



Advice on Preparing Cakes at Home

Food Safety Advice for Cake Makers



Braintree
District Council

This guidance is intended for anyone who plans 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 guidance which can be viewed at [Starting a food business | Food Standards Agency](#) and which can be read in conjunction with this advice.

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

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 [Register a food business](#) to complete the online registration form.

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. 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.

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The Inspection

Catering from home falls under the Food Safety and Hygiene regulations (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 several 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 the national scheme which rates a business based on compliance with the three areas stated above. You will receive a rating following your inspection which will be published on a website at

[Food Hygiene Ratings | Food Standards Agency](#)

Your address will not be published, just the first part of your postcode.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

**VERY
GOOD**



Management

FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

All food businesses are required to think about how they will prevent the food they prepare from being contaminated and ensure it is safe to eat.

Contamination falls into three categories: chemical, physical and microbiological.

You are required to have a simple written system in place which shows how you will control these problems.

The Food and Safety Team have produced a short document 'Food Safety Management System for Cake Makers and general home catering' which you can use to meet these requirements, which will be sent out with this guide. Complete the blanks in this document to form a food safety management system.

TRACEABILITY

You need to make sure that you can show where all your ingredients have come from and to where your products have been sold. 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 online or in person and can be offered by many training providers, including courses run by Braintree District Council (details of which are on our website at [Food safety training – Braintree District Council](#))

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USE BY / BEST BEFORE DATES

Cakes and biscuits often contain 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 that you cannot see bacteria.



LABELLING

You need to tell customers if any of your food contains any of the listed allergens as an ingredient. Consumers may be allergic or have intolerance to other ingredients, but only 14 allergens are required to be declared as allergens by food law: celery, cereals containing gluten (such as wheat, rye, barley, and oats), crustaceans (such as prawns, crabs and lobsters), eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs (such as mussels and oysters), mustard, peanuts, sesame, soybeans, sulphur dioxide and sulphites (if the sulphur dioxide and sulphites are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million), tree nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts,

brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts).

Free food allergy training is available online at [Food Allergy Training | Food Standards Agency](#).

NATASHA'S LAW - A food allergen labelling requirement from 1 October 2021.

This labelling requirement for food which is "Pre-packed for Direct Sale" (PPDS) will help protect your customers by providing potentially life-saving allergen information on packaging.

What is Pre-packed for Direct Sale (PPDS)?

Pre-packed for Direct Sale (PPDS) is food which is packaged at the same place that it is offered or sold to consumers and is in this packaging **before** it is ordered or selected. If you wrap or pack your bakes, or you sell them elsewhere on a market stall or mobile site, these requirements will apply to you.

What is the requirement?

Any business that produces PPDS food will be required to label it with the name of the food and a full ingredients list, with allergenic ingredients emphasised within the list (e.g. in **bold** text).

Where can I find out more?

The Food Standards Agency has produced an allergen and ingredients labelling tool. You can check if your business sells PPDS food and find out more about the different requirements for labelling, and what you need to do at [Allergen labelling | Food Standards Agency](#).

If you require more information or do not understand the requirements, please contact Trading Standards at Essex County Council.

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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”.



We recommend that you install a 1½ or double sink unit. One of these sinks can then be designated solely for hand washing.

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



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 is implemented.

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

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, or amongst your customers.



If you suffer from sickness and/or diarrhoea you must ensure that you are symptom free (no sickness and/or diarrhoea without the help of medicine) 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 became 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 cheesecakes 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).

Royal icing is traditionally produced using raw egg whites. This method can still be used however we would recommend that British Lion marked eggs (or a demonstrably equivalent comprehensive quality assurance scheme) are used, and that these products are not given to vulnerable groups (the young, elderly or pregnant). You can now purchase pasteurised dried egg whites or pasteurised royal icing mixes which remove this risk.

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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.



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 the British Standard (**BS EN: 1276 or 13697**).

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

E. COLI

Making cakes is a low-risk activity, however if you prepare raw meat and unwashed salad and vegetables in your home you may introduce 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.



Structure

You must ensure that the structure of your kitchen is kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition so 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 impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material (for example, sealed lino or sealed floor tiles with waterproof joint) but also give due consideration to slip resistance. |
| Ceiling | need to be smooth, impervious, non-absorbent, washable and of non-toxic material. |

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TOILETS

Toilets should not open directly into your kitchen. If you have a toilet that does open directly into the kitchen it might not be possible for you to use your kitchen as a food business. Should you wish to pursue operating a food business from your home address you are likely to need to alter the structure to provide a lobby between the toilet and the kitchen. Please contact the Food & Safety Team at Braintree District Council to discuss further.

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. Fly screens and fly chains can be fitted to doors and windows if they are open during food preparation times.

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.

Cakes should be covered, with, for example, clean tea towels or mesh cake domes when cooling. 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.



Storage 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 on to others.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

TRANSPORT

When transporting food, it is important that it is protected from the risk of contamination e.g. pet hair, dust, dirt, and 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.

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.

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

EDIBLE DECORATIONS

Non-edible cake decorating materials, described as dusts or glitters, are often marketed in ways that could be misleading. These include products only labelled as 'non-toxic', without stating they are not to be consumed.

As a food manufacturer you must ensure that you safely use glitters and dusts with food. If you are unsure if a 'non-toxic' glitter or dust is safe for use in contact with food should contact the glitter or dust supplier.

(Glitter manufacturers have to provide suppliers with a 'declaration of compliance' to show the product(s) meet the requirements of legislation for food contact materials and articles)

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 a lot of changes in temperature; keeping them in the fridge keeps them at a constant temperature.



Food businesses must use Grade A eggs. These are eggs which have been packed in an approved packing centre, and which specify Grade A, packing centre number and best before date on the packaging. You cannot use eggs produced by your own hens, or eggs bought locally via gate sales. We recommend you use eggs marked as meeting a specific safety standard such as British Lion, laid in Britain or other egg assurance schemes.

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For further information please contact:

Food & Safety Team

Braintree District Council

Causeway House

Bocking End

Braintree

Essex CM7 1HB

Tel: 01376 552525

Email: food&safety@braintree.gov.uk

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk>

[Food Standards Agency - GOV.UK](https://www.foodstandards.gov.uk)

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