

Fundamentals of Food Hygiene

August 2004

Revised February 2007

9 Guided Learning Hours

Description:

The *Fundamentals of Food Hygiene* is a qualification covering the basic principles of food hygiene. It is valuable as a free-standing qualification or as an addition for people following other training programmes. It is useful for anybody who handles food, including the general public, and is particularly suitable for those working in kitchens or undertaking front-line duties in preparing, processing or retailing food. The emphasis of this qualification is placed on the correct handling of "high risk" foods and the importance of temperature control. The qualification provides the basic knowledge for candidates to be safe food handlers and to be able to play an effective role in a food business operator's food safety management system.

The qualification is equivalent to the Royal Society for Public Health's *Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Catering* and the *Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Retail* or any superseding qualifications, and covers material required by the qualification template developed by the Royal Society for Public Health and other awarding bodies under the guidance of People 1st and Skillsmart Retail, the sector skills councils for the hospitality and retail industries.

Summary of Outcomes:

To achieve this qualification a candidate must:

1. **Describe the importance of food hygiene**
2. **Outline the nature of food hazards**
3. **Describe good hygiene controls**

Content:

1. **Importance of food hygiene**

How food hygiene contributes to food safety: Contribution to food safety by reducing the risk of contamination and cross contamination; definitions of food hygiene and food poisoning; causes of food poisoning; *effects of food borne illness on consumers and businesses*; the incidence of food poisoning; trends in food related illness; 'At risk' groups; common symptoms of food poisoning; loss of custom for food businesses and threat of legal action.

Legal responsibilities placed on food businesses: Outline of the *Food Safety Act 1990* and the *Food Hygiene Regulations 2006* or any superseding legislation; standards for structural requirements of food premises and equipment; requirement for food safety management systems based on HACCP principles and food hygiene training; legal responsibilities of food handlers; outline of legal sanctions; role of enforcement officers.

2. **The nature of food hazards**

Role of microorganisms in food borne illness and spoilage: The nature of food poisoning bacteria and their effects on food; growth requirements of bacteria; importance of toxins and spores; range of "The Temperature Danger Zone" and its importance to bacterial growth; high risk foods; viral food poisoning; food spoilage.

Contamination sources, vehicles and routes: Sources of food poisoning bacteria; contamination and cross-contamination; contamination vehicles such as pests, hands, cloths and equipment; contamination routes; risk to food safety of food handlers suffering from stomach upsets and other illnesses and infections.

Physical, chemical and allergenic contamination: Examples of chemical, physical and allergenic hazards; how such hazards can enter food.

3. **Good hygiene controls**

Cleaning, disinfection and waste control: Definitions and examples of "clean-as-you-go", "scheduled cleaning" and "cleaning in place"; use of cleaning and disinfection chemicals; cleaning procedures for premises, equipment and utensils; importance, methods and frequency of waste disposal; cleaning and location of waste bins; safe storage of tools and chemicals.

Design, layout and construction of premises and equipment: Work surfaces, floors and walls, sinks and equipment; need for premises and equipment to be constructed of appropriate materials to aid cleaning and reduce contamination; work flow; standard of services and facilities.

Introduction to HACCP based food safety management systems: Purpose of HACCP; definition of hazard; biological, chemical and physical hazards; hazard analysis; definition and examples of critical control points; importance of monitoring, recording and reporting.

Personal hygiene, infection control and good food handling practices: Need for appropriate hygiene standards; importance of protective clothing, good personal hygiene practices, hand washing, wound dressings, jewellery and illness reporting; role of good food handling practices in food safety.

Pest control: Control of pests such as rats, mice, cockroaches, flies, birds; conditions favourable to attracting pests; signs of pest infestation; contamination of food and surfaces by pests; preventing access to pests; removal of pests.

Monitoring, recording and reporting: Frequency of recording and monitoring (to include cleaning schedules, food deliveries and the temperatures of chillers, refrigerators, freezers, store rooms, ovens and hot-holding cabinets); importance of reporting possible food safety hazards such as illness, presence of cuts or sores, evidence of pests, faulty equipment, equipment at incorrect temperature, out of date stock: monitoring of critical control points and reporting if critical limits are exceeded.

Temperature controls: Importance of thorough cooking of food and keeping prepared food out of the "Temperature Danger Zone"; destruction of bacterial toxins and spores; maintaining hot or cold temperatures; reheating, cooling and thawing food; refrigerating and freezing; use of microwave ovens.

Storage controls: Storage of canned and dry food; use of refrigerators and freezers for storage of food; date marking of food (*use by* and *best before* dates); stock rotation; disposal of unfit food.

Assessment:

Attainment of the Learning Outcomes will be assessed by a multiple-choice examination of 40 minutes consisting of 30 questions. The examination is provided by the RSPH. A candidate who is able to satisfy the learning outcomes will be awarded a score of at least 20/30 in the examination.

Guidance:

Recommended prior learning:

There are no recommended prior learning requirements for this qualification. The RSPH does, however, recommend that candidates have a level of literacy and numeracy equivalent to *Entry Level 2* (but see notes on Special Assessment Needs below)

Special Needs:

Centres that have candidates with special needs should consult the RSPH's *Regulations and Guidance for Candidates with Special Assessment Needs*, this is available from the RSPH and the RSPH's website www.rsph.org.uk

Recommended Qualifications and Experience of Tutors:

The RSPH would expect that tutors have teaching experience and a qualification in a relevant subject area, but recognises that experienced teachers can often compensate for a lack of initial subject knowledge, or experienced practitioners for a lack of teaching experience.

Suitable qualifications for the *Fundamentals in Food Hygiene* include:

- a) Degree or Dip. HE in: Food Science; Environmental Health; Environmental Science; Home Economics; Microbiology; or one that contains elements of these subjects.
- b) HNC/D in one of the above.
- c) Level 4 qualification in Food Hygiene such as: *RSPH Level 4 Award in Managing Food Safety in Catering*
- d) Level 3 qualifications in Food Hygiene such as: *RSPH Level 3 Award in Supervising Food Safety in Catering* or the *RSPH Level 3 Award in Food Safety Supervision for Retail*
- e) Graduate Diploma in Food Science and Technology of The Institute of Food Science and Technology.
- f) Membership of the Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA).

National Qualifications Framework

Centres should note that the *Fundamentals of Food Hygiene* is not accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and is not part of the National Qualifications Framework. Centres are advised to check the availability of government funding for this qualification if this is required.

The RSPH does offer accredited qualifications in food hygiene. If such a qualification is required centres should apply for permission to offer The Society's *Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering* or the *Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Retail*. Copies of the syllabuses for these qualifications can be obtained from the RSPH or from the RSPH's website www.rsph.org.uk

Centres should be registered with the RSPH.

Any enquiries about this qualification should be made to:

The Qualifications Department,
Royal Society for Public Health
3rd Floor
Market Towers
1 Nine Elms Lane
SW8 5NQ