

Food & Safety Update

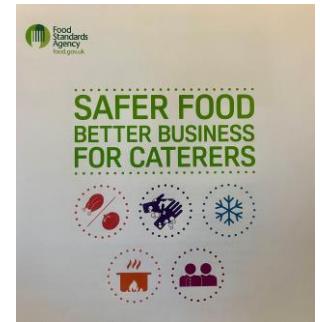
Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk



SAFER FOOD BETTER BUSINESS

Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) was designed and developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to help small catering businesses adopt robust food safety procedures and comply with the legal requirement to maintain a documented food safety management system.

Many businesses have been using SFBB since its introduction, and it's encouraging to see how embedded the system has become. However, we are still finding cases where businesses are relying on the original pack issued in 2006. While this shows long-term commitment, it also means some food safety documentation may now be outdated as there have been additions to the pack over the years, including allergens.



“Foodborne illness is preventable with the right precautions.”

Food businesses are required to document their food safety controls and carry out regular monitoring to ensure those controls are being implemented correctly. The amount of documentation you need will depend on the type of food you prepare, and the level of risk involved.

Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) was designed to help small catering businesses focus on controlling the four main potential hazards found in any catering operation:

- Cross-contamination
- Cleaning
- Chilling
- Cooking

Each section of the pack contains a series of Safe Methods that you must read and complete. Some may not apply to your business, depending on the activities you carry out.

If a safe method is not relevant, we recommend marking it as Not Applicable (N/A). This demonstrates that you have read, considered, and assessed the method, and determined that it does not apply to your operation.

At the back of the pack, you will find the Management Section, which explains how the system should be monitored and recorded. This includes the checks you need to carry out, how

often they should be completed, and the records you must keep showing that your food safety management system is working effectively.

A simple diary is provided for record keeping & includes a 4-weekly review, to help ensure that the document remains up to date.

Benefits of Using SFBB

Compliance with Food Safety Legislation - By following and maintaining your SFBB pack, you can be confident that you are meeting the legal requirements for documenting and managing food safety controls.

A Recognised Food Safety Management System - SFBB is widely used across the UK and is recognised by enforcement authorities as an effective and appropriate food safety management system for small catering businesses.

Improved Food Safety and Potentially Fewer Inspections - Using SFBB helps ensure that the food you produce is safe. A well-maintained system can also demonstrate good management practices, which may result in fewer visits from your Food Officer.

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Free to Access and Simple to Implement - The pack is available to download and print at no cost. Once downloaded, you simply complete each section and ensure your staff are trained in the safe methods and procedures you have put in place.

Update & Review

For those of you still using the original SFBB pack, it is now time to update and replace your version. The pack has been amended several times since it was first introduced, and businesses must ensure they are working from the most up-to-date version.

We recommend checking your current pack against the downloadable version available on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) website [Safer food, better business for caterers | Food Standards Agency](#)

If you need a new pack, you can download and print it yourself. Please be aware that the full pack contains over 100 colour pages, which may be costly to print if you are using a small domestic printer.

It can be printed in black & white or you could keep an electronic completed copy of the main pack and print the daily diary sheets on paper.

Alternatively, you can order a printed copy from us. To do this, please contact the Customer Information Centre 01553 616200 and request the relevant SFBB pack for your business type (Caterers, Retailers, Indian Cuisine, Chinese Cuisine, Childminders, or the Residential Care Home Supplement). A small charge will apply to cover printing costs.

Review

You should ideally review your SFBB pack at least once a year and this should be documented at the front of the pack.

In addition to the annual review, you must also update it whenever there are significant changes within your business, examples include:

- Changes to the menu,
- New or Different staff,
- Customer complaints,
- Introduction of new equipment or processes.

Your 4-weekly review in the SFBB diary is a useful tool for identifying when updates are needed. Regular reviews help ensure that your food safety management system remains accurate and effective.

Multiple Copies of SFBB?

If you find that you have more than one copy of the SFBB pack, you must ensure that you are using the most up-to-date version. We recommend archiving any older versions along with their completed diary pages.

Keeping previous versions on file provides a clear record of how your food safety management system has developed over time, while ensuring that the version you actively use reflects current guidance.

Failure to Complete or Implement SFBB

When we ask to see your food safety management system during an inspection, we expect to see the entire SFBB pack, not just the diary pages or supporting documents.

Your SFBB must be fully completed, up to date, and organised. (It is not the food officer's role to put your pack in order for you.)

The completed SFBB must also be kept on site at all times & diary pages and opening and closing records should be completed daily.

Saying that "the chef took it home" is the food safety equivalent of "the dog ate my homework"!

Failure to produce your SFBB and, or failure to implement the safe methods can negatively affect your food hygiene rating.

Initially, this may result in informal action, where an officer writes to you outlining what you need to do to achieve compliance.

If, at a follow-up visit, the officer finds that you still have not met the requirements, this may lead to formal enforcement action in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

Will I Be Penalised if I Don't Use Safer Food Better Business?

No. If you already have your own food safety management system that clearly documents your controls and monitoring, you do not have to replace it with SFBB or run both systems together. SFBB is a recognised and accessible option, but it is not the only acceptable way to meet legal requirements.



Safe Methods

SFBB is built around a series of Safe Method documents. Although these are explained at the start of the pack, inspections often show that not everyone fully understands how they should be used.

Each Safe Method contains three key parts:
Safety Point – This explains what you should be doing to ensure food safety for that particular topic.

Why – This section outlines the reason behind the safety point, helping you understand the risk and the importance of the control.

What You Do – This is where you record what your business actually does. Sometimes you will need to write down your specific procedures to make the method relevant to your operation. In other cases, you may simply tick Yes or No if you follow the method exactly as written.

