

# Food Hygiene and Safety Newsletter

## Health and Safety Myths

Health and safety laws are there to protect workers from proven work-related diseases and from serious workplace hazards. They also protect members of the public and visitors to premises from unnecessary danger. Unfortunately, 'health and safety' has also been used to justify advice or decisions made in the name of health and safety at work but which are legally inaccurate or

completely out of proportion to the nature of the danger. Those decisions and actions often have nothing whatsoever to do with health and safety at work: instead someone thinks that it's easier to hide behind health and safety than to provide a proper explanation. This only serves to discredit and devalue the important work that our officers do to deal with serious workplace

hazards and to investigate complaints and accidents.

The HSE's Myth Busters Challenge Panel provides a way for anyone to challenge advice or a decision taken in the name of health and safety that they believe to be disproportionate or inaccurate. You can read about their work on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/myth-busting.htm> and then read about the best health and safety myths at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/>

## Top 10 worst health and safety myths

1. Children being banned from playing conkers unless they are wearing goggles

2. Office workers being banned from putting up Christmas decorations

3. Trapeze artists being ordered to wear hard hats

4. Pin the tail on the donkey games being deemed a health and safety risk

5. Candy floss on a stick being banned in case people trip and impale themselves

6. Hanging baskets being banned in case people bump their heads on them

7. Schoolchildren being ordered to wear clip on ties in case they are choked by traditional neckwear

8. Park benches must be replaced because they are three inches too low

9. Flip flops being banned from the workplace

10. Graduates ordered not to throw their mortar boards in the air

## Business support is available: Invest Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire District Council is recognised as a pro-business, pro-growth Council and the continued support to the business community to ensure a strong economy is a mainstay of the Council's policy. The Economic Development Team is dedicated to support local businesses, and through its activities and its "Invest Huntingdonshire" website [www.investhuntingdonshire.co.uk](http://www.investhuntingdonshire.co.uk) it offers a range of support and assistance. This includes helping to find funding and premises, developing local supply chains, promoting your business or recruitment and training support through the EDGE partnership.



# Huntingdonshire

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[www.investhuntingdonshire.co.uk](http://www.investhuntingdonshire.co.uk)

This free to use website includes:

- online funding search tool including e-mail alerts
- commercial property finder facility
- business events diary
- directory of local businesses
- procurement and business opportunities

For more information about the site or the Council's economic development activities call 01480 388074 or e-mail [invest@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:invest@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

### Attention Childminders

Have your circumstances changed? Do you prepare food for 5 or more children? If your answer is yes you should have let us know by now. But don't worry it's not too late.

The food safety team prioritises its workload which means that our officers might not be able to visit smaller, low risk businesses. You may have received one of our questionnaires in the past asking

you to provide details about your business but if your circumstances have changed and you now provide food for 5 or more children we may need to visit you. That is not as bad as it sounds. We will look at where you prepare the food, ask you about how you prepare it and discuss the legal requirements to help you comply with the law.

Even if you prepare food for fewer than 5 children there are plenty of resources available to help you

comply with the law, including our website [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) and the Food Standards Agency at [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk). You will find all the information you need but don't forget we are always at the end of the telephone so give us call and we will find the time to deal with your enquiries.

So remember, please keep in touch, keep us informed of any changes to your business and we will help you to stay on the right side of the law.

## Less than thoroughly cooked burgers

The sale and consumption of burgers served less than thoroughly cooked and rare or pink in the middle is a trend that has been steadily increasing in the UK. In September 2015, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Board were asked to consider the issue of serving less than thoroughly cooked burgers in food outlets and catering settings including restaurants and pubs.

This led to the FSA producing advice for food business operators on safe systems for serving beef burgers less than thoroughly cooked, and for enforcement officers that carry out official controls at these establishments. This advice

provides greater consistency for food business operators in terms of the types of systems they can put in place.

Restaurants, pubs and any other food outlet or catering business serving less than thoroughly cooked beef burgers must have systems in place which either:

- Offer the same level of protection as the recommendations made by the FSA's independent advisory committee – even where burgers remain pink in the middle, or;
- Involve controls throughout the supply chain to minimise or reduce the risk of contamination of meat used to make burgers, and a process or processes that

achieve a significant reduction of bacteria in your catering setting, alongside messages that explain to your customers the potential risks from burgers that are not thoroughly cooked.

The service of beef burgers is only acceptable when either of the above is demonstrated.

When an officer visits to carry out a food hygiene inspection you will be asked if you offer less than thoroughly cooked burgers to your customers, and if so, how you have assessed and implemented the FSA guidance.

The full guidance can be found on the Food Standards Agency's website.

