



Starting a Food Business in the Home

Starting a food business from home can be a rewarding business venture but is only for those committed to maintaining the highest level of hygiene and food safety. Producing food in your home for many people to eat is a serious undertaking and is not the same as cooking for the family. You will be entering into a highly regulated business area with serious legal obligations. Food business operators are legally responsible for producing food that is safe.

The information in this factsheet details the legal requirements and pitfalls and risks associated with operating a food business in the home and should be used in conjunction with the FSAI's **'Guide to Food Law for Artisan/ Small Food Producers Starting a New Business'**. This publication is available on our website www.fsai.ie or a hard copy can be ordered by calling our Advice Line: 1890 33 66 77.

Operating a food business from home does not exempt your business from the requirements of the food hygiene legislation. This legislation sets out requirements for:

- Registration of the business with the Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Hygiene rules to be complied with
- Training
- Food safety management system based on the principles of HACCP (Hazard analysis and critical control points) to ensure the production of safe food
- Traceability systems and recall procedures in the event of unsafe food being placed on the market

Where food of animal origin, e.g. meat, poultry, eggs, fish, unpasteurised milk, is being processed, you may also need to comply with the legislation setting down specific hygiene rules for foods of animal origin and in some cases, the business may require approval by the HSE.

You should contact your local HSE office as soon as possible to check if your home is suitable for the intended food business activities. Contact details for local HSE offices are available from the FSAI's Advice-Line on 1890 336677.

Additional Legislation

Compliance with additional legislation may be required depending on the type of product, e.g. labelling, additives, marketing standards for eggs, nutrition and health claims etc.

Full details of all food legislation can be found on our website at http://www.fsai.ie/legislation/food_legislation.html

Starting a Food Business in the Home

Possible Pitfalls when Operating a Food Business from Home

Operating a food business from home can present specific problems that you should be aware of.

- 1) Food can become contaminated due to:
 - Normal domestic activities – there must be proper segregation of business and domestic food preparation and activities
 - Poor hygiene – not washing hands properly or frequently enough, particularly after using the toilet, handling refuse etc., dirty cloths and tea towels, poor cleaning practices, dirty equipment/utensils etc
 - Working when ill, particularly when suffering from vomiting/diarrhoea, infected skin wounds, flu, coughing and infections of the mouth, throat, eyes or ears
 - Changing/feeding babies in food preparation areas
 - People or pets entering food preparation areas
 - Facilities being too small
- 2) Production of too much food for the size of the area.
- 3) Insufficient/unsuitable refrigerator space to keep food chilled.
- 4) Lack of equipment necessary to cool food fast enough after cooking.
- 5) The type of food being produced or the process involved presents too high a risk to take place safely in a domestic kitchen.
- 6) Food may be supplied to a vulnerable group, e.g. babies and young children, pregnant women and the elderly.

If, after reading this factsheet and the accompanying guide, you have any questions, please contact our Advice Line on 1890 336677 or email info@fsai.ie