

Food Business Compliance Starter Guide

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A plain-language overview of the compliance building blocks every food business should have in place.

1. Know which rules apply

- List every premises and the activities carried out at each (manufacture, storage, trade, catering, import, export, e-commerce).
- Identify the applicable food registration or licence category for each premises, and any other product or packaging requirements (for example labelling, packaged commodity declarations, product standards or certification schemes).
- Verify the current requirements on official regulator websites; rules and thresholds can change.

2. Put the paperwork in order

- Keep constitution, identity, address and premises documents organised and current.
- Display your licence / registration as required and track renewal dates in a compliance calendar.
- Update your licence particulars when products, premises, capacity or ownership change.

3. Get the basics right on the floor

- Personal hygiene: clean clothing, head covering, hand washing, illness reporting.
- Cleaning and sanitation: a written schedule that is followed and checked.
- Pest control: a professional service plus your own daily checks.
- Temperature control: defined limits for storage, cooking and holding, with records.
- Separation: raw vs ready-to-eat, food vs chemicals, allergens.

4. Record what you do

- Temperature logs, cleaning records, pest control reports, receiving checks and training records are the minimum most businesses should keep.
- Records must be completed at the time, by the person doing the work, and reviewed by a supervisor.

5. Train your people

- Induct every new food handler before they start work.
- Refresh training periodically and after any incident or audit finding.
- Keep attendance and assessment records.

6. Check yourself before others do

- Run a simple self-inspection monthly using a checklist.
- Conduct a structured internal audit at least annually, or as required by your standard.
- Fix root causes, not just symptoms, and verify that actions are effective.

7. Grow your system with your business

- As you grow or start supplying larger buyers or export markets, consider a formal food safety management system (HACCP, ISO 22000, FSSC 22000, BRCGS) and market-specific certifications.

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