On the reverse side of each Safe Method, you may find additional guidance:

Check It – This explains what you should look for to confirm that your Safe Method is working effectively.

What to Do if Things Go Wrong – Practical advice on how to deal with problems if they arise.

How to Stop This Happening Again – Suggestions to help prevent the issue from recurring.

If anything does go wrong, you should use your SFBB diary to record what happened and what action you took. You should also consider whether the relevant Safe Method needs updating and whether staff require further training to ensure the method is followed correctly.

Using your SFBB Diary

Although the SFBB pack includes a 'How To' guide at the beginning, it's clear during inspections that not everyone has read it—or people simply forget how the diary should be used. The diary is an essential part of your food safety management system, and it must be completed correctly.

Date every page clearly, ideally using day/month/year. When diary pages become mixed up in storage, undated entries make it difficult to understand what relates to what.

Use the daily boxes to record anything significant that happens on that day, especially if something

goes wrong.

Examples include:

- Changes to the menu
- Change of supplier
- Equipment failure
- Staff sickness and the date they return to work
- Rejection of a delivery and the reason why

Extra Checks Box: The Management Section provides a list of extra checks which you may need to carry out and requires you to complete the frequency of these checks.

You should use the box on the weekly diary to record the actual completion of any of these activities.

Finally, remember that someone must complete the name and signature boxes each day to confirm that the Safe Methods have been followed. This daily sign-off is a key part of demonstrating that your food safety controls are being implemented consistently.

Opening and Closing Checks – Part of the Diary

Each day in your SFBB diary includes tick boxes for opening and closing checks. The Safe Method for Opening and Closing Checks, found in the Management section of your SFBB pack, outlines the checks that should be completed daily. This list is not exhaustive, so you may wish to add additional checks that are relevant to your business.

These boxes must only be ticked once the checks



have been carried out. They should never be completed in advance.

During inspections, we often find that these checks are being signed off without the checks being completed, or they are ticked before the shift has finished. This undermines the purpose of the diary and does not demonstrate effective food safety management.

Prove It

The 'Prove It' Safe Method in the Management section should be reviewed before you complete the physical Prove It record found in the SFBB diary.

If you regularly change your menu, you may need to print additional Prove It sheets to ensure each new process or dish is properly assessed.

SAFE METHOD	HOW DID YOU PROVE IT?	DATE
Cooking	Beef burger cooked at 2.25 - temperature 82°C	XXXX/XXXX
COOK	LARGE TRAY OF LASAGNE Preheat @ 1150 - Temp 75°C	9/02/2026
COOL	LARGE TRAY OF LASAGNE - ICE BATH TANK @ AMBIENT - 90 MIN TEMPERATURE LOG USED TO MONITOR TIME / TEMP.	9/02/2026
REHEAT	PORTION BEEF STEW IN MICROWAVE 5 MIN TEMP 82.4°C	11/02/2026
COOK	PULLED PORK - SLOW COOKER HIGH SETTING 16-HOURS TEMP 72.1°C	13/02/2026

The Prove It record gives you an opportunity to:

- Check that your Safe Methods are being followed in practice
- Confirm that the controls you rely on are actually working
- Record what you do if your method differs from the recommended approach

Although the example in the pack focuses on Cooking, you can use Prove It for any process that needs validating. For instance, you might record:

Roast Joint – cooked low and slow overnight

- Oven temperature preset to: ____ °C
- Placed in oven at: 00:00 (time) on (date)
- Removed from oven at: 00:00 (time) on (date)
- Core temperature on completion: ____ °C

You could also note any important limitations or conditions, such as:

- This method is suitable for whole muscle joints only, not rolled joints
- Whether the joint was seared, and for how long
- Any additional steps taken to ensure safety

This level of detail helps demonstrate that you have properly validated your cooking method and understand the risks involved.

Separate Temperature Monitoring Records

SFBB requires you to monitor temperatures, but you only need to make a written record when something goes wrong. If a problem occurs, you should record what happened in your diary along with the corrective action you took.

However, keeping routine written records of fridge and freezer temperatures, as well as cooking and hot-holding temperatures, is considered good practice. These records can help you spot issues early and may support your due diligence if something goes wrong. If you are already recording temperatures daily, we recommend that you continue to do so.

If you choose to keep daily temperature records but there are gaps, do not fill them in after the event. Instead, record the reason why the check was missed. This explanation can be written in your diary and shows honesty and transparency in your monitoring system.

Food Standards Agency

To keep track of the most up to date versions:

[Safer food, better business \(SFBB\) | Food Standards Agency](#)

SFBB not working for you? Why not look at

Cook Safe – Scottish version of SFBB: [CookSafe Guide | Food Standards Scotland](#)

Safe Catering – Northern Ireland version of SFBB: [Safe catering | Food Standards Agency](#)

Further Advice for Businesses on Food Safety from the Food Standards Agency: [Guidance for food businesses | Food Standards Agency](#)

Quick Review Checklist

Do you have the most recent version?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date Checked:
Is the file in order? (if paper version)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
4 C's Have the 4 C's been completed, (where relevant)? <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;"> Cross Contamination Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Chilling Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> </div>		
Do the 4 C's need updating?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date completed
Safe Methods Have you completed & updated the Safe Methods	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date completed
Staff Training Records Have they been completed and are they up to date? (Check if you have had leavers and new starters)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Cleaning Schedule Have you completed the cleaning schedule And has it been reviewed, following any kitchen redesign, introduction of new equipment or change of chemicals?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date reviewed
Daily Diary Sheets Have these been completed and dated?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
4 Weekly Review Have these been completed? Have the additional details been completed, where there has been changes?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

