



The Food Information Regulations What caterers need to know

From 13th December 2014 it will become a legal requirement for food businesses that serve meals or any unpackaged foods to provide information to their customers about food allergens.

How do we do this?

There are three ways of providing information to the customer:

- You can list the allergens on your printed menu or chalk board.
- You can direct customers to a 'Menu folder' at point of order which could include recipes, ingredient labels etc to help them make an informed decision.
- You can provide a statement on the menu, or at point of order for example:

Food Allergies and Intolerances

Before you order your food and drinks please speak to our staff if you have a food allergy or intolerance.

What practical steps do I need to take to make sure I comply with the new law and keep my customers safe?

1. Make sure that you inform and train your staff on food allergens – they will need to know the list of 14, and the importance of checking the ingredient labels on ready to eat menu items as well as for home-made recipes.
2. The ingredients for home-made recipes must be consistent. Make sure that they are written down and all staff follow them.

You might find the Allergens
– Recipe Checklist attached to
these notes helps you.

3. Make sure that you keep recipes and ingredient labels in an allergy file which you can easily refer to if a customer makes a request for food allergy information. Don't forget that you should include items like cooking oils, sauces, garnishes and dressings.
4. There should always be a member of staff present who has sufficient knowledge about food allergens to help provide the customer with the correct information.
5. If you change your recipe or one of your suppliers changes a product always update your allergy file with the new information.

How do I make sure my kitchen is a safe place to prepare food for a customer with a food allergy?

Make sure that you thoroughly wash your hands, work surfaces and utensils in hot soapy water and rinse in clean hot water before you prepare food. This will help prevent cross contamination with allergens. When food is fried in a deep fat fryer or cooked on a grill or griddle you should make sure the cooking oil or surface of the grill or griddle has not been in contact with the allergen.

Where can I find more information about food allergens and food intolerance?

The Food Standards Agency Website has information and guidance for small businesses that sell restaurant/bar meals.

Visit <http://food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide/>

You can also test your knowledge about food allergies at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Food-allergy-myth-buster.aspx>



