

Safer Food Better Business

It is now a legal requirement for all food businesses, no matter how large or small, to have a written food safety management system in place.

Having consulted extensively with catering businesses, The Food Standards Agency has produced a FREE pack on how to do this called, Safer Food Better Business. (SFBB) The pack is easy to follow and offers a step by step guide to help businesses put in place food safety management procedures in order to comply with food hygiene regulations introduced in January 2006.

Using this pack will help you to:

- comply with food hygiene regulations
- show what you do to make food safely
- train staff
- protect your business's reputation
- improve your business, such as by wasting less food.

There are two sections to the pack; the food safety policy which covers the 4 Cs: cooking, cleaning, cross contamination and chilling, and the diary section which is used to record checks carried out and any problems that are encountered.

There are packs available for caterers, retailers and also packs in different languages. To accompany the SFBB packs a DVD guide, available in 16 different languages has been produced to help food businesses implement SFBB and train staff.

If you would like to order an SFBB pack or the DVD guide call Food Standards Agency Publications on 0845 606 0667 or email foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk.

BFBCs Environmental Health Department have also developed a simple and easy to use food safety booklet for childminders which will help them also to comply with current regulations in relation to putting in place food safety management procedures.

If you have any queries or require a copy of either the SFBB pack or the childminders booklet please contact the Commercial Team on 01344 352000.

Counterfeit Vodka

Bracknell Forest Trading Standards are warning businesses and members of the public to be on their guard following the discovery of counterfeit vodka on sale across the Thames Valley region.

Bottles of Glen's Vodka 70cl have been found on sale across the whole of the South East of England. Trading Standards are warning licensees and residents to only buy this product from reputable sources.

The counterfeit spirit has not been through the company's strict distilling process and so the strength and effect cannot be certified. It is also reported to have a strange taste.

The seized vodka is now being tested for composition and safety. However, it is believed to be connected to bottles found in other areas of the country which contained higher levels of methanol than normally found in Glen's Vodka.

In the past, counterfeit vodka has proved to be dangerous to health, potentially leading to blindness and even death. It is believed that the counterfeit vodka found is not likely to be dangerous unless consumed in large quantities but this has yet to be confirmed by testing.

What you see is what you get? Trading Standards helping consumers to make informed choices

Bracknell Trading Standards together with 18 other Services across the South East of England are calling on the food industry to give consumers the true picture on food labels to rebuild confidence and enable informed choices to be made.

A survey has revealed that consumers are cynical about the accuracy of pictures on food labels. They may not bother to complain about potentially misleading foods and this can make it difficult for Trading Standards services to challenge the food companies.

223 samples were taken with experts judging that just over 10% of the pictures on the labels when compared to the product inside could have been misleading. The worst offenders were desserts, breakfast cereals and meat pies/stews.

Six of the worst offenders were then presented to ordinary consumers. One product picture was found to be misleading by 95% of the consumers surveyed with the other five being judged to be misleading by between 77% to 37% of the consumers.

However only 13% of the consumers who found the pictures misleading would complain to Trading Standards. Reasons varied from feeling that we have more important things to do to saying that the whole industry had to change its ways.

Trading Standards services would like to assure consumers that their complaints about food labels they feel to be misleading are taken seriously. Although action may not be taken on every occasion by complaining consumers are helping us build a bigger picture so that we can challenge the food companies more effectively on these issues.

Useful Contacts

If you have any queries regarding food hygiene or food standards contact the Food Team at:

environmental.health@bracknell-forest.gov.uk for food hygiene issues

trading.standards@bracknell-forest.gov.uk for food standards issues

Alternatively you may wish to call our Customer Services Centre on **01344 352000**



Newsletter June 2008

9-13 June. National Food Weeks

Food Awareness Week

Food Awareness Week takes place between the 9th and 13th of June this year. It is a national campaign introduced by the British Dietetic Association to increase awareness of the importance of eating a healthy diet and taking adequate exercise. The occurrence of obesity in children has been rising over the last few years and Food Awareness Week is designed to promote healthy eating to children to help tackle this problem.

The key aims of Food Awareness Week are to increase awareness of the three campaign messages:

- The importance of eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day
 - The concept of a balanced diet
 - To take at least one hour of physical activity a day
- Bracknell Forests Commercial Team has been involved with Food Awareness Week over the last four years. We have worked with the Primary Care Trust in local schools running lots of fun, but educational activities.

Last year's campaign was bigger than ever. Every primary school in East Berkshire participated along with many secondary and

independent schools – a total of 141 schools. An events day was run at Great Hollands School with the children during the week with lots of activities including:

- A giant fruit salad prepared by the children
- Painting cereal bowls to encourage the children to eat breakfast
- Fruit kebabs
- Making salad caterpillars
- Fruit and vegetable tasting sessions
- Home made pasta prepared with the help of a chef
- Ready Steady Cook competition with teachers as the cooks
- A Food Fair with free food tasting for children and their parents.

