NCASS
NATIONWIDE CATERERS ASSOCIATION
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The Nationwide Caterers Association

Safety Management System

To be used in con...

Safety Management

Safety Management...

This comprehensive guide compares the Safer Food Better Business pack with the NCASS Safety Management System.

Confused about which food safety system to use?

This guide will help catering businesses to understand the key differences between the following compliance systems – The Safer Food Better Business Pack (SFBB) and the NCASS Safety Management System (SMS).

It is part of the work that we are undertaking to help NCASS members challenge established ideas and to find an approach that better suits the needs of their business. We want to support our members with the right systems and processes for their businesses. Such as, providing our members with the tools to ensure they can create a high-quality risk assessment and have this readily available for inspection whether this is in a bricks and mortar or green field site.

We have recently been made aware of instances where EHOs have suggested NCASS members use SFBB despite the fact they had an NCASS SMS in place. We suspect that this may be due to a combination of:

- The NCASS Member not utilising the NCASS food safety risk assessments which form a vital part of the SMS or not sharing them with the EHO during routine inspections

- The EHO, being unfamiliar with elements of the SMS, directing the use of SFBB which they are more familiar with.

Having a widely used, recognised food safety management system such as SFBB continues to be of great value to many businesses. The NCASS Safety Management System has similarities but is focused on the specific needs of NCASS members. As a result, the SMS aims to provide a wider scope of knowledge and enhanced understanding of safety matters and legal responsibilities.

It should not be necessary for an NCASS member who is effectively implementing their SMS, to use the SFBB system.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich, who are the NCASS Primary Authority Partner have provided the following supporting statement:

"We have supported and assured the NCASS Safety Management System as part of the Primary Authority Partnership scheme. The system can confidently be used as an alternative to the SFBB system to help businesses understand and demonstrate their compliance."

Regardless of which compliance system a business chooses to use, it needs to be fully implemented and available upon request. For NCASS members this means effectively utilising the SMS and having their key compliance documents available. This is to support both their business and the routine food safety inspection process that inevitably results in the food hygiene rating score awarded to the business.
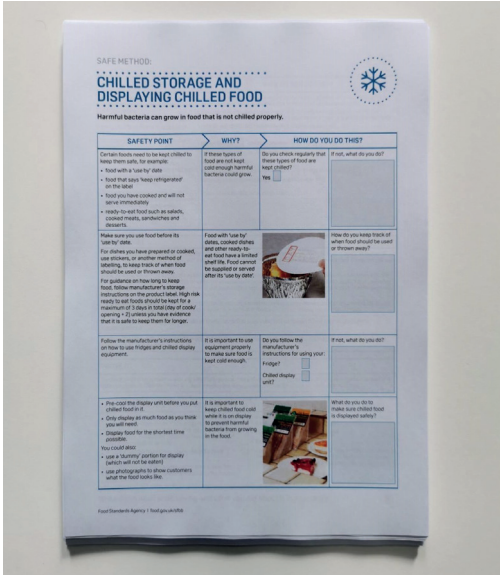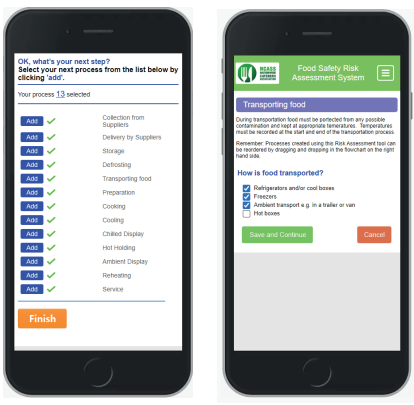
We are supporting EHOs to familiarise themselves with the key elements of the SMS so that they are comfortable that there is another option available to businesses and can see for themselves the benefits of the SMS. We have made the SMS resources available to EHOs via the NCASS Connect system. This includes instructional videos demonstrating how members use the NCASS online risk assessment tool via the member dashboard. We send regular newsletters to EHOs with updates and specific information on our compliance system. We will also be sharing this guide with EHOs along with a call to action asking them for their feedback and their experiences with members and their SMS.

In line with the Primary Authority Partnership scheme, we would direct EHOs with specific concerns about the SMS, to contact our Primary Authority Partners, as opposed to directing members to use SFBB.

This guide is intended to show/explain how the NCASS SMS compares with SFBB and how it provides specific advantages to NCASS members.

