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# The NCASS Food Hygiene Rating Inspection Checklist

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Every NCASS member should be aiming for the top food hygiene rating of 5 - Very Good. Anything under a score of 3 – Generally Satisfactory, is undesirable. As well as deterring customers, it could impact your ability to do business, for example and if you trade at events, many event organisers and local authorities require a minimum food hygiene rating of 4 to trade at events or in public places.

There are a number of key areas that Environmental Health Officers look for when undertaking a routine food safety inspection and awarding a food hygiene rating score. We have key insight into these requirements as set out in the National Food Hygiene Brand Standard and to help you prepare for your food safety inspection we have prepared this inspection checklist. It outlines the requirements in line with the following scoring categories of the food hygiene rating scheme:

- Food safety and hygiene procedures - How hygienically the food is handled, how it is prepared, cooked, re-heated, cooled and stored
- Structural requirements – The condition of the structure of the building and other facilities, the cleanliness, layout, lighting and ventilation
- Confidence in management procedures - How the business manages and records what it does to make sure food is safe

A food hygiene rating given is based on an assessment of compliance in these areas. To get the highest rating a business must do well in all three areas.

For more information on how the food hygiene rating scoring works refer to our handy guide [NCASS Guide to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme](#).

The following checklist will help you make sure you've got everything in place for your next inspection and to achieve the best food hygiene rating score that you can! Work through the list to be as prepared as you can be.

This will enable you to rest easy, reap the rewards and be part of the high standards of food safety of which NCASS and all our members are so proud.

No.	Food Safety & Hygiene Procedures	Yes (tick)
1	Are staff wearing clean protective clothing that they change into when they start work? Are staff fit to work? Long hair tied back or covered, are there rules in place for wearing jewellery, nail varnish etc.?	
2	Does regular effective hand washing take place (e.g. before food preparation, after handling raw foods, disposing of waste etc.)?	
3	Are cooked/ready to eat foods stored separately or above raw foods e.g. raw meat, vegetables, shell eggs?	
4	Are raw and cooked/ready to eat foods kept separate during preparation? Are separate areas provided?	
5	Is there separate designated equipment for raw preparation (e.g. cutting boards, knives, sanitizer spray, cling film, cleaning cloth, disposable aprons)? Is this equipment clearly marked and is it understood that it is for raw preparation only?	
6	Where colour coded equipment is used, is it used correctly in order to prevent cross contamination?	
7	Are allergen ingredients stored in sealed containers and not in contact with other foods? Are they labelled or easy to identify?	
8	Is there separate equipment or preparation space in place for preparing allergen free food e.g. gluten free items, or for preparing a specific menu item for a customer who has an allergen?	
9	Are all foods suitably covered, wrapped or in containers to prevent contamination and spoilage?	
10	Is there an adequate date marking system in place for prepared foods and stored ingredients? (For example foods labelled with 'date made' and/or use by dates). Are foods checked daily to remove out of date items?	
11	Are foods being properly stored and temperature controlled? (The core temp of refrigerated food should be 8°C and below, and frozen foods at -18°C or below.)	
12	Can you clearly outline your procedures for making sure food is properly cooked? (High risk foods must be cooked in line with your risk assessment e.g. to a core temperature of 75°C for 30 seconds.)	
13	Are hot held foods kept at a temperature of 63°C and above? Is hot holding equipment preheated and checked to ensure it is capable of maintaining adequate temperature control?	
14	Are cooked foods cooled and refrigerated within 90-120 mins?	
15	Can you outline your procedures for safely defrosting frozen foods (e.g. in a refrigerator overnight, in a suitable container to minimise dripping and avoid cross contamination, labelled with a suitable use by date)?	

