



Introduction

People are concerned about what they eat. Where the food comes from, whether it is healthy, free from harmful substances and that it has been prepared and handled in clean and hygienic conditions. Norway therefore has a modern and efficient set of regulations that ensures that food safety is prioritised, every day of the year.

Unfortunately, experience shows that errors can still occur and that people can become sick from what they eat and drink. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority's reports have revealed that hygiene in the food service industry is not always adequate enough to ensure that the regulations are being observed. The consequences can be reduced food safety and an increased probability of guests becoming sick from the food.

The subsequent media attention has cast a long shadow over the industry and made everyone a scapegoat. It is obviously unfortunate when we also know that the majority of food outlets employ a lot of resources and work hard to fulfil the requirements that have been imposed.

The introduction of Smiley's in the food service industry has therefore been something that consumers have wanted for a long time. Experience from Central Norway, where a pilot started in 2007, shows that the industry values this type of inspection. They are now more aware of what is required of them and are able to take the necessary measures to ensure that everything concerning food safety is in order. Once the result of the inspection is communicated through a Smiley symbol, there is an extra stimulus to making an all-out effort to create a consistently hygienic business.

These guidelines provide a complete overview of the requirements that form part of the Smiley inspection. For each item, reference is made to the relevant act or regulation. Following this are comments on the expectations for compliance enshrined in the regulation. It is therefore important that you not only read the guidelines but also familiarise yourself with the regulations.

For small businesses it is often difficult to obtain sufficient knowledge on their own. If this applies to you, you can find some useful tips by visiting the Norwegian Food Safety Authority's website www.mattilsynet.no, seeking advice from colleagues with experience of similar businesses, or getting in touch with a trade organisation.

The guide does not provide details and individual solutions. Instead, it describes what needs to be focused on in order to comply with the requirements of food safety. The regulations provide you with the opportunity to make choices and decisions suitable to your situation. You should therefore take this opportunity to take action yourself.

Our best tip is to read the guide thoroughly so that you know where your efforts should be directed. You will then have a real chance of preventing food hygiene from becoming a problem and will be well prepared to receive your next Smiley from the Norwegian Food Safety Authority.

If you still have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the Norwegian Food Safety Authority.

Best wishes,



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1. Procedures and management

- 1.1** Food business operators' obligations
- 1.2** The enterprise's duty to report
- 1.3** Visible Smiley report
- 1.4** Internal controls
- 1.5** Risk assessment and control measures
- 1.6** Training



2. Premises and equipment

- 2.1** General – floor plan, standards and maintenance
- 2.2** Premises – special requirements for preparation, processing and finishing
- 2.3** Equipment – cleaning
- 2.4** Waste disposal
- 2.5** Preventing and combating vermin
- 2.6** Hand-washing
- 2.7** Staff toilets and cloakrooms



3. Food handling and preparation

- 3.1** Raw materials
- 3.2** Water and ice
- 3.3** Contamination hazards
- 3.4** Storage
- 3.5** Transport
- 3.6** Personal hygiene
- 3.7** The cold chain
- 3.8** Heat treatment
- 3.9** Cooling
- 3.10** Defrosting



4. Traceability and labelling

- 4.1** Traceability and labelling
- 4.2** Labelling of allergen ingredients



1. Procedures and management

1.1 Food business operators' obligations

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 853/2004, Chapter II on food business operators' obligations, Articles 3 and 4 no. 2.

The requirement in detail

The food business operator is the party (or parties) in an enterprise (physical or legal persons) who has formal responsibility for ensuring that the food regulations are complied with. The operator does not have to be physically present at the premises but must have organised responsibility in such a way as to leave no doubt for either the Norwegian Food Safety Authority or employees regarding who fills the role of operator in accordance with regulations and who has the day-to-day or local responsibility. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority uses this item to enquire about who is in charge (the operator) of the business. If the person (or persons) is not physically present, indications of responsibility and organisation can be deduced through observations made during inspection and dialogue with the employees. Good organisation of the business, clarified levels of decision-making and employees with access to ongoing internal communications indicate that the requirement

is being met. It is the inspector's objective perception of the presence of responsible management functions that forms the framework for verifying this point.

Some facts:

- The operator is the party who represents the enterprise vis-a-vis the Norwegian Food Safety Authority and who provides the necessary information about issues that characterise the enterprise and ongoing changes to the enterprise.
- The operator often plays a key role in the establishment and implementation of the enterprise's internal controls in order to comply with food legislation.

Clear organisation and areas of responsibility are key to the fulfilment of the requirements.