	Safer Food Better Business Pack (SFBB)	NCASS Safety Management System (SMS)
What is it?	A simple system developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to help small food businesses in the UK to comply with the legal requirement to have a food safety management system. 	A comprehensive guide to Food Safety, Health and Safety and Fire Safety. It is an educational tool to help independent food businesses to understand their responsibilities it is also a compliance system, to help drive up standards and tackle industry wide issues. It is the outcome of a truly collaborative process with Food Safety, Health & Safety and Fire Safety experts and has been checked and assured by our Primary Authority Partners – Royal Borough of Greenwich, Monmouthshire County Council and East Sussex Fire Service.
How does it work?	A basic food safety management system that is combined of two halves. The first half contains four key sections titled: • Cross contamination • Cleaning • Chilling • Cooking Each section contains a series of safe method sheets detailing the basic food safety information and enabling the recording of some basic information to confirm the business's food safety practices and procedures. Users are required to work through and complete each of the relevant safe methods sheets by hand. It also contains a diary where users can record anything different that happens including anything that goes wrong.	It is comprised of four main parts: Safety Management System (SMS) - a folder that contains compliance / educational information, outlining everything needed to run a food business safely and in a legally compliant manner. It is set out in 3 distinct sections to reflect Food Safety, Health & Safety and Fire Safety. Risk Assessments - templates for food safety processes and a range of relevant health & safety and fire safety topics. Available within an online risk assessment tool via the member dashboard. Implementation of risk assessments are essential to enable legal compliance, safe work practices and to achieving a good food hygiene rating score. Daily Dairy - incorporates all the relevant monitoring checks into one place e.g., opening and closing checks, temperature checks in order to evidence how key controls are being properly implemented. Additional Resources - access to numerous useful template documents including an allergen matrix, cleaning schedule, suppliers list, gas and electrical safety checklists etc.
Who is it suitable for?	Designed as a generic system for small food businesses. There are relevant SFBB packs for caterers, retailers, childminders and residential care homes.	It's versatile – It's designed for mobile and fixed site food premises. Our expertise is in street food and mobile catering so there are elements of this information that will not be found anywhere else, but our system can also be applied to fixed site catering.

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How do I get it?	It is free to download from the FSA website. It accounts for approx. 100 pages plus the user will need sufficient diary sheets to cover every day of trading, all of which must be printed. It will therefore require access to a printer, plus all the pages will need to be hole-punched and organised into a ring binder folder for storage otherwise there will soon be pages all over the place. It is possible to buy printed and bound copies from some online suppliers.	The SMS, Daily Diary, access to the risk assessment tools on the member dashboard and the additional member resources are all part of NCASS membership. Members will get access to the system as soon as they start their membership. The safety management system is contained in a hard-wearing ring binger and the Daily Diary is in a separate easy to use format. No printing or hole punching is required. It is sent out to members in the post and is immediately ready to use, straight out of the box. NCASS members have immediate access to the online member dashboard where they can create a business profile, use the risk assessment tools and store important compliance documents e.g., insurance/gas/electrical certificates. NCASS can also print the risk assessments for the member and send them in the post. So, if they don't have a printer then there is no need to worry! To discuss NCASS membership call our friendly and supportive Membership Team on 0300 124 6866 or go online to *www.ncass.org.uk* for more information.
Food safety risk assessments	A series of safe method sheets that contain some basic information on food safety; outlined as: • Safety points • Some brief information on why this should be done • The provision of limited space (white boxes) to be completed by the user with information on their site-specific food safety arrangements. It is basically a checklist that food business operators can work though to obtain a record of what they do to make sure food is safe to eat. SFBB has been recognised by UK and EU Food safety authorities as meeting minimal legal requirements. Whilst the system allows FBOs to understand general food safety issues and controls it is limited in its ability to fully address more complicated arrangements. Example of safe method sheet: 	It's a comprehensive risk assessment tool based on the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) as required by the food safety regulations. Members can log into the tool via the online member dashboard tool to create a process flow of the relevant food safety procedures that apply to their business e.g., cooking, hot holding, defrosting etc. This will then automatically create the risk assessment tables outlining the general food safety controls, monitoring, and corrective action procedures relevant to each step in the food process. The process is simple, straightforward, and designed to guide the member through the steps whilst providing a clear understanding of the legal responsibilities etc. It produces a professional looking detailed assessment that if properly implemented by the business will support the inspection process and ultimately be reflected in the food hygiene rating score awarded to the business. The content of the assessments is Primary Authority assured so following the process correctly a business can be confident their documentation is accurate. There is less guess work than there would be if the business was trying to manually complete an alternative assessment.