This year's campaign day will be bigger and better than ever and will be held at Wildridings School.

Further information on the scheme can be found at the British Dietetic Association website: <http://www.bda.uk.com>

To find out more about Food Awareness Week in Bracknell, please contact: Public Health Dietician, Bracknell East Primary Care Trust. Tel: 01753 638752. Alternatively, check their website:

<http://www.bhps.org.uk/healthyeating/faw.htm>

Food Safety Week

The sixteenth National Food Safety Week takes place between the 9th and 13th of June. This UK-wide campaign aims to raise awareness of good food hygiene practice, encouraging local authorities, schools and communities throughout the country to focus on the best ways to avoid food poisoning. The focus for National Food Safety Week in 2008 is on vulnerable groups and those caring for them, schools and community groups.

The new theme for this year's Food Safety Week is 'GermWatch'. This covers all aspects of food safety and especially homes in on the 4 C's: Cleaning, Cooking, Chilling and avoiding Cross-contamination.

Many people devote a great deal of effort to make sure our food is as safe as possible:

• Scientists in the food supply chain ensure the hygienic production and sale of safe foods

• Enforcement officers monitor and advise food manufactures, caterers and retailers to ensure our food complies with legal and safety requirements

• Researchers continually seek new knowledge about all aspects of food safety.

So what can we as consumers

and food preparers do to help ensure our food is safe to eat? The following are some simple guidelines:

- Wash hands and surfaces thoroughly and frequently
- Prevent contamination of ready-to-eat foods
- Cook foods properly, to reach at least 75°C at the centre
- Store foods properly after purchase and preparation
- Pay careful attention to storage instructions
- Follow the 'use by' and 'best before' dates
- Keep cold foods cold – below 8°C
- Keep hot foods hot – above 63°C

Bracknell Forests Commercial Team takes an active role in Food Safety Week. This year we will be visiting a local primary school in the borough and giving hand washing demonstrations using a UV detection box and a disclosing cream to highlight how important it is to wash your hands thoroughly.

To find out more about Food Safety Week, please contact the Commercial Team on Tel: 01344 352000. Alternatively check the Foodlink website: <http://www.foodlink.org.uk>



(picture is from Great Holland School)



CIEH Level 2 Awards in Food Safety - Fundamental Food Hygiene Knowledge for all Food Handlers

A food hygiene course has been run by the Environmental Health Commercial Team at Bracknell Forest Borough Council for many years now and continues to be very popular. The new Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering has replaced the Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene. This new qualification have been developed to address the new national occupational standards in food safety and the recent changes in food safety legislation.

The course is designed to help people working in a food business to gain a good understanding of food hygiene and how to prevent customers from getting food poisoning. It also helps proprietors of food businesses comply with the legal requirement for their food handling staff to have received adequate supervision, instruction and/or training.

The course lasts for approximately 6 hours and covers the following topics:

- Legislation
- Food safety hazards
- Temperature control
- Refrigeration, chilling and cold holding
- Cooking, hot holding and reheating
- Food handling
- Principles of safe food storage
- Cleaning
- Food premises and equipment

Candidates take a multiple-choice test at the end of the course, to ensure those attending have understood the information they have been given. Candidates who pass receive the Level 2 Award in Safety in Catering, which is nationally recognised.

The courses cost £65.30 per person and include course book, examination fee, and certificate and refreshments.

The next available course is: Thursday 19th June 2008 (09:00 – 16:30)

Details of further courses to be held in September and October 2008 as well as booking forms are available at: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/environment/env-environmental-health/env-food-and-drink/env-food-hygiene-training.htm>

Outdoor Eating and Food Safety

Summer will be with us soon and for many families dining will move outside onto the patio and the barbeque will re-emerge from its winter hibernation in the shed.

These general pointers can help you and your family enjoy a summer of barbecues and outdoor entertaining:

- Take care when arranging the position of your barbecue. Put it in a sheltered, flat area away from anything that could catch fire. Do not move a lit barbecue and never leave it unattended
- Never light a barbecue with petrol or paraffin. Barbecue lighter fluid or firelighters are available
- Light charcoal barbecues 50 minutes before you start to cook. Gas barbecues usually need about 10 minutes to warm up. Start to cook when the flames have died down and the charcoal is glowing red with a powdery grey surface
- If it rains when you are about to light your barbecue, your food can be cooked under the grill or in a pre-heated oven at 200°C

- Keep a bottle of water near the barbecue. This can be used to put out flames caused by dripping fat and marinades
 - Brush the barbecue grill with oil before cooking to help prevent food sticking to it
 - Change the temperature for cooking by altering the distance of the grill from the charcoal. The further the grill is from the charcoal, the lower the heat will be
 - Try not to wear loose or flammable clothes near the barbecue and keep long hair tied back
 - Use long-handled tongs and forks to place food on the barbecue. Oven gloves can be worn when barbecuing with skewers and kebabs
 - When your barbecue is finished clean the grill with a wire brush while it is still warm. It can then be soaked in hot, soapy water
 - Keep young children and pets away from hot barbecues
- Always remember that cooking and eating outside needs the same amount of food safety care as in the kitchen, to help prevent food poisoning.