1.2 The enterprise's duty to report

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 6 on official controls, registration and approval, no. 2.

The requirement in detail

The enterprise shall report to the Norwegian Food Safety Authority what type of business it is running via the form service at www.mattilsynet.no. Information about who the operator is and significant changes to the enterprise's premises, character and operation shall be reported when such changes affect the original conditions of the enterprise. For example, if a condition has changed when activities are expanded in such a way that another regulation or requirement comes into force.

Changes of ownership, business registration number, moving, rebuilding of premises also fall under the duty to report. Information must be correct and up to date. The purpose of the duty to report is to exchange information with the Norwegian Food Safety Authority to make the authority aware of the new activity, to allow the authority to assess the risk, provide necessary information and plan an inspection, where applicable.

1.3 Visible Smiley report

Regulations

The regulations on the publication of results of inspections of food service enterprises by the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (the Smiley Regulations) Section 4.

The requirement in detail

The Smiley report must be displayed by the enterprise as soon as it is received, and it must be clearly visible before consumers enter the premises and in close proximity to the entrance.

Enterprises based in shopping centres or in open public areas without a defined entrance must find a way of making the report visible to the public. It must not be hidden or in any way made inaccessible. Reports that are damaged or lost must be replaced by the enterprise by requesting a new report from the Norwegian Food Safety Authority. The fact that an enterprise had intended to replace the report will not be accepted as mitigation as it is the actual presence of the report that is assessed during an inspection. A report that has not been displayed will be considered a discrepancy that will result in a plain face or sad face in the event of repeated breaches.

1.4 Internal controls

Regulations

The regulations on internal controls of the implementation of and compliance with food legislation, Sections 4 and 5.

The requirement in detail

Internal controls mean the enterprise has established work routines and necessary controls to ensure that the regulations laid down in the Food Act are being fulfilled. Through internal controls the enterprise performs self-inspection by ensuring that stipulated requirements for operation are being fulfilled.

The requirements for systems and routines are specified in Section 5. A routine is a generally accepted way of conducting an activity and may be both verbal and in writing.

Certain routines are so important that the regulations require them to be put in writing. This applies to routines for non-conformance, routines to prevent repeated non-conformance, routines for review of own internal controls and routines to ensure that only relevant and applicable routines are used. Certain other written routines may also be necessary, especially if the size, character or complexity of the enterprise requires it. It is the enterprise itself that must assess which written routines are necessary. Some routines can be safeguarded in other ways than by preparing written routines, e.g. by having a well prepared and collective working pattern in order to carry out tasks. Dynamic and practical internal controls will generally always leave natural traces in day-to-day operations without requiring special attention.

Internal controls are initially assessed through the conduct and work routines that the management has established to ensure that food is handled in accordance with the requirements. Findings of isolated errors and discrepancies during an ordinary inspection at a food service enterprise do not mean that there are also flaws in the internal controls. In such cases the inspector will investigate whether the observation follows on from a number of similar and more systematic errors and discrepancies with a probable underlying cause. It is the identification and rectification of systematic errors and discrepancies that is the core for the requirements laid down in the internal controls regulations. Such instances will be present when structural damage can be linked to an inadequate maintenance plan for the premises. The enterprise itself must immediately identify the cause of the error and take the necessary measures to prevent a recurrence.

Inspection of the internal controls procedures is generally done by incorporating the requirement into the observations of any isolated errors and discrepancies. If there is evidence of faults in systems and implementation routines, these will be linked to the internal controls regulations and will have an effect on the Smiley symbol in the category "routines and management".

Some facts:

- Is the observation an isolated error or does it lead to a number of systematic errors of the same character?
- Have routines been identified to register faults/defects and to implement measures to prevent the error from recurring?
- Does the operator perform a regular review of internal routines to ensure that they comply with actual practice?

For further information on internal controls, please refer to general information at mattilsynet.no/smilefjes

1.5 Risk assessment and control measures

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 5 on hazard analysis and critical control points.

The requirement in detail

The enterprise must be conscious of and have knowledge of the business it runs and of the hazards that may arise. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) is a recognised tool to identify which hazards can occur and how they can be reduced to a level at which they no longer constitute a threat.

There will not normally be a requirement for a food service enterprise to document the seven HACCP principles fully by creating flow charts, risk matrices, decision trees, etc. However, you must be familiar with the principle of the tool. You must be aware of the hazards associated with food handling and have prepared work and control routines to ensure that risks do not arise.

