

12. Food & Drink



Most events will have some form of food and drink on site, some of which may require a licence to operate.

The provision of food and drink to the public is covered by wide ranging legislation covering food safety, so it is important that event organisers check that those providing these services have the necessary licenses and training to comply with the law.

Food safety

All food-business operators must have a written Food Safety Management System (FSMS) in place, based on Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles and those operating the units should be trained in its use. There are a number of different systems including the Nationwide Caterers Association (NCASS) Due Diligence system; the Safer food, better business (SFBB) run by the Food Standards Agency; and CookSafe for businesses in Scotland. Food businesses can also have their own specific systems.

In addition to these systems, all those working in catering units should have at least a Basic Food Hygiene certificate.

A good way for event organisers to check out a caterer's standard of food hygiene is to ask to see their Food Hygiene Rating. The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) - or Food Hygiene Information Scheme (Scotland) - now covers most of the UK and provides an independent assessment of the food safety of individual operators and awards ratings based on this. The ratings, which take account of the operating standards as well as the state of the premises, are from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good) and should be displayed on every catering unit where they can be seen by the public.

Food businesses must also be able to provide information to their customers about the foods they supply in terms of the ingredients they include, particularly where allergens are concerned. The law requires that if any of 14 specified allergens are present in foods they must be clearly identified to customers.

In addition to food safety, a catering business must meet its legal obligations for health and safety record keeping which includes keeping records of any diseases or dangerous incidents that have occurred.

Licensing

Food premises do not currently require a licence to trade in food before 2300hrs and after 0500hrs, but there is a requirement for an authorisation issued under the Licensing Act 2003 for the provision of late night refreshment (selling of hot food/drink between 2300hrs and 0500hrs). In addition some local authorities require food operators at events to have a street traders licence.

If alcohol is to be sold at an event this requires a licence. If the event has an attendance of less than 500 people in England and Wales it will need a Temporary Event Notice (TEN). Larger events will require a full premises licence.

There is also a requirement for drinking water to be available via a tap where a bar is operating.

Drinking water

Event organisers should also ensure a source of safe drinking water is available.