Guidance Note (GUI) **8**

**Food Safety**

Events may be so large, and/or taking place over several days, so that even a very experienced caterer and event organiser may be dealing with something out of the ordinary. Food business operators must be registered with the local authority where they are usually based. It is a legal requirement for food business operators to have documented food safety management procedures that detail the steps taken to ensure the safety of foods prepared and served. Such documents should be present for inspection at each stall/mobile unit.

**Four Golden Rules for Food Safety:**

* Choose foods that can be cooked and served safely.
* Use staff who know what they are doing, who are suitably trained and who can demonstrate good standards of personal hygiene (effective hand washing – hot water, soap and hygienic hand drying facilities, fitness for work, appropriate protective clothing). Please note – sanitising alcohol gel must not be used as a substitute for hand washing.
* Manage cleaning and disinfection to the highest standards.
* Store perishable foods that support the growth of bacteria at 8°C or below.

**The Foods**

* Keep it simple and only put on the menu what can be handled safely.
* If foods cannot be stored, cooked, and served safely – do not use them.
* Do not serve any salad dressing, sauce or pudding made with uncooked egg.
* Never use any foods beyond the use-by dates.
* Serve foods that do not require refrigeration – for example apple pie, biscuits, olives, and fruit salad to reduce storage problems.

**Storage and cooking – cold food, buffet dishes, cream dishes**

* Hire extra refrigeration equipment, as necessary. High-risk foods should be refrigerated at ideally at 5°C or less until ready for service. Keeping food cold is a priority.
* Make a list of all the cold foods to be used – then work out if there is sufficient refrigerator space to store them properly.
* Ensure all foods are covered with suitable materials during storage (for example foil, plastic wrap or plastic lidded containers).

**Storage and cooking of food that will be served hot**

* Ensure that foods can be cooked safely, core temperatures must reach at least 75°C.
* Ensure the equipment to be used has sufficient capacity to cook foods thoroughly, without causing cold spots.
* If food is to be served hot, ensure you use suitable and sufficient equipment capable of keeping food above 63°C.
* Ensure dishes made with minced meats, burgers, stuffed joints and rolled joints are cooked through to core temperature of 75°C (there should be "no pink bits" and juices should run clear).
* There should be means for checking core temperatures. Determine who will carry out this monitoring. Ensure any thermometer used is calibrated, cleaned, and disinfected between uses.
* The preparation of raw and cooked food must be always kept separate to prevent cross contamination.
* Make sure you use separate boards, knives, and containers for raw and ready to eat foods to prevent cross contamination.

**Cooling hot food/Cooking to serve cold or to reheat**

* Food must be cooled within one and a half-hour of cooking so that it can be put in the refrigerator. You must make sure this can be achieved.
* If food is to be reheated it must be kept refrigerated until this takes place. The food must then be reheated to 75°C or above. You must make sure this can be achieved.
* Determine how the temperatures will be checked and recorded.

**Allergens**

* You must be familiar with the 14 common allergenic foods (cereals containing gluten, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, molluscs, crustacea, milk, celery, lupin, mustard, sesame seeds, soya, and sulphur dioxide), and understand that consumption of such foods can cause serious harm to individuals.
* Should any customer ask whether an allergenic ingredient is present in a food, you must be able to provide full and accurate information.
* Keep all original ingredient labels so you can refer to them should a customer make an enquiry.
* Consider potential cross contamination of allergens. Even if a specific allergen has not been purposefully added to a food, it could still be present by means of transfer from a utensil, cloth, person, or any other vehicle, especially if the preparation area is limited in size.

**Some Final Thoughts**

For further guidance on food safety contact the Council’s Environmental Health (Commercial) Team, Redcar and Cleveland House**, Kirkleatham Street**, Redcar TS10 1RT. Tel: 01287 774774. Information is also available on the Council’s website.

If you are intending to use contract caterers or mobile food units, ensure that they are registered with their own Local Authority and can demonstrate that they are trained in food hygiene. Ask for a copy of the latest food hygiene inspection report.

Mark the location of each of the food traders on a plan*.* Knowing where food traders are operating gives Environmental Health staff visiting the site the opportunity to clearly identify each trader and give you feedback on any issues they may have.

Make Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council Environmental Health staff aware of the type of food traders you intend to use at the earliest opportunity. Food inspections are prioritised on a risk basis. Food traders that are preparing high-risk foods or using specialist cooking methods score more on the risk rating system than those only handling wrapped produce.

Make adequate provision for all food traders to be supplied with potable water. It is a legal requirement for food premises to have a supply of potable water. The event needs to be able to provide the traders with such a supply if they do not have their own.

Estimate the amount of food waste likely to be produced and make waste collection and disposal provisions for the food traders operating at your event. If the caterers supply food in packaging, then litter bins and litter picking will also need to be addressed.