In most cases, the hazards that are relevant to a restaurant or food outlet will be effectively controlled through basic conditions. "Basic conditions" refers to individual regulatory requirements, e.g. that raw materials shall be of good hygienic quality and that handling and storage do not expose foods to contamination or microbiological activity.

In order for the basic conditions to adequately remove or reduce the level of risk, it is important that they are planned and implemented based on where the hazard could occur and that they are deemed to be sufficient in controlling the risk in relation to the nature of the product and process.

It is the task of the enterprise to define relevant hazards and determine how they should be kept under control.

Some facts:

1. The identification of hazards and necessary control measures can take place without detailed flow charts, risk matrices and decision trees. However, the enterprise must demonstrate that it has control of the relevant food hazards.

2. Item 8 of the introduction to directive 852/2004 states that the HACCP requirements should be flexible enough to apply to all situations, including small businesses.

For example, it is emphasised that critical control points do not necessarily have to be identified and that the requirement for stipulating critical limits does not mean that a quantifiable limit must be stipulated in each individual case. Also, the requirement for storing documents must be flexible enough for small businesses to not have unnecessary burdens imposed on them.

3. This means that flexibility applies initially to critical control points, critical limits and degrees of documentation. However, it is important that all enterprises can describe how they control relevant hazards. This will often be through the basic conditions. There is no flexibility when it concerns knowledge of internal hazards.

4. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority will not demand specific solutions but will challenge enterprises to take responsibility and think independently.

5. It is important that the basic conditions are planned in such a way as to ensure adequate control of the hazards. This is where the subjective terms "suitable", "appropriate", "adequate" and "necessary" must be put into context.

6. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority must substantiate requirements regarding other solutions than the ones the individual enterprise has arrived at.

7. The operator of the food service enterprise is responsible for food safety. The operator is therefore responsible for own solutions.

8. National guidelines can be helpful in determining the level of basic conditions and form the basis of the enterprise's hazard assessment.

9. The flexibility in the regulations requires competencies within the enterprise. Use the competency requirements provided by the legislation, especially Regulation 852/2004, Annex II, Chapter XII.

1.6 Training

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4, no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter XII on training.

The requirement in detail

Competency is a prerequisite for being able to understand the relevant risks associated with food handling and for being aware of and implementing procedures and work routines that the enterprise has established through internal controls. The regulations in the field of food impose no requirements regarding formal qualifications. Equally, the operator is obliged to give all employees an introduction to and training in the work functions they have been assigned. Employees must be particularly familiar with the routines that are crucial to food safety and any internal controls the enterprise has established.

Also, the person/s responsible for preparing routines in the internal control system must have undergone adequate training in the use of the HACCP principles.

The training requirement has also received its own point in the internal controls:

Routines must be identified to ensure that employees possess the skills necessary to comply with the requirements for internal controls.

In this respect, the enterprise can also assess whether the routine shall be written or verbal and what is most appropriate to ensure uniform knowledge of responsibility, working methods and reporting. For example, the inspector will assess the requirement through observing conduct and work operations, ask questions to clarify compliance or observe other aspects of the workplace.

If the errors are multiple and extensive, this may be because the routines for information and instruction have failed. Rarely will an enterprise reach this conclusion itself, having analysed the reason why highlighted errors and discrepancies have occurred.

Some facts:

- How is information on work routines and instructions communicated between management and employees?
- Who works at the enterprise and when is such information/training provided?
- Are temporary workers also provided with the same information?

Control of this point occurs indirectly through observations of operational routines. A well organised and executed operation indicates that the objective of the training requirement has been fulfilled and works in accordance with the objective.

When necessary, the inspector will ask direct questions in order to confirm knowledge of the routines that have been established to ensure implementation of internal or statutory requirements for food safety.



2. Premises and equipment

2.1 General – floor plan, standards and maintenance

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 853/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter I on general requirements for food premises.

The requirement in detail

The regulation concerns general requirements for premises, both at which foodstuffs are only stored and at which foodstuffs are produced, processed and handled for further use.

Buildings with associated access and courtyards shall be located, designed and executed in such a way as to ensure that food handling can be undertaken with an adequate level of cleanliness and hygiene. The premises shall be protected from contamination and shall prevent vermin from gaining access.

The size, shape and quality of the premises shall be in proportion to their use. Small, narrow premises in older building can be equally suitable as similar buildings that are large and new, providing they are well maintained and do not prevent the essential structure and organisation of food handling. The character and scope (volume) of the food handling will therefore be of significance.

