



Breakfast Bites: back to basics – food safety

Questions and answers

Thank you to everyone who attended the FSAI Breakfast Bite on the basics of food safety. This document contains the questions posed by attendee's during the breakfast bite. Thanks to all who participated. Any further queries can be sent by email to info@fsai.ie.

The topics include:

Breakfast bites
Cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation
Covid-19
Delivery and transport
Farmers markets
Packaging
Pest control
Staff
Starting a new food business
Takeaway
Temperature control – fridge and freezers
Training

Breakfast bites

1. Is the webinar available on the website afterwards?

Yes, the webinar will be available on [our YouTube channel](#) for a period following the webinar. It is also linked at the bottom of the follow-up email

Cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation

2. I understand that the use of gloves are not mandatory once the hand washing is done properly right?

Yes, proper hand washing is the most important thing.

3. Is it a legal requirement to have hot/warm water for hand washing?

The temperature of the water is not set out in legislation, but the general recommendation is that warm water is used. However, the most important part of hand washing is the combination of the soap, the physical action of rubbing the hands for 20 seconds and proper drying of the hands afterwards.

4. If my business has been closed for a while, do I need to do a deep clean before I re-open?

Not necessarily. It depends on why the business was closed. If it was closed by an inspector, they will have detailed in their report exactly what is required before you can reopen.

5. Can you give some information on the requirements of a sign off for cleaning schedules? And deep cleaning?

It's up to each food business to come up with a cleaning schedule and ensure that all staff know what to do when and how to do it correctly. Like all activities in a food business there should be regular supervision and checks to ensure it's being done properly.

- 6. When starting a home baking business, how can one limit the fluff transfer from tea towels, clothes, so on? Also, pet hair transfers even though pets are not allowed in the kitchen. So from air, clothes, so on. Thank you!**

It's really important to have proper segregation of home activities like laundry and pets from your food business activities. Before starting your food preparation you should do a full clean down of all surfaces and keep pets out of the room for the duration of the food preparation.

- 7. I have a pet, even though can I have food catering business in my kitchen?**

Yes, you can operate a food business from home even if you have a pet. You need to make sure you keep your pet out of the area where you are carrying out your food business activities. Have a look at the information on our website on starting a food business from home

https://www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/starting_business/home_business_food_stall.html

- 8. Do I have to have two sinks in my house even though I am not handling meat?**

No, this is not always necessary in a home environment. Your environmental health officer should have visited your home before you started so they would have advised if this was necessary. However, if you have any concerns about your set up give them a call to discuss.

- 9. How often should one validate their cleaning and sanitation?**

This is up to the individual food business and should form part of their overall food safety management system.

Covid-19

10. Are Covid-19 measures being checked by EHOs as well as food safety issues?

Yes, at present, Covid-19 measures are being inspected.

11. Are EHOs able to come and give me advise at the moment or do inspections?

At present, the best thing to do is to ring/email your local EHO office and they will advise you further on this. [See more here.](#)

12. Are food inspectors working at the moment? I am planning on starting a new food business and I'm wondering can I get inspected now or do I have to wait until after all business open up again after covid?

At present, the best thing to do is to ring/email your local EHO office and they will advise you further on this. [See more here.](#)

Not all food businesses are inspected before opening as it is the responsibility of the food business operator to make sure they are compliant with food law. However, you must register with the local inspectors before starting to operate, so give them a call.

13. Are you running a course for food safety related to covid-19 procedures or just follow what is on the FSAI website?

At the moment, please follow the advice on in [our FAQ on the website](#) which we are regularly updating.

14. What is the current advice on face masks?

According to current government advice, certain situation may require face masks. However, it is expected that this will become clearer in the coming weeks.

15. The Who recommends 1 meter, why are the FSAI saying 2m?

The FSAI is basing this on HSE guidelines. This is the advice at present.

We also have [some advice on our website](#). There were some other questions asked by attendee's in relation to Covid-19. For those of you who asked these questions, note that the guidance in relation to this will come from the HSE and government. These are not food safety issues. We hope this helps.

Delivery

16. Is it possible to use a personal/private vehicle to deliver for the business provided it's clean/safe/has temperature control etc.?

Yes, as long as the food is adequately protected from contamination, proper temperatures are maintained, and the vehicle is clean.

Farmers markets

17. Do you need to go through all the steps of setting up a business just listed if you were joined a farmers market?

Yes, the same requirements apply to all food businesses including home businesses and markets. We also have some useful publications on food stalls and markets that you might find useful:

https://www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/starting_business/home_business_food_stall.html

Packing

18. How to ensure that packaging (plastic and paper) that you are using for take away food is fully compliant?

The supplier of the materials should be able to advise on whether the packaging is suitable for food and, if so, the types of food and the temperature it is suitable for. For example, some packaging is suitable for microwaving and other packaging isn't.

Pest control

19. Can I ask please, can I do my own pest control rather than have a contractor?

What records would I need to keep for inspectors?

Yes, you can do your own pest control if you feel competent to do so. You should detail your pest control plan including measures taken to prevent access by pests, how often checks are carried out, staff training and the steps you will take if you do discover an infestation.

20. Regarding to pest control, it is extremely hard to control? Could you kindly advise what is the frequency of pest control programme and how to monitor it? Are they state in Law?

There's nothing set out in law on this other than you must have a pest control programme. As we discussed in the presentation you should be checking for signs of pests regularly, ensuring your premises has no access points, being careful with waste and keeping food in pest proof containers. If you are having difficulty with pests, and haven't already done so, you might want to employ a pest control contractor.

Staff

21. If the worker gets a flu, is it required to stay at home? In that way, is it impact to his work?

Staff must not work with food when they have a cold or flu as coughing and sneezing can transfer food poisoning bacteria to food.

Starting a new food business

22. We are a new food service business currently retrofitting a kitchen prior to opening for business. At what point should we contact our local HSE inspector/representative?

There's no harm in contacting your inspector now to have a chat with them and get your registration form ready to submit before you open.

Takeaway

23. If you are currently closed and operating as a takeaway when previously didn't, is this considered a change in business activities

Yes, this is a change in activity, and you must contact your inspector.

Temperature control – fridge and freezer

24. Correct temperature for fridge and freezer?

Below 5°C for fridges and -18 °C for freezers.

25. Is it possible use sensor to keep in freezer/fridge to register temperature instead record manually? Are wifi systems with notification when the temperature is out of range.

It is recommended that you check and record the fridge temperature daily but if the system you have records this automatically and can alert you when the temperature is out of range that should be fine as long as the system is validated i.e. that you are sure it is accurate. It is always a good idea to check with your inspector to be sure they are happy with this way of monitoring your fridge temperatures.

Training

26. We provide our team members Chartered Institute of Environmental Health training (Level 2 & 3) this is written for UK legislation but covers the basics, is this acceptable in Republic of Ireland?

There is no national accreditation body for food trainers or training courses in Ireland so there's no particular course you must do. The most important thing is that staff understand how to work safely with food following the training and can demonstrate this to the inspector when they visit.

Food hygiene legislation is EU legislation and so applies to all member states. Therefore, the UK training course should be fine. Again, the important thing is that staff can put what they've learned into practice.



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