No.	Structural Requirements	Yes (tick)
1	Are all food preparation areas and equipment in good condition, clean and well maintained? (Food preparation areas should have a clear flow from raw through to cooked/ready to eat food preparation.)	
2	Are wash hand basins clean and equipped with running hot and cold water, soap and hygienic hand drying facilities? Are they only used for hand washing?	
3	Are there an adequate number of refrigerator and freezer facilities to properly store all foods and ensure adequate separation?	
4	Is there adequate lighting in place to enable adequate pest control checks and effective cleaning to take place?	
5	Is there adequate mechanical and natural ventilation in place? Are extract systems cleaned and well maintained and are windows and air vents pest proofed where possible?	
6	Are all drains and grease traps clean, well maintained and pest proofed? (Drains should be running freely, look for slow draining sinks, broken/ill-fitting drain grills etc.)	
7	Is a disinfectant spray complying with BS EN1276 or 13697 in use? (Required if handling raw and ready to eat foods).	
8	Are you familiar with how to use your disinfectant and cleaning products properly? Can you explain the correct contact time and use (e.g. dilution where applicable)?	
9	Is a two stage cleaning process being carried out on food contact surfaces and equipment e.g. chopping boards and knives?	
10	Are single use cloths used for cleaning? If cloths are reused are they cleaned and disinfected appropriately and are separate cloths used for cleaning raw and ready to eat foods areas?	
11	Is there an adequate number of sinks for cleaning equipment and washing food?	
12	If the same sink is used for both washing equipment and washing food are they effectively cleaned and disinfected between uses?	
13	Is there a constant readily available supply of hot and cold potable running water for cleaning and food preparation?	
14	Is the business premises adequately pest proofed and is it regularly checked for pest activity?	
15	Is all waste including used cooking oil stored in suitable clean lidded bins and collected by a licensed waste contractor? Can you provide evidence of this e.g. commercial waste invoice?	



No.	Confidence in Management Procedures	Yes (tick)
1	Is there an up-to-date copy of the NCASS Safety Management System readily available and is it accessible to staff? (Everyone must be aware of its relevance and know where to find it.)	
2	Are you familiar with the controls outlined in the NCASS food safety risk assessments and have you ensured that they reflect the practices and procedures that you are carrying out?	
3	Are appropriate opening and closing checks carried out, before and after trading each day? Is there evidence that corrective actions are taken when problems are identified e.g. equipment failures are addressed, customer complaints are investigated?	
4	Are Daily Diary records kept up-to-date with evidence of the important checks that are carried out? Do staff understand how to use the diary and are they able to present these records on request?	
5	Are you aware of the 14 allergens and how they impact your business? Has a meaningful risk assessment been carried out to determine which ingredients and menu items contain allergens and how you would minimize cross contamination if asked to prepare an allergen free dish?	
6	Are staff able to provide allergen information to customers? Where written information and signposting is available, is it clear and up-to-date?	
7	Are all staff trained to an appropriate level? Have they undertaken a formal food safety training course and have they also been trained on the food safety procedures outlined in the Safety Management System?	
8	Are deliveries checked to make sure incoming ingredients are suitable for use and are they monitored for substituted ingredients which could impact allergen information records?	
9	Has a supplier list been completed and is there evidence of traceability in place to identify ingredients e.g. recent supplier invoices, receipts, product labels?	
10	Are any foods that meet the definition of Prepacked for Direct Sale (PPDS) adequately labelled with an ingredients list and allergen information?	
11	Have you undertaken a risk assessment for high risk food activities (e.g. Vacuum packed foods, Sous vide processed foods, fermented or smoked/cured foods etc.) to identify specific controls and has the outcome been recorded?	
12	Does the business have a suitable cleaning schedule? Can you clearly outline and describe your cleaning procedures e.g. equipment used, frequency, staff training?	
13	Is a probe thermometer readily available along with food safe probe wipes to clean it with? Has the probe thermometer been calibrated in the last month?	
14	Can you clearly outline your fitness policy/return to work procedures? (Staff must report illness and refrain from work. If they have suffered from sickness and diarrhea then they must refrain from work for 48 hours after symptoms have stopped).	
15	Is there a record of the pest control checks that are carried out? If a pest control contract is not in place then there should be evidence of the checks carried out by the business itself.	



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