Premises shall generally be reserved for foodstuffs without adjacent activities or tasks that could threaten food safety. When different functions are nonetheless present in one place at an enterprise, particular attention must be paid to ensuring that food is healthy and safe. Support functions such as cold-storage rooms, toilets and cloakrooms should be integrated into one single area. If certain functions are some distance away (in another building, across a courtyard, etc.), consideration must be given as to whether the distance and the necessity for internal transport represent a threat to hygiene and that this has been adequately taken into account in the enterprise's routines.

The same applies if the cloakroom or staff toilet are based on a shared solution with users outside the enterprise and could represent a threat of indirect contamination from persons and the environment outside the control of the enterprise. If the location and organisation of such rooms or facilities represent a contamination hazard, these factors must be included in the enterprise's own hazard assessment (see item 1.5) and the necessary measures implemented to reduce the risk. How the enterprise assesses the situation can influence the conclusion as to whether the premises are appropriate or not.

Goods reception and storerooms shall be adapted to ensure hygienic and practical transportation in and out of the premises.

2.2 Premises – special requirements for preparation, processing and finishing

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter II on premises at which foodstuffs are prepared, processed or finished.

The requirement in detail

The regulation concerns the floor plan and design of premises at which foodstuffs are produced, prepared, processed or finished (not including premises at which food is consumed), i.e. rooms in which the core activities of a food service enterprise take place (production room, kitchen, pantry, etc.) Such rooms must be constructed and equipped in a way as to be suited to carrying out good hygienic practice and protected from contamination between tasks while food handling is taking place. Floors, walls, ceilings, doors and surfaces must be complete and sealed and in good condition, easy to clean and maintain.

Areas that make contact with food must be smooth, water resistant and be made of materials that do not emit harmful substances. If necessary, it should also be possible to disinfect such fixtures. Doors and gates to contaminated areas must be kept closed when not in use.

Windows, ventilators and vents must be designed in such a way as to prevent unnecessary access by vermin such as rodents and insects. Windows that can be opened must have an insect net, if necessary. Windows and doors left open without consideration being made for the contamination hazard may be an indication that, with regard to this point, the premises are not fulfilling the requirements of essential hygienic operation. Furthermore, suitable cleaning appliances must be present and also disinfection of work tools and equipment, where applicable. Washing-up equipment etc. must be made of corrosion-resistant material, be easy to clean and have access to a supply of hot and cold water.

It is often necessary to wash, clean or rinse raw materials and ingredients before they are further processed.

In such cases, premises must be equipped with dedicated washing appliances, located in such a way that contamination and micro-organisms cannot be spread further. The appliances must have access to a supply of hot and cold water and must be easy to keep clean.

2.3 Equipment – cleaning

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter V on equipment requirements.

The requirement in detail

Food can become contaminated through contact with equipment and objects. Appliances and equipment must therefore be fit for purpose, easy to keep clean and not emit harmful substances. It is permitted to use wooden chopping boards if the surface is even, stable and well maintained and can be cleaned properly. If the use of such equipment represents a contamination hazard, the enterprise must have considered this factor and taken it into account in a hazard assessment, e.g. by avoiding the use of such equipment for raw materials with different degrees of contamination and for food that is to be consumed without being heat-treated.

The danger of contamination is reduced through effective and targeted cleaning. Appliances and equipment must therefore be installed and fitted in such a way as to prevent contamination from building up in cracks and crevices. All objects and equipment that come into contact with food must be thoroughly cleaned at suitably frequent intervals and disinfected, where necessary. When the temperature is crucial to the safe storage of food, equipment used for temperature storage must be equipped with measuring devices for easy reading of representative storage temperatures.

2.4 Waste disposal

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. cf. Annex II, Chapter VI on food waste.

The requirement in detail

Food waste and other types of waste must be removed as quickly as possible in order to prevent accumulation that can lead to the presence of vermin and contamination.

Both temporary and stationary waste containers shall be of a suitable design and be easy to clean. "Suitable design" means that they shall be adequate in numbers, be of a size that meets the needs, have a lid if this is necessary to prevent odours and insect infestation and can be used without causing any hygienic inconvenience. Waste containers that form part of an external waste disposal scheme must not be stored in the kitchen or in areas in which unpackaged food is handled.

2.5 Preventing and combating vermin

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter IX on provisions applicable to foodstuffs, no. 4.

The requirement in detail

In item 2.2 the guide describes the importance of preventing vermin from entering the premises and contaminating food. The enterprise must therefore focus on preventive measures such as keeping doors and windows closed, keeping vents and potential hiding places clean and keeping the outside of the building tidy. When vermin is identified the necessary measures must be implemented and the source removed. Combating vermin is undertaken through dedicated methods and through the use of necessary skills.