# Scores on the Doors

## The Food and Health and Safety Service

There are approximately 1500 registered food businesses on our database and almost 2400 businesses for which we're the health and safety at work enforcing authority. The food hygiene rating scheme sticker is an obvious reminder about some of the work that we do and in 2016 our officers issued over 500 food hygiene ratings to food businesses. However, there's much more to our work and here are a few examples from 2016:

- Food samples taken from 22 businesses – 92 samples taken and submitted for analysis to check standards of hygiene
- Investigated 77 complaints and enquiries about health and safety – unsafe working practices, working with asbestos and complaints from members of the public
- Investigated 50 complaints about contaminated food
- Investigated 160 complaints about unhygienic food premises
- Issued 98 export certificates – any food supplied to countries outside the EU must be accompanied by an export certificate
- 15 unannounced health and safety inspections – we visit the highest risk workplaces without making appointments
- Hosted 6 food hygiene courses – almost 100 people attended our food hygiene courses and business briefing events
- Health and safety investigations – investigated 59 accidents and serious health and safety incidents
- Special project visits – 72 premises visited to check significant health and safety issues such as forklift truck safety, workplace dermatitis and falls from height.

## FREE e-learning training

Are you fully aware of your responsibilities to manage allergens in your business? Free online allergen training is available from The Food Standards Agency's website, and covers the following topics:

- Module 1: legislation
- Module 2: the effects that allergens have in the body

- Module 3: considerations of allergies in the factory
- Module 4: how allergenic ingredients should be displayed on labels
- Module 5: identifying allergens in restaurant dishes
- Module 6: how food businesses should be providing consumers with allergen information

After completing the online training you have the option to print off a certificate for your records.

The training can be found [here](#).

Our officers have recently carried out a number of sampling visits to catering premises. Food samples and surface swabs were taken and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for analysis. Businesses selected for a sampling visit were either:

- those that carry out sous vide cooking or;
- catering businesses who achieved a high food

hygiene rating at their last food hygiene inspection. Sampling visits were carried out as an alternative to a full food hygiene inspection. Samples collected included high-risk ready-to-eat food produced on the premises and sauces from refillable bottles which may have been exposed to contamination risks or poor temperature control. Surface swabs were collected from hand contact surfaces and equipment/utensils. We discussed the results of the samples with the food business operators, and gave advice on how to improve hygiene practices where necessary.

## Sampling activities



Surface swabbing kit

# Reporting Workplace Accidents Getting it Right First Time

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) place duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the 'responsible person') to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences ('near misses'). If you're not sure about whether an incident should be reported then you can contact us on 01480 388302 or by email at [envhealth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:envhealth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk). You can also visit the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>

Only the 'responsible person' should submit reports under RIDDOR and the easiest way to do so is to complete the on-line report form via the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm> The form will then be submitted directly to the RIDDOR

database and you will receive a copy for your records. All incidents can be reported on-line but a telephone service is also provided for reporting fatal/specified and major incidents only – call the incident contact on 0345 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm). If you make a report online you will need to answer some questions by selecting from a series of drop-down menu options. We receive about 90 notifications each year, but about half of them are incorrectly reported. The most common mistakes are:

- Selecting the wrong local authority
- Not accurately describing the type of business at which the accident happened

If you've received this newsletter then that means that we have your business on our database even though you might be closer to Peterborough or Cambridge.

So select Huntingdonshire District Council if you need to report an accident.

It's also important to accurately describe your business by choosing correctly from the drop-down options. Choose the option which best describes the workplace as a whole rather than the specific location. For example, if an accident happens in a school kitchen, then the responsible person should describe the business as 'provision of education' or 'County Council' rather than catering or restaurant.

It's an offence not to report a notifiable accident so if in doubt please report it. You won't be criticised if the accident isn't actually reportable but one of our officers might contact you and ask some additional questions. We log every reported accident on our premises database but only investigate about one in three.

**Staff Change:** Many of you will have met Belinda Betham, one of our food safety inspectors. Belinda has worked at Huntingdonshire for 15 years but will be leaving us in March to take up a new position with West Suffolk Council. We wish Belinda well in her new position and look forward to introducing a new member of the team to you in the near future.

## Do you use a vac packer?

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has recently issued updated guidance to help assess and minimise the risk of Clostridium botulinum in vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods. The guidance is intended to assist food businesses, including manufacturers and retailers of chilled vacuum packed and

modified atmosphere packed (VP/MAP) foods in the practical development and implementation of a HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) based approach for these foods. If you use a vacuum packer to vac pack either raw or ready-to-eat products you should refer to the FSA guidance when devising and implementing your HACCP procedures.

# Have we got your **email address?**

If you've received this copy of our newsletter in hard copy it is because we don't have your email address. In an effort to improve efficiency and reduce costs we continue to look for ways to share information with you electronically. We are moving towards including

more articles with web links and video clips in future newsletters, so it is important that we have your current email address in order for you to make full use of this information. Please send your current email address to [food@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:food@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)