

Notes about the registration of food businesses and premises

What is registration?

1. Registration of premises used for a food business (including market stalls, delivery vehicles and other moveable structures) is required by law. Registration allows local authorities to keep an up-to-date list of all those premises in their area so they can visit them when they need to. The frequency of the visits will depend on the type of business and how well the business complies with food hygiene requirements.

Who needs to register?

2. If you operate a food business, whether for profit or not, you must tell the local authority about each establishment at which food is stored, handled, processed or produced. Depending on where the establishments are located, you may need to notify more than one local authority. Food business establishments include: restaurants, hotels, cafés, shops, supermarkets, staff canteens, warehouses, guest houses, delivery vehicles, buffet cars on trains, markets and other stalls, hot dog and ice cream vans. The 'Food Business Operator' is the natural or legal person(s) responsible for ensuring that the requirements of food law are met within the food business under their control.
3. If you use vehicles in connection with the operation of a shop or warehouse then you only need to register the fixed premises. However, you must tell the local authority how many vehicles you have. You do not need to register each vehicle separately. If you have one or more vehicles but no permanent premises, you must tell the authority where the vehicles are normally kept.
4. Anyone starting a new food business must register with the local authority at least 28 days before doing so.
5. All food business establishments must be registered unless the activities are sporadic or infrequent or there is no obvious organisation or management of the operation in question.

Are there any exemptions?

6. You do not need to register if:
 - you produce or prepare food only for private domestic consumption;
 - you are a "primary producer", for example, you grow fruit or vegetables; or
 - you operate a "product-specific" food business establishment which requires approval under Regulation 853/2004 (e.g. you produce milk, yoghurt, meat pies, pasties or fish products).

How do I register?

7. By filling in the form which is enclosed with this letter. Registration cannot be refused and there is no charge. Please return the completed form to the address on the letter. If you have food business establishments in more than one local authority area, you must register with each authority separately.
8. You must tick all the boxes which apply to your business, answer all the questions and give all the information requested. If you have any questions please ring 01480 388302. It is an offence to give information which you know to be false.

What happens to the information on the form?

9. The local authority will enter the details on its register of food businesses. The general public are entitled to see the list of addresses and the type of business carried on each address. The remainder of the information is not publicly available.

What if my business changes?

10. Once you have registered with the local authority you need to notify them about a change of proprietor, changes in the nature of the business, or if there is a change of the address at which moveable premises are kept. Although not a legal requirement it would be helpful if you notified your local authority if the business closes down. The new proprietor will need to complete an application form.

If the local authority wishes to change the entry in the register because of information which it receives from someone else you will be given 28 days' notice and an opportunity to comment on the proposed change.

These notes are provided for information only and should not be regarded as a complete statement of the law.