Evidence of living or dead insects or the remains of such is an indication that the requirement has not been adequately fulfilled.

2.6 Hand-washing

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter 1 on general requirements for food premises, no 4.

The requirement in detail

The number and placement of wash basins in production premises, cloakrooms and toilets should be such that they are easily accessible. It is particularly important to place hand basins close to areas containing unpackaged food and where switching from one task to another could lead to contamination. In certain cases, wash basins may be combined with equipment for washing food, provided it is hygienic and the requirement for accessibility is fulfilled.

Wash basin points must be designed in such a way as to ensure that the equipment serves as an effective hygiene barrier between tasks, persons and environments. Wash basins must have hot and cold running water and include equipment for the hygienic washing and drying of hands. In some cases, such as when the enterprise handles ready-to-eat food or raw materials with a high risk of contamination, it may be necessary to equip wash basin points with fittings for hands-free operation in order to prevent the actual wash basin point from becoming a source of disease dissemination. These are assessments that the enterprise must make in connection with a review of potential hazards and routines established to ensure compliance with the food safety requirements (described in more detail in item 1.5). A lack of hygienic design may in some cases be compensated for by good routines.

If disposable gloves are used, it is important that they are fit for purpose and are not used for multiple tasks with different hygienic statuses.

Wash basins must be operational and in use at all times in order to ensure the highest level of personal operating hygiene.

Thus, routines must be identified to ensure that the equipment works at all times and that hand soap and disposable towels are replenished.

2.7 Staff toilets and cloakrooms

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter 1 on general requirements for food premises, no 3.

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter 1 on general requirements for food premises, no 6.

The requirement in detail

Toilets should generally form part of the enterprise's premises. If the toilets are located adjacent to premises in which food is handled, there must be an inter-connecting passage.

Toilets can be a source of disease dissemination. Thus, toilets must contain facilities for hand hygiene similar to those described in the item on wash basins.

To reduce the possibility of infection from outside, staff toilets should generally not be available to any party not working at the food service enterprise.

The use of external toilet solutions (for example, shared toilet in a department store) should therefore be avoided. If, however, this situation cannot be avoided, the enterprise must carry out an assessment as to whether special hygienic measures are necessary to compensate for the hazard this represents. An example of reinforced measures is wash basins used before resuming work in own premises being equipped with fittings for hot and cold water that can be operated without using the hands.

Cloakrooms should also generally form part of the enterprise's premises. If the food service enterprise is small with few employees, an alternative cloakroom solution may be more suitable, e.g. with an appropriate changing room or special equipment for storing work clothes.

Work clothes and private clothes must be stored separately, otherwise infectious agents could be transferred to food.



3. Food handling and preparation

3.1 Raw materials

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 853/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter IX on provisions applicable to foodstuffs, no.

The requirement in detail

Raw materials can cause unwanted contamination of premises and finished products. Raw materials, ingredients and additives must therefore be of the required hygienic quality and be free from infectious agents or contamination that could pose a health hazard. This control point primarily focuses on how raw materials and ingredients (meat, fish, dairy products, eggs, vegetables, etc.) are procured and how they are assessed and handled in order to prevent them from representing a contamination hazard before they are taken into the premises. The use of known suppliers, specifications for microbial or content quality, labelling for secure tracking and scope for visual assessment are examples of relevant control routines and measures.

Some facts:

- It is natural that everyone who buys raw materials, ingredients and finished products bases this on a supplier agreement or customer relationship. The requirements imposed on buying must be in proportion to the risk the raw materials represent and the relevant specifications of the regulations. Routines for supplier feedback in the event of non-conformance and frequent evaluation of the agreement or purchasing system should form part of the internal controls at both consignor and consignee.
- Takeover of goods normally includes a commercial document, dispatch note or invoice. Together with labelling of goods, this is important documentation when purchasing routines are to be reviewed and evaluated and for tracking back in the distribution chain.
- Routines for acceptance check can be a visual inspection, measuring temperature, checking analysis certificates and commercial documents.

3.2 Water and ice

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. cf. Annex II, Chapter VI on water supply.

The requirement in detail

Food enterprises should generally have a water supply that satisfies the requirements of the drinking water regulations for chemical and microbiological quality. The capacity for both cold and hot water must be adequate to meet the needs of the activities taking place, for cleaning the premises and equipment and for good personal hygiene.

