



**Guidance on the operation of the
Eat Safe Award Scheme for Scotland**

Eat Safe - Promoting Excellence in Food Hygiene

THE EAT SAFE AWARD SCHEME BACKGROUND

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) considers the Eat Safe Award Scheme to be an important element in raising food safety standards thus supporting food law enforcement.

The Scheme is directly linked to the following food safety objectives:

- Reducing food-borne disease
- The promotion of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)
- Generating transparency of food hygiene standards in food premises
- Improving public confidence/consumer choice.

The Eat Safe Award Scheme was developed in Northern Ireland following consultation with all interested parties i.e. consumers, caterers and enforcers. Eat Safe was extended to Scotland during January 2005.

THE EAT SAFE AWARD SCHEME

Question & Answer Guidance

1. Who manages the Scheme in Scotland?

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) manages the Scheme and Scottish Local Authorities administer the Scheme.

The Food Hygiene Information Scheme Implementation Group advises Food Standards Scotland (FSS) on the ongoing development of the Scheme. The group consists of representatives from each of the following: Consumer Focus Scotland, Scottish Food Advisory Committee, The Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee and Trade and Industry representatives.

2. How many tiers does the Award have?

The Eat Safe Award has one tier with the intention of keeping the Scheme simple, easy to administer and of minimising possible impact on Local Authority Officer workloads.

3. Which premises are eligible for inclusion in the Scheme?

Initially the Award was limited to catering operations to which