Food Allergen Risk Assessment For Caterers

People with food allergies have to take great care when eating out to avoid certain foods that could cause them harm. As a business you have a legal obligation to ensure that any food you produce or prepare is safe. Whilst there is currently no legal requirement to label allergenic foods sold unpackaged, you should be able to provide information on allergenic ingredients when asked.

**Main Food Allergens:**

- Peanuts
- Nuts
- Crustaceans
- Molluscs
- Shellfish
- Fish
- Eggs
- Milk
- Cereals containing Gluten
- Soya
- Sesame seeds
- Celery
- Mustard
- Lupin
- Sulphur Dioxide

The risk assessment has been divided into three sections covering Overall Management & Training, Kitchen Procedures and Front of House. This will allow you to assess whether the controls you currently have in place are effective and if any improvements can be made to ensure that the food you serve is safe.

If you are not certain that you can provide food that is suitable for someone with a food allergy then you should tell them so, they can then decide whether or not to eat the foods you provide.

More comprehensive guidance can be found on the Food Standards Agency at [http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes/labelregsguidance/nonprepacked](http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes/labelregsguidance/nonprepacked)

**Overall Management & Training**

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| 1. Do you have a written policy on food allergies and intolerances? | You should consider the following:  
a) Read the Food Standards Agency Guidance (see the link above)  
b) Identify the allergen risks  
c) Decide who is to have overall management responsibility for allergens and food safety.  
d) Ensure training is given to all staff (both permanent and temporary) and that there is always a trained member of staff on duty during opening hours  
e) Plan how to minimise the risks  
f) Display notices to remind staff of the risks.  
g) Plan how to communicate the risk between members of staff, and to customers. |
| □ Yes □ No | |
| 2. Are your emergency procedures up to date and rehearsed? | |
| Yes No | |
| □ □ | (Please see guidance at end) |
## Training

3. Have all kitchen staff received food allergen awareness training?

- [ ] Yes  - [ ] No

4. Have front of house staff received food allergen awareness training?

- [ ] Yes  - [ ] No

It is good practice to ensure all training given to staff is recorded and kept on file and that refresher training is given on a regular basis.

## Kitchen Procedures

### Allergenic Ingredient Identification

5. Which food allergens do you handle?

- [ ] Cereals containing gluten: wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut and their hybridised strains.
- [ ] Crustaceans & Molluscs (Shellfish)
- [ ] Eggs
- [ ] Fish
- [ ] Peanuts
- [ ] Soybeans
- [ ] Milk
- [ ] Nuts including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, Brazil nuts, pistachios, macadamias, and Queensland nuts
- [ ] Celery
- [ ] Mustard
- [ ] Sesame seeds
- [ ] Sulphur dioxide and sulphites often expressed as SO2, used as a preservative and often found in wine and dried fruit.
- [ ] Lupin

Prepare a list and how you will control their use, and prevent cross-contamination.

6. Have you checked for allergens in ingredients you use? Including checking the labels of prepared food, sauces, and seasoning mixes?

- [ ] Yes  - [ ] No

You need to take steps to ensure this is carried out so you can comply with legislation to supply safe food.
7. Does your supplier provide you with adequate labelling information?
   - Yes  
   - No

8. Do you check to see if any substituted items that have been deliveries contain allergenic ingredients?
   - Yes  
   - No

You should consider the following:
   a) Contact your supplier for the information, and make sure they understand why you need the information.
   b) Ensure they provide you with clear information and that they update you should the ingredients or their processing change.
   c) Think about how you can make staff remember to check for allergenic ingredients in new or replacement ingredients, for example a delivery checklist.
   d) All food should be labelled in English, if it is not you should ask that your supplier provides ingredients details in English. You can then show customers what the food contains if needed.

9. Do you record any of the above checks?
   - Yes  
   - No

You should consider how you would be able to demonstrate what steps you have taken to prepare safe food. For example,
   a) Written records
   b) How frequently are records made?
   c) Who checks information is being recorded correctly?