If the water comes from a separate water supply (well, reservoir, collecting tank, etc.) the source of water must have the necessary protection and the water must be subject to regular sampling with regard to microbial quality, cf. The requirements of the drinking water regulations. What constitutes necessary internal controls shall be assessed by the enterprise itself based on knowledge of the water supply, seasonal variations and area of use.

3.3 Contamination hazards

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 no. 2, cf. Annex II, Chapter IX on provisions applicable to foodstuffs, no.

The requirement in detail

This item requires work routines to take necessary account of safe hygienic storage, handling and processing of food. The regulations are key with regard to ensuring that food is not directly or indirectly exposed to contamination that could compromise food safety. It is important that there is a clear barrier or good distance between work areas, equipment and food that represents a contamination hazard of varying degrees and character. This is the only way to prevent food being contaminated by raw materials, food with a different hygienic status, equipment or fixtures. Clean food must be stored in clean equipment in clean areas, separated from raw materials and food with uncertain hygienic status. When such produce is stored in the same room, there must be a practical barrier between, for example, heat-treated food/non-heat-treated food, between raw materials, finished produce and food that could cause allergic reactions (allergens). For example, necessary separation can be created with optimal organisation during storage, different degrees of covering or by screening or otherwise protecting exposed food.

Some facts:

Effective barriers should exist between:

- Heat-treated food and non-heat-treated food
- Raw materials and finished produce
- Raw materials with different microbial status
- Raw materials that could cause allergies in the event of unintentional contamination of other foodstuffs
- Packaged and unpackaged food
- Work equipment used in the preparation of food with different hygienic status, e.g. heat-treated/non-heat-treated
- Cleaning and disinfection agents and additives/processing aids for food

Storage directly on the floor obstructs cleaning and can transfer contamination when items are moved into areas in which unpackaged food is handled and prepared.

3.4 Storage

Regulations

Cf. Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 on general and specific hygiene requirements, cf. Annex II, Chapter IX no. 2 on the provisions applicable to foodstuffs.

The requirement in detail

The requirement for storage is based on the premise that food must not be contaminated and that it shall be stored at a temperature that prevents microbial growth. These considerations are described in more detail in the section on contamination (3.3) and the cold chain (3.5).

The general principle is that food must be stored in clean equipment in clean areas, separated from raw materials and food with uncertain hygienic status.

3.5 Transport

Regulations

Cf. Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 on general and specific hygiene requirements, cf. Annex II, Chapter IV no. 1 on transport.

The requirement in detail

For food service enterprises this requirement is relevant when raw materials are collected directly from a manufacturer or wholesaler, and for the delivery of finished produce. The requirement can also serve as a control of goods delivered to the door by other carriers.

Food must be transported in a way that ensures that it does not become contaminated. The means of transportation must therefore be kept clean and in good condition. In the case of transportation over longer distances, it must be possible to keep the food at a specific temperature, e.g. in consideration of the cold chain, and to monitor this temperature.

3.6 Personal hygiene

Regulations

Cf. Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 853/2004, Article 4 on general and specific hygiene requirements, cf. Annex II, Chapter IX no. 2 on the provisions applicable to foodstuffs.

The requirement in detail

The requirement for personal hygiene and health must be in proportion to the risks of handling food. Along with raw materials and equipment, the hands are the greatest source of unwanted contamination of finished foods.

Thus, anyone working with food handling must be familiar with routines for personal hygiene, and such routines must be designed to prevent possible infection or foreign matter being transferred to the food.

When employees are ill or suffer from skin infections that could transfer to food, they must not work with food or have access to areas in which food is handled when there is a danger of direct or indirect contamination. The operator must be notified of such instances so that the necessary measures can be implemented. The routine must be in proportion to the risk picture the activity represents.

Routines should include regulations for:

- Work clothes and changing clothes
- Washing work clothes
- Use of protective gear (for example, disposable gloves)
- Routines for wash basins
- Use of earrings, watches, rings and nail varnish when this reduces efficient hand hygiene
- Personnel traffic in work areas
- Barriers between tasks with different hygienic statuses

3.7 The cold chain

Regulations

Chapter V of the Food Hygiene Regulations – Supplementary national regulations on temperature requirements, Section 12 on specific regulations regarding easily perishable foods.

The requirement in detail

Shelf life and storage temperature are closely related. Low storage temperature often provides a long shelf life and high temperature a correspondingly short shelf life. Storage and shelf life are therefore a key part of food labelling. It is the manufacturer that states how the food should be stored and how long it will last.

If the food is to be sold at a low temperature, this temperature must be maintained right up to the point of delivery.

