There should be a plentiful supply of clean hot and cold water and an adequate trapped drainage system. If the water supply is from a private source, e.g. a well, borehole, river, stream or surface water, the water will be sampled annually by the Council to ensure it is safe to drink. It is most important that the supply is maintained, for example UV bulbs routinely changed, and that someone takes responsibility for this. Further advice on private water supplies can be obtained from place-health@scotborders.gov.uk.

3.2 The Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004

These regulations apply to any premises where food or drink is sold or supplied, whether or not for profit, including community centres and village halls; They set out the minimum legal hygiene standards which **must** be complied with. They are aimed at preventing the contamination of food and food poisoning/ food-borne illness.

Premises used by people supplying food, whether for profit or not, on a regular basis **must** be registered with Scottish Borders Council. Registration is of right and is free of charge.

Application for registration must be made by the person, group or organisation that is providing food on a regular basis. Application forms are available Scottish Borders Council's Food, Health and Safety Team or from the Council's website https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20004/business/289/food_safety

The Regulations also require anyone using a hall or centre to supply food or drink, to:

- Ensure that all preparation, storing, packing, transporting, handling and supplying or selling of food or drink is carried out in a hygienic way
- Identify food safety hazards
- Know which steps are critical for food safety
- Ensure safety controls are in place, maintained and reviewed

These Regulations cover all stages of food production, from preparation to serving or sale.

They require certain foods (such as cooked meat, fish and dairy products) to be kept either hot, at or above 63°C or cold in a fridge, except for short periods.

3.3 Inspection of Food Premises Environmental Health Officers, Food Safety Officers and Trading Standards Officers have the right to enter and inspect food premises at all reasonable hours, however an appointment will usually be made. Food safety legislation applies whether or not the food premises are registered as food premises.

4. Requirements for premises used for catering.

4.1 The premises **must** be kept clean and must be designed, constructed, and maintained in good repair and condition so as to reduce the risk of contamination of food and prevent access by pests. Food preparation areas should have washable surfaces. Surfaces which would comply, if properly maintained, are stainless steel, ceramics or Formica type surfaces etc. Joints between work surfaces could present a dirt trap and should be properly sealed. Surfaces made without joints are far better.

Surfaces that come into contact with food must be cleaned and disinfected frequently (or, if seldom used, cleaned and disinfected on a regular cycle and again before use). Equipment should be dismantled and cleaned and disinfected after use. Other areas where dust or food debris may accumulate **must** be cleaned periodically.

Chopping boards should be synthetic and preferably colour coded for different jobs to avoid contamination. Wooden boards are only acceptable for certain jobs such as cutting bread or pastry. It is important that chopping boards are not badly scored or ingrained with food debris or dirt.

4.2 Appropriate facilities **must** be available to maintain adequate personal hygiene (including facilities for the hygienic washing and drying of hands, hygienic sanitary arrangements and changing facilities).

There **must** be a separate hand wash basin with hot and cold water (or mixed water at a suitable temperature) in the kitchen. Soap and a clean towel, preferably disposable paper towels, **must** be provided when the kitchen is in use. All sinks and wash hand basins **must** be kept clean and in good working order.

4.3 Adequate provision **must** be made for the cleaning, and where necessary disinfection of work utensils and equipment and for the cleaning of foodstuffs.

Hot and cold water and detergent **must** be available for washing utensils and equipment. An instant water heater is acceptable, provided the temperature can be controlled and it is capable of providing hot water in sufficient quantities.

Ideally a double sink should be provided, one for food washing and the other for equipment, crockery, etc. but where this is not possible the sink should be cleaned and disinfected between different activities. Provision should also be made for the draining and drying of equipment, crockery etc.

4.4 Adequate arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse and food waste **must** be available. Refuse **must** be removed frequently (ideally by the end of each hiring event) from the preparation and storage areas. Hall committees may wish to include this as a requirement of their hire agreement.

5. Food storage and temperature control

5.1 Food Storage - All food/drink stored or displayed on the premises **must** be protected from contamination and deterioration. It is recommended that only dry goods such as tea, coffee and biscuits are stored on the premises and these should be kept in sealed containers or tins with close fitting lids.

5.2 Temperature Control - Compliance with temperature control requirements is the responsibility of the caterer providing the food. If a refrigerator is provided the hall management committee will need to be sure that it is operating at the correct temperature, e.g. below 5°C and must implement a system of cleaning and maintenance. A thermometer should be available and the fridge temperature measured and noted in a logbook when the facilities are in use. The refrigerator should ideally operate between 0°C and 5°C. A notice should also be displayed stating that it is the responsibility of the users to ensure that food is being stored at the correct temperature, e.g. less than 5°C.

Such a notice is particularly important where the refrigerator is not operating continually, since a 'start up' period will be needed before it reaches the correct operating temperature.

The Regulations require certain high-risk foods to be kept either cold in a fridge, or above 63°C, except for short periods. They apply:

To food regularly prepared for and served to the public in village halls (e.g. Luncheon clubs)

To food prepared in domestic kitchens and brought to the hall

To food supplied by commercial caterers (e.g. wedding receptions)

Foods subject to temperature control requirements include:

Daily products such as soft or semi hard cheeses (e.g. Stilton) ripened by mould and/or other bacteria, dairy based deserts such as fromage frais, crème caramel, or products containing milk or fresh cream.

Cooked products containing eggs, meat, fish, milk, cereals, rice, pulses and cooked vegetables.

Smoked or cured meat or fish including ham, smoked fish and salami.

Prepared ready to eat vegetables and vegetable salad (e.g. coleslaw) or products containing mayonnaise.

Sandwiches containing the above ingredients.

Uncooked or partly cooked pastry and dough e.g. pizzas or fresh pasta containing meat fish and vegetables.

Raw meat

Packaged products will have storage instructions on their labels indicating whether or not they need to be kept refrigerated.

6. Personal hygiene of food handlers The personal hygiene of food handlers is extremely important in the prevention of food poisoning. In order to remind food handlers of their responsibility for maintaining good personal hygiene standards, a notice should be displayed in the kitchen.

7. Food hygiene training

All food handlers **must** have an awareness of food safety matters, which reflects the level of work undertaken and which is in proportion to the risk to food safety. Clearly, those who are serving low risk food such as tea, cakes and biscuits, will only require a low level of training. However, those people who are providing high risk foods such as luncheon clubs, meals on wheels, wedding receptions, etc. where the food production involves more complex operations, will require a greater understanding of food safety matters.

As a general guide, people who handle food should receive written or verbal instruction in the essentials of food hygiene before starting work. This should include:

- Personal hygiene
- Fitness to work
- Temperature control
- Cross contamination
- Cleaning procedures
- Other safety instructions