Scores on the Doors



Bracknell Forest Borough Council currently offers

awards to food businesses to indicate those which are complying with basic food hygiene requirements and those which have gone beyond the basic requirements.

Current award holders are listed on our website in 5 categories – Gold, Silver, Bronze, Pass and Fail. Premises are also listed where they have achieved a Catering For Health Award.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council are considering participating in a national website to display this information, with premises shown with star ratings. (5 Best , 0 Poor)

The scoresonthedoors.org.uk website received 6 million enquiries in 2007 alone. This is a valuable advertising and marketing tool for business and also enables customers to vote with their feet by avoiding premises where standards are poor.

82% of local authorities already publish schemes in this way.

The scores on doors rating scheme is based on guidance from the Food Standards Agency. These ratings have been chosen because food operators have direct control over the standards needed to

achieve a good score and include such areas as food hygiene and safety procedures, structure of premises and confidence in management.

This scheme is designed to give the public the opportunity to make informed choices about where they buy food from or where they choose to eat. The information the scheme provides relates to the overall food hygiene and safety standards found at the last food safety assessment.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council believe the main benefits of introducing the scheme to be:

- Provide public access to information held by the Council about the hygiene standards of food businesses.
 - Encourage businesses to achieve high food hygiene & safety standards.
- It is anticipated that Bracknell Forest Borough Council will move toward displaying this information on a national website before the end of 2008.
- To see how this is working at other authorities log onto www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk
- If you would like to let us know of your views please email us at Environmental.Heath@Bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Catering For Health Award

Berkshire East **NHS**
Primary Care Trust



In the UK we have one of the highest rates of heart disease and strokes in the western world. This has been attributed to a number of reasons, with one of the major ones being our diets.

Research has shown that a diet which includes low levels of fruit and vegetables and too much salt, sugar and high fat foods can increase the risk of developing conditions like stroke, heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

For an average household, an increasing number of meals are now eaten away from the home. Most consumers feel they should have the choice to be able to eat a healthy diet and many feel it is the caterer's responsibility to provide this choice.

Bracknell Forests Catering for Health award can help caterers show their customers that they are concerned and aware of healthy eating. The award has been running since 2004 and provides recognition for caterers who offer healthier options on their menus. We currently have about 28 premises with the award; this includes schools, nurseries and restaurants.

Key Messages on Healthy Options:

- Make starchy foods a main part of most meals
- Offer a good selection of fruit and vegetables, incorporating them into dishes where practical and acceptable
- Offer fibre rich varieties of bread and cereals
- Include plenty of pulses and vegetables in dishes
- Use lower fat cooking methods and ingredients
- Reduce the amount and alter the type of fat used in food preparation
- Use salt and sugar in moderation

If you are a caterer with a Safe Food Award and are interested in achieving the Catering for Health award please contact: Commercial Team on 01344 352000.

For details of current award holders, please check on <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/environment/env-environmental-health/env-food-and-drink/env-catering-awards.htm>

Two Nurseries in the Borough have recently achieved the Catering for Health Award



The Tee Pee Day Nursery, Pembroke, Bracknell



Teddies Nursery, Horndean Road, Bracknell

Food Sampling Information

Food sampling is carried out routinely by officers from Bracknell Forests Commercial Team to determine the possible presence of harmful micro organisms in particular foods.

Last year 150 food items were sampled from premises in the borough. Of these some were taken following complaints received about premises in Bracknell Forest. 89% of the total numbers of samples were found to be satisfactory.

Officers explain the sampling results to proprietors and offer advice where appropriate to achieve improvements in hygiene.

This year speciality meats like biltong, jerky, salami, pepperoni and pastrami will be examined with a focus on Salmonella and Listeria. Several previous Salmonella incidents reported to the Health Protection Agency have been linked to speciality meats from markets.

Egg mix used in catering premises will also be examined for Salmonella. This will include egg mix for egg fried rice and omelettes. The use of raw shell eggs in restaurants and take-away premises is of particular concern due to increased numbers of food poisoning cases specifically Salmonella infections. Shelled nuts in retailers including packets of mixed nuts for snacking and cooking will also be examined.

Local surveys will focus on reheated meals from premises like hospitals and schools and sandwiches from delicatessens. These areas have both caused concern in the past with relation to food poisoning incidents