In the case of food sold to food service enterprises that will further process the food, there is an opportunity to provide information on shelf life and storage in documents accompanying the goods. This information is useful for ensuring that further handling and storage of food will be as correct as possible. When a food service establishment processes and prepares these raw materials, the establishment must determine new storage and shelf life information for the goods. If the food is not served right away, it may be natural to return it to the cold chain again. The regulation in item 1.5 on hazard assessment will be useful in determining the necessary rules and measures.

For various reasons it may be necessary to remove food from the cold chain, e.g. for the purpose of further processing, tempering, maturing or serving. The regulations do not prevent this, but the length of time out of the cold chain must be as short as possible and, in any case, not so long as to constitute a health risk.

The cold chain at a food service establishment must therefore be assessed based on what types of food are being handled and the need for a controlled and managed temperature during, storage, preparation and serving, respectively. The regulations give leeway to enterprises that have established a routines for handling temperature-dependent food and that know how routines for errors and discrepancies should be managed.

Some facts:

- You must decide the storage temperature and shelf life of food you have processed or produced yourself.
- Periodic storage of easily perishable foods outside the cold chain, e.g. on display or at a lunch buffet, requires you to carry out a new assessment of shelf life and whether the food can continue to be used.
- If you have no specific rules for internal storage, easily perishable foods must be stored at a temperature of 4°C or lower.

3.8 Heat treatment

Regulations

Section 13 of the Food Hygiene Regulations on special provisions for heat treatment and heat storage.

The requirement in detail

Heat treatment is an important measure for reducing the number of harmful micro-organisms. Thus, heat treatment is often regarded as a critical point that the enterprise must have control over. At a food service enterprise, heat treatment will often be used for other reasons than potential health hazards, either because the properties of the raw materials are different or because there are technological reasons why beef or sausage meat products are heated treated differently. Even if 72 degrees is regarded as a safe temperature for avoiding a health hazard, a core temperature that is considerably lower may also be satisfactory if it concerns the heat treatment of whole, pure meat products. What is crucial to fulfilling the requirement is whether the enterprise can prove that heat treatment of the various products is satisfactory from a hygienic perspective, that potential risks have been taken into account and that the routine is practised consistently.

Some facts:

- Routines for time and temperature for different foods shall be based on knowledge of raw materials, experience and own measurements.
- For processes in which temperature is critical to safe heat treatment, measurements in accordance with internal controls can be taken on a spot check basis. Heat treatment may also be controlled visually, e.g. by ensuring that the burger has been cooked right through by checking the colour when this is a safe indicator.
- Extended controls are necessary if the enterprise has determined that heat treatment is a critical control point in accordance with item 1.5 of this guide.

Food that is sold hot must be kept at a temperature of at least 60° C until it is served, unless a lower temperature in the specific situation does not involve any health risk.

3.9 Cooling

Regulations

Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 on general and specific hygiene requirements, cf. Annex II, Chapter IX no. 6 on the provisions applicable to foodstuffs.

The requirement in detail

Bacteria grow quickly at room temperature. Food should therefore be cooled as quickly as possible to a temperature that does not pose a health risk. A rule of thumb is that the temperature should be reduced from 60° C to 10° C over the course of 2 hours. This particularly applies to foods comprising multiple ingredients such as sauces, casseroles, etc. The enterprise must have considered potential challenges to cooling down food as part of the hazard assessment described in item 1.5.

To achieve an optimal cooling down effect, the refrigeration equipment must have sufficient capacity, and the food must be distributed or arranged in such a way that air change happens quickly.

The requirement will be fulfilled when the enterprise has ensured that potential risks have been taken into account and that the routine is practised consistently.

3.10 Defrosting

Regulations

Cf. Section 1 of the Food Hygiene Regulations, cf. Regulation (EC) no. 852/2004, Article 4 on general and specific hygiene requirements, cf. Annex II, Chapter IX no. 7 on the provisions applicable to foodstuffs.

The requirement in detail

Easily perishable foods must be defrosted in a way that ensures that the growth of potentially pathogenic micro-organisms is as limited as possible. Controlled defrosting is best achieved by using a cooling appliance or equipment that has been specially designed for defrosting food. If food is defrosted at room temperature, it is important to ensure that it is not exposed for extended periods to temperatures that could constitute a health risk. A general rule of thumb is that defrosting should take place in such a way that the temperature of any part of the food does not exceed 10° C.

If water that drains as part of the defrosting process could constitute a health risk, it must be collected and removed hygienically.



