Mobile catering is a high risk business. Not necessarily in terms of profits, but in terms actual physical risk to personal safety. If you don’t keep your eye on the ball, there are quite a few things that could go wrong. But if you’re really on top of safety, running a food business will be pretty darn delightful. Let’s discuss how you can minimise risks and maximise safety for you, for your staff and for your customers.
Deal with gas the right way - get all of your LPG equipment installed, inspected and tested by a registered Gas Safe engineer with qualifications in each specific piece of kit.

- **Take measures to avoid cross contamination.** Food poisoning can cause a heck of a lot of grief. Be very strict about how you deal with your ingredients, surfaces and equipment.

- **Run a strict temperature recording** regime to keep on top of how safe your food is. Always keep foods in the danger zone (5°C - 63°C) for the shortest time possible too.

- **Don’t take risks with equipment.** Make sure all gas equipment is CE marked and has a flame failure device.

- **Do risk assessments:** food safety, fire safety, health & safety… Anything you can think of. Acknowledging hazards and taking measures to minimise them is one of the most important things that every mobile caterer needs to do.

- **Get food hygiene training** that’s sufficient for the job you’re doing, and make your staff do the same. As the owner you should be doing **level 3**.

- **Use separate systems for washing** food, hands and equipment to minimise the risk of cross contamination and food poisoning. (And no, anti-bacterial hand gel isn’t good enough). There are lots of portable hand washing systems available at [www.ncassequipment.co.uk](http://www.ncassequipment.co.uk).
4 big mistakes to avoid

One. Do not fail to use separate utensils and chopping boards

It might sound like overkill but you must take all measures possible to prevent cross contamination, like using separate chopping boards for different types of food and different utensils and containers for raw ingredients.

Two. Not checking the Gas Safe register before booking an engineer

Making mistakes with gas can cost lives. You need to do everything within your means to make your business as gas safe as possible. That includes visiting [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk) and making sure that your LPG engineer is Gas Safe registered and has the exact qualifications that correspond to your LPG equipment.

Three. Avoid second hand or ridiculously cheap equipment

Buy cheap or second hand equipment and risk buying twice. Low prices are often too good to be true: the equipment might not be legally acceptable and is more than likely to be past its useful life if second hand. In this business your equipment is the most important thing you own, so be prepared to pay more for the right piece. And no, camping equipment is NEVER acceptable.

Four. Forgetting to record temperatures and cleaning duties

You need to keep a daily recording diary as part of your due diligence system and enter your fridge and freezer temperatures and cleaning duties every working day. If you ever have to undergo legal proceedings, your records will form the basis of your defence.
Clean up any mess as you go to minimise threats to personal safety. Stuff on the floor can turn into a tripping hazard. Stuff on your surfaces can cause cross-contamination.

**Take First Aid training.** It’s not a legal requirement but it’s a bit of a no-brainer really. You’ll be working in a high risk environment and sometimes accidents do happen. Best be prepared with a wee bit of First Aid training.

Use the Allergen Hub at [www.ncass.org.uk](http://www.ncass.org.uk) for free tools and guidance to help you highlight allergenic ingredients to customers (*which is a legal requirement these days*). Never pay for an allergen toolkit – you can get everything you need for **free** from NCASS.

Use the NCASS due diligence system and stick to it like glue. It’s full of all the health and safety and food safety policies, procedures and checklists that you need to trade safely. It’s even got a ready made daily recording diary in it too. It’s so good that it’s been approved by a Government department.
How to get all the “safety stuff” you need

More than 4500 caterers make up the NCASS family right now. When you're just starting out in this industry and don't have all the experience you'd like, you can draw on ours.

As a member of the Nationwide Caterers Association you'll stay on top of food safety and health and safety with the UK’s only due diligence system produced by a Primary Authority. It makes your food business a safer place, and makes you stand out to EHOs (in a good way!).

You'll get all the food hygiene training that you and your staff need, plus other training courses that will help you run a safer food business.

And the best bit? You have a friendly support team waiting to answer all of your questions about food safety at the other end of the phone. Knowing that NCASS are there for you is invaluable at this early stage of running a food business; it's this sort of peace of mind that makes the whole thing much less scary.

When you’re part of the NCASS family you’ll get:

- A better night's sleep knowing you've got a trade association, a Primary Authority and a legal & financial support team at your beck and call
- Training qualifications and a due diligence system that makes EHOs more likely to aware you a higher food hygiene rating (which is better for business)
- The support and safety net you need to trade legally, easily

Call 0121 603 2524 or visit www.ncass.org.uk/join to start your journey. We can’t wait to work with you.
What the caterers say

“All of the health & safety information has been a great help and is provided in a pack which is great as it keeps everything in one place for when the EHO comes to visit.” – Lee, Baked in Brick

“The heaps of legal requirements were vast and my own documents really couldn’t start to scratch the surface. SO I call in the troops (NCASS), really not expecting much more than a website with resources. Instead I first received a BIBLE (it’s a LIFESAVER) – the due diligence system. Then I received the best personalised customer service ever.”

Patricia, Where The Pancakes Are

“The best thing about NCASS, in my opinion, is the one to one chats with the staff. They are REAL, they talk to you understanding where you are coming from and they simply tell you things as they are. They look after your safety first and foremost, which always feels like fresh air.”

Patricia, Bish Bash Bangers

“The online training is another great tool from NCASS for catering businesses. It’s easy to use and the quality of the training delivered is excellent. Since working with NCASS our hygiene rating at our Manchester restaurant has improved from a 3 to a 5. The results speak for themselves!”

Helen, Zouk

“NCASS has been a great help with keeping organised and up to date. The food hygiene guidance and booklets are beyond helpful. Time is precious for a start-up so tools like this are great. With NCASS you get friendly advice from people with specific industry knowledge.”

Simon, Lola’s Wings