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Monitoring records	The diary section is there to support the user with maintaining monitoring records. It includes: • Week to view diary pages • Checks to do every day • Cleaning schedule • 4 Weekly review. There is nowhere to specifically record individual temperature records or additional checks. There is instead a limited space for the user to record and evidence that they have carried out all their checks and to note when things have gone wrong. It can be easily overlooked with users often simply using it as a tick box exercise – ticking the opening closing checks and recording no or little other information in their diary. It relies upon the 'recording by exception' approach – recording when there is deviation from the safe method or when something goes wrong. The regulations require that record keeping must reflect the size and nature of the business. So, a diligent user with multiple refrigerators or who need to demonstrate that their cooking, reheating, or cooling processes are adequate for their due diligence, will need to try and record everything in the limited space available! Alternatively, they will need to develop their own temperature monitoring records. There is a 4-weekly review – to reflect and review recent operations and any changes that have been made or are necessary. However, this is only as useful as the information recorded in the weekly sheets. Users often miss out the 4-weekly review. 	The Daily Diary incorporates all the relevant monitoring checks into one place e.g., opening and closing checks, temperature checks. It represents 12 months of monitoring records. Whilst the SMS sets out what to do and how to do it, the Daily Diary allows members to document, record and evidence how they are doing these things properly. It contains: • Clear instructions on how to use the Daily Diary • Templates for suppliers lists, cleaning plans, maintenance logs, allergen matrix and product sheets, probe calibration checks • Gas safety and electrical safety checklists • Delivery checks • Daily record forms including weekly reviews and 4-weekly checks. During routine inspections and spot checks, the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) who visits the business will be able to easily review this Daily Diary, to assess how the safety management system is implemented, taking the onus off the member to remember and explain everything. But this must be a reflection of the effort made by the member to make sure the records are completed and kept up to date. The Daily Diary reflects our aim to produce a system that allows members to demonstrate a deeper understanding of their responsibilities and to evidence this effectively through the checks and records they complete. We believe this plays a big part in why the vast majority of NCASS members receive a food hygiene rating of 4 and above.

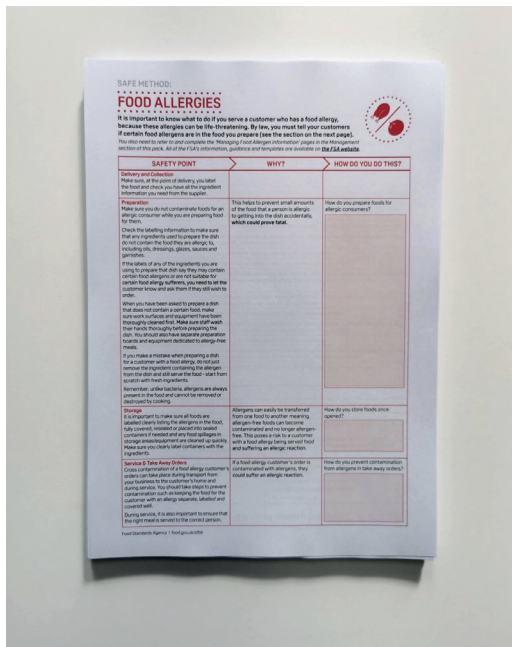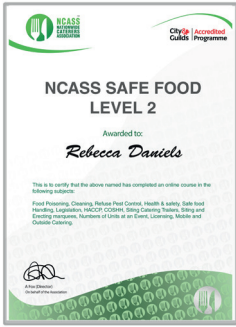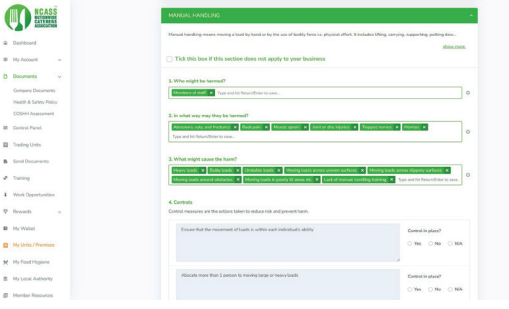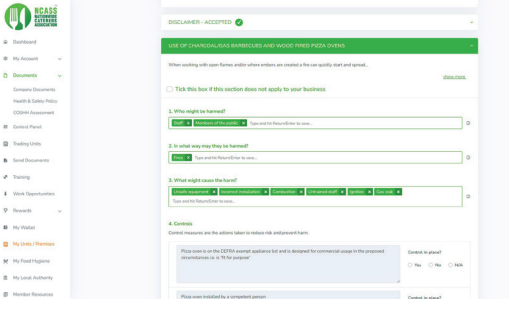|	**Safer Food Better Business Pack (SFBB)**	**NCASS Safety Management System (SMS)**
Food Allergens	There is a designated safe method for food allergens included within the SFBB pack. It is brief and covers the general principles of allergen management. The FSA offers a free online allergen training course which is targeted at all types of food businesses. Sections of this course are relevant to food manufactures and may not be entirely relevant to small independent caterers. The FSA have made some useful resources available on their website to download and complete electronically including: • Dishes and allergen content menu chart (allergen matrix) • Allergy and intolerance sign • Chefs recipe sheet for allergens. 	We have included a whole section on food allergens and intolerances within the SMS – everything a business would need to know. Allergen controls are incorporated as standard within the food safety risk assessment at each stage of food processing to support the development of an allergen management system and compliance with updated regulations. During routine food safety inspections businesses are expected to demonstrate how they have assessed their controls for the presence and cross contamination of food allergens. Many businesses are failing to meet this requirement. NCASS members following the allergen controls already outlined in the NCASS food safety risk assessments and having this assessment available to view will mean this is already taken care of. They won't have to spend hours considering where the controls and correct procedures should be implemented. In addition, the allergen matrix and recipe card templates are included as standard within the SMS and are online in the member resource area so copies can be saved, printed and updated as necessary. All members receive an 'Allergens & Intolerances' window sticker to display in their business to direct customers to speak to staff. Multiple stickers can be made available on request. NCASS offer an online Allergen Awareness course which is available as part of the membership package. It has been written with independent catering businesses entirely in mind so incorporates relevant tips and procedures to manage food allergens.