4. Traceability and labelling

4.1 Traceability and labelling

Regulations

The regulations on the general principles and requirements of food safety legislation (the Food Act Regulations), directive 178/2002, paragraph 4, general requirements of the food regulations, article 18 on traceability

The regulation on food information to consumers, (the Food Information Regulation), Regulation (EC) 1169/2011, Chapter IV

The requirement in detail

Traceability

Tracking of food is important to ensure trust in trade and retail. It is also important to know the origin of the food, if at some subsequent point it becomes necessary to recall or impose restrictions for batches or individual products.

Food labelling, whether on the actual foods or in specifications or documents accompanying the goods, is important

in order to carry out tracking. The requirements for traceability are fulfilled when it is easy to identify the origin of raw materials, the enterprise has a good overview of its own goods, intended use and option to recall if the product is sold on to other enterprises.

Labelling

Food that is delivered to a food service establishment (commercial kitchen) shall be accompanied by the same information that applies to ready-packaged food for consumers. An important difference is that instead of labelling on the packaging or container, much of the information can be provided in the documents accompanying the goods.

This information should generally be included on the actual goods in the form of a label on the packaging or container:

- Description of goods
- Use-by date
- Information on storage and use, if relevant
- Name and address of manufacturer or dispatcher

4.2 Labelling of allergen ingredients

Regulations

The regulation on food information to consumers, (the Food Information Regulation), Regulation (EC) 1169/2011, Chapter IV

The requirement in detail

This regulation will ensure that the consumer is informed about the allergen content in unpackaged food.

The information must be available in writing directly to the consumer without having to ask for the information. This could be on menus, on signs, boards or some other appropriate way.

Allergen labelling must include/state the text: "Contains".

For grains and nuts, the type/sort must also be specified.

The following allergens are covered by the requirements for information for consumers:

1. Cereals containing gluten, i.e. wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt wheat, kamut or hybridised crops of these and products made from such cereals, with the exception of:
 - a. Glucose syrup made from wheat, including dextrose
 - b. Malt dextrins made from wheat
 - c. Glucose syrup made from barley
 - d. Cereals used to make alcoholic distillates, including agricultural ethanol
2. Seafood and products made from seafood
3. Egg and products made from egg
4. Fish and products made from seafood, with the exception of:
 - a. fish gelatine used as a carrier for vitamin or carotenoid preparations
 - b. fish gelatine or fish glue used as a fining agent in beer and wine
5. Peanuts and products made from peanuts
6. Soya beans and products made from soya beans, with the exception of:
 - a. refined soya oil and fat
 - b. naturally blended tocopherol (E306), natural D-alpha-tocopherol, tocopheryl acetate and alpha-tocopherol acid succinate from soya beans
 - c. phytosterols and phytosterol esters made from vegetable sterols from soya beans
 - d. phytosterols made from vegetable sterols from soya beans
7. Milk and products made from milk (including lactose) with the exception of:
 - a. whey used to make alcoholic distillates, including agricultural ethanol
 - b. lactitol
8. Nuts, i.e. almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashew nuts, pecan nuts, brazil nuts, pistachio nuts and macadamia nuts, and products made from such nuts, except nuts used to make alcoholic distillates, including agricultural ethanol.
9. Celery and products made from celery
10. Mustard and products made from mustard
11. Sesame seed and products made from sesame seed
12. Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/litre in terms of the total SO₂ which are to be calculated for products as proposed ready for consumption or as reconstituted according to the instructions of the manufacturers.
13. Lupin and products made from lupin
14. Molluscs and products made from molluscs

References:

References are made in this guide to the following regulations that are relevant to inspection in accordance with the Food Act in food service enterprises:

Hygiene and control:

Regulation no. 1141 of 26 September 2015 on publication at food outlets of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority's inspection results (smiley face scheme)

Regulation no. 1623 of 22 December 2008 on food hygiene (regulation on food hygiene) that introduces directive (EU) 852/2004 on food hygiene

Regulation no. 1620 of 15 December 1994 on internal control in order to comply with food legislation, Sections 4 and 5. (internal control regulations)

Food labelling:

Regulation no. 1497 of 28 November 2014 on food information for consumers

Food tracing:

Regulation no. 1620 of 22 December 2008 on the general principles and requirements of food safety regulations (the Food Act regulations)

Guidelines:

Information on allergens for non-ready-packaged food

Safe food – basic hygiene for catering establishments

Routines for safe food – and introduction to internal control and HACCP

All information and guidelines are available on the following website: www.mattilsynet.no

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