**STORAGE**

10. Do you have a storage system to prevent cross-contamination of ingredients with allergenic ingredients like milk powder, soya and nuts?
    - Yes  
    - No

11. If you transfer ingredients from packaging into storage containers or fridges/freezers, do you have a procedure for retaining product information such as date codes, batch codes, allergen information?
    - Yes  
    - No

You should consider the following:
   a) A colour code for allergenic ingredients.
   b) A spillage plan to clean up allergenic ingredients.

**PREPARATION**

12. Do you follow any procedures when preparing food for a customer with a food allergy?
    - Yes  
    - No

13. If yes, have you considered all aspects listed in the right hand column?
    - Yes  
    - No

You should consider the following:
   a) Check ingredient labelling for allergenic ingredients.
   b) Consider dish preparation, separate equipment & utensils, storage, cooking/reheating, separate preparation area.
   c) Thorough cleaning before and afterwards.
   d) Adequate hand-washing.
   e) Don’t re-use cooking oil, if there is a possibility that nut proteins/fish proteins/gluten will still be present.
   f) Serving Procedures; for example, garnishes, topping a dessert with almonds, preventing cross-contamination when food is served in a buffet style.
14. Do you inform customers about dishes that contain particular allergens, and ensure that information is available and clearly displayed?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

You should consider the following:

a) Ask your customers if they suffer from any food allergies, and identify any dishes that they will not be able to eat. (Particularly for advance or group bookings)

b) Highlight on menu by including the allergenic ingredient in the name of the food description if not obvious.

c) What about garnishes of nuts/breadcrumbs / croutons / sesame seeds etc: Are they stated on the menu?

d) Providing allergenic information on notices detailing the name of food at self-service counters, salad bars. Ensuring foods containing no allergenic ingredients are sufficiently separated from food containing allergenic ingredient, and in a way to prevent any falling food contaminating it. Do you provide enough utensils to prevent cross contamination?

e) Guide/Symbols to indicate which dishes contain certain allergenic ingredients

f) Notices/details in menus (see suggested wording below)

g) Is any information available on your website?

After completing the risk assessment and you feel that your business needs more advice please contact Food Control, Newry and Mourne District Council on 028 30313103 and see http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/guide/

Information for Customers with Food Allergies

Benefits of using the signs like the ones opposite:

• Use the words ‘Food Allergies’ - so only customers who do have an allergy need read it.

• Invite the customer to share their problem – “we'll help if we can, and if we can’t, we'll say so”.

• It says to your customers
  ▪ “We have a system in place - please ask and we'll listen to you too”.
  ▪ “We are quite entitled to use these things in our products and only use them when appropriate, but also recognise that for some people they are very dangerous. So we will take care”

• Just having the notices raises awareness amongst the general public, and particularly acts as a reminder to all staff - including new or temporary.

• It can be very useful to change these notices regularly. Using different colours and images helps to keep staff and customers alert to the problem.
Display on your premises, include on your menus:

FOOD ALLERGIES
Some of our menu items contain nuts, seeds and other allergens.
There is a small risk that tiny traces of these may be in any other dish or food served here.
We understand the dangers to those with severe allergies.
Please speak to a member of staff who may be able to help you to make an alternative choice.

Display this in your staff areas in a prominent position:

Emergency Action

If an allergic customer becomes ill, it is likely that person – or someone with them – will say that he/she is suffering an allergic reaction. They may use the word

“ANAPHYLAXIS”

This is what to do:-

- Immediately send someone to dial 999, giving the following information:

  “THIS IS AN EMERGENCY. A CUSTOMER HAS COLLAPSED AND WE BELIEVE THEY ARE SUFFERING FROM ANAPHYLAXIS.” (Pronounced ANA-FILL-AXIS).

  ASK FOR AN AMBULANCE WITH A PARAMEDIC

  SPEAK CLEARLY SO THAT THE AMBULANCE CREW WILL KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO COME (TELL THEM THE POSTCODE IF YOU KNOW IT).

- Someone should be sent to stand at the entrance to direct the ambulance crew to the patient.
- Ask other customers if there is a Doctor in the Restaurant.
- Any staff trained in First Aid should make a point of learning what to do if someone has an Anaphylactic reaction.

Please remember death can take place within 10 minutes. Prompt and immediate action is vital.