

FOOD/CATERING SECTOR

(See also [Cold Store Warehousing\(15\)](#); [Electrical Equipment\(22\)](#); [Fire\(26\)](#); [First Aid\(28\)](#); [Food Equipment\(30\)](#); [Lighting\(47\)](#); [Slips, Trips and Falls\(77\)](#); [Ventilation\(85\)](#); [Young Workers\(94\)](#))

INTRODUCTION

The food industry, which includes food producers, manufacturers, processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers and caterers comprises one of the largest business sectors in the UK. The catering sector alone, which covers restaurants, hotels, take-aways, public houses and night clubs, employs in excess of 1.2 million people at an average of about 7 employees per premise.

In addition to this workforce, a large number of members of the public come into contact with food/catering businesses, either whilst visiting retailers, eating at restaurants or staying at hotels. Employees and others have a duty to protect the health and safety of these people whilst on their premises.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE FOOD/CATERING INDUSTRY

1. Slips, Trips and Falls
 - condition of the flooring, or its covering
 - obstructions (equipment, boxes, trailing cables, etc.)
 - spillages
 - condition of lighting on staircases; fitting of hand-rails
 - suitability of footwear
 - performance of flooring when wet
 - condition/suitability of stepladders, etc.
2. Space Requirements
 - sufficiency of floor area; positioning of equipment in relation to work processes.
3. Storage
 - adequate storage space for the amount of stock normally kept
 - means of access to goods stored on racking systems, e.g. stepladders etc.
4. Training and Safe Systems of Work
 - required for all functions, but particularly those involving hazardous operations, e.g.
 - * draining of hot oil from catering equipment
 - * diluting/mixing/decanting cleaning chemicals
 - * dismantling/cleaning dangerous equipment, e.g. food slicers/mixers etc.
 - * manual handling of heavy/awkward loads

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5. Cleanliness and Waste Materials
 - good housekeeping standards maintained
 - regular cleaning and removal of waste materials
 - all surfaces capable of being kept clean.
6. Electrical Safety
 - periodic checks on the fixed electrical system by a qualified electrician
 - procedures to maintain the safety of electrical equipment including user checks, formal visual inspection and combined inspection and testing (where necessary).
7. Machinery/Equipment
 - appropriate guards to be maintained and used
 - servicing contracts; safe maintenance of equipment
 - training in the use of hazardous equipment eg. slicing/chopping machines, mixers, bandsaws, etc.
8. Manual Handling
 - precautions, training, instructions for carrying loads.
 - provision of suitable equipment to remove the need for excessive manual handling, e.g. sack trucks, trolleys, roll cages, etc.
9. Provision of First Aid
 - sufficient and suitable first aid equipment, facilities and personnel
 - suitable notices displayed in the workplace.
10. Welfare Facilities
 - suitable and sufficient sanitary accommodation, washing facilities, accommodation for clothing and rest facilities
 - provision of changing facilities.
11. Lighting/Ventilation
 - suitable and sufficient ventilation to avoid excessive build-up of heat and to remove cooking fumes
 - adequate natural and/or artificial lighting, particularly to stairs, passageways and storerooms.
12. Hazardous Substances
 - COSHH assessments will be required, particularly in relation to cleaning chemicals.
13. Occupational Dermatitis
 - Caused by the skin coming into contact with substances at work.
 - simple health surveillance provided in workplace.

ADDRESSING HAZARDS

- carry out risk assessments where required
- ensure proper maintenance and use of all equipment
- introduce safe systems of work for all activities
- allocate responsibility for health and safety to a nominated member of staff
- ensure all staff are aware of hazards and are either informed, instructed or trained in risk control procedures.

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CHECKLIST

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| 1. Are your premises covered by: | | |
| i) a health and safety policy statement
(required if you have 5 or more employees) | YES | NO |
| ii) risk assessments | YES | NO |
| 2. Have you established safe systems of work/safe practices to control risks in a food retailing/catering environment? | YES | NO |
| 3. Have you informed, instructed or trained your staff (as appropriate) with regards to hazards in the workplace. | YES | NO |

REFERENCES/FURTHER DETAILS

- *1. Booklet L24 - Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare. (Approved Code of Practice) - HSE ISBN 0-7176 0413-6
- *2. Leaflet IND(G)225(L) - Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls at Work – HSE. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg225.pdf.
- *3. Slips, and Trips: Guidance For The Food Processing Industry -HSE - HS(G)156 ISBN 0-7176-0832-8.
- **4. Leaflet IND(G)231(L) - Electrical Safety and You – HSE. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg231.pdf
- **5. Leaflet IND(G)214(L) - First Aid At Work – HSE www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.htm
- **6. Leaflet IND(G)163(L) - 5 Steps to Risk Assessment – HSE www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf
- **7. Leaflet IND(G)136(L) - COSHH – HSE. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg136.pdf
- **8. Leaflet IND(G)213(L) - 5 Steps to Information, Instruction and Training www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg213.pdf
- *9. HSE Information Sheet - Occupational Dermatitis in the Catering and Food Industries. Food Sheet No. 17. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/food17.htm
- *10. Catering Information Sheet 7. An index of health & safety guidance in the catering industry-HSE. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cais7.pdf

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- * Available to view by prior arrangement at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Environmental Health Services, Council House, Coton Road, Nuneaton. CV11 5AA
 - ** Free copy available from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council at the above address.

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