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Training	There isn't any specific online training course to accompany SFBB. The user will need to use the contents of the SFBB pack to train their staff on food safety procedures. They will then need to fill in the training record sheet that is included, confirming that staff have been trained in each relevant safe method. They will have to arrange and source training courses from wherever they can locate them. Most local authorities no longer provide food hygiene training so training must usually be sourced from online providers where the training content can sometimes be inconsistent and poor quality.	NCASS have created instructional videos to support members with the online risk assessment tool. We have included guidance on how to get the best use out of the SMS etc. within the pack and on the member dashboard. We also have a Membership Team on hand who can help and support our members over the phone with setting up their compliance resources, so they are not alone. NCASS recommend that all staff review the SMS as part of their training, particularly the section titled 'Essentials of Food Hygiene' which sets out the general hygiene rules. We also provide a range of relevant online training courses as part of the membership including: • Level 2 food safety – essential training for all food handlers • Level 3 food safety – relevant to managers and supervisors • HACCP for Caterers – to support with the implementation of the SMS and the principles of HACCP • Allergen Awareness • Health & Safety • LPG Safety • And many more! We have included an easy-to-use training matrix to record the training courses that have been undertaken by staff to support with the business's due diligence.
Updates	Users of SFBB must undertake their own updates – they are responsible for checking if there have been any updates to SFBB and to add in the updated information to ensure the pack remains up to date. For example, the most recent updates have been in relation to the safe method for food allergens. Failure to update the SFBB could mean they are missing key safety controls from their overall food safety management system. This could impact their compliance and subsequently lower the business's food hygiene rating score. There isn't an email notification system to notify the users of SFBB of changes. In most cases users won't know there has been an update or that there are new regulatory requirements or guidance until they are made aware by the EHO during their routine inspection. Businesses will need to review the pack at least every 12 months but also when there are any changes to the business. In this case the safe methods will have to be amended by hand. Sometimes this requires the user to download a whole new pack in order to be able to make the changes.	NCASS will always update members on any changes or updates. If there are updates to the SMS, then we will automatically make members aware and send them the relevant pages to replace. We are constantly reviewing our resources to make sure they are up to date and are always liaising with central authorities about planned regulatory changes, and important matters that are in the pipeline, so we can keep our members ahead of the curve and up to date. The online risk assessments and additional resource records can be updated and amended online whenever necessary – keeping the records looking neat and professional. For example, the allergen matrix can be updated and saved online, as opposed to starting from scratch each time there are changes or making numerous corrections on a paper format.

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Health & Safety	SFBB is only about food safety. There is no health and safety guidance included within SFBB. The user must complete their own H&S policy and risk assessments from scratch to ensure compliance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations and to ensure the business has adequate due diligence in place.	The H&S section of the SMS will support members with providing a safe workplace and environment for staff and customers as well as complying with the legal requirements. Members will have access to: A template H&S policy – required by law and intended to outline the business's arrangements to manage H&S. A COSHH assessment tool – to identify any hazardous substances in use and how the risks will be controlled. A H&S risk assessment tool – to produce risk assessments that are relevant to the catering industry including manual handling, violence at work, slips, trips and falls etc. The controls are already included for the member to review and implement so they don't have to be an expert in H&S matters or risk assessments. They just need diligence and commitment to implement them within their business. For this they will be rewarded with a safe and legally compliant business that customers will support and return to.
Fire Safety	Likewise, there is no fire safety guidance or template documents to support with the development of fire safety measures. Users must therefore seek this support separately, which can be time-consuming and costly. EHOs and fire authorities subsequently find that businesses have not properly assessed the fire risks to their employees and customers.	Within the SMS we have included guidance on the legal requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which places responsibility on businesses to undertake a fire risk assessment. The NCASS Online Fire Risk Assessment tool will help members to identify general controls that can eliminate or reduce fire hazards commonly associated with the catering industry. Again, the controls are already included for members to review and implement so they don't have to be an expert in fire safety or risk assessments.

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Gas safety	There is no information relevant to gas safety.	NCASS have worked with gas experts and suppliers on LPG safety for many years now. We regularly encounter issues with LPG and have concerns about its use. As the outdoor hospitality & mobile sectors continue to grow, so does the use of LPG and consequently the challenges surrounding its safety. We have included within the SMS comprehensive checklists to help members assess the safety of LPG use for powering single or multiple pieces of equipment in gazebos and, tents or marquees. We are also getting ready to launch a new LPG safety course which is relevant to mobile LPG use and includes lots of practical advice and tips. Although we are not the regulators, we have a considered insight into the sector and feel strongly that we can drive standards by raising awareness, encouraging our members to follow the correct procedures and by using engineers that we can trust to carry out gas installations and safety checks correctly. LPG is one of the most significant health and safety risks in mobile catering, so it is imperative that the highest standards are maintained in order to protect lives and also safeguard the industry.
What if it gets lost or damaged	It happens quite frequently that completed SFBB packs are water damaged or lost. Over time they become dirty, coated in cooking grease and need to be replaced. There is no free electronic back up version. So, users will need to acquire a new pack and complete it all over again. Failure to replace the pack and have it in place could impact the food hygiene rating awarded to the business.	NCASS sends a new safety management system pack upon renewal of membership each year. If the pack is lost or damaged there is also the option to request a replacement. The risk assessments are saved on the member dashboard so can be easily edited, updated and won't be lost. Upon renewal the member is required to review and update their compliance documents to support their compliance and future inspection process. We send members timely updates and reminders, so they don't have to remember everything. We enable members to save important documents within their profile so they always have them safe and can easily share them with event organisers and local authorities etc. This way they are not reliant upon paper copies.

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Is there additional support and help?	There is no designated help line or support service provided to help businesses with the completion or implementation of SFBB. EHOs are great at giving advice to businesses but their workloads are significant, and they have less and less time to support individual businesses set up and understand the requirements. Aside from during routine inspections it is unlikely that there will be dedicated support with using SFBB from their local authority.	NCASS members will have access to a dedicated membership team who can help with any compliance or business queries that they may have. We are here to help, so if in doubt just ask! We are launching a Member Forum where members will be able to chat to other members, share experiences and gain support with developing their business.
Summary	Free to download, costly to print. Simple and easy to use but delivers only the minimum in terms of implementing a food safety management system. SFBB is only about food safety and offers no guidance or support with establishing and evidencing Health & Safety and Fire Safety controls. For more information on Safer Food Better Business pack _Safer food, better business (SFBB)	Food Standards Agency._	There are more components to the SMS for members to consider and on the whole it is far more comprehensive than many alternative systems. But we think the effort is worth it to have a more detailed and bespoke safety management system that will be a one-stop guide to running a safe and compliant business. Which is why NCASS members average a food hygiene rating of 4 and above. For more information on the NCASS safety management _The NCASS Safety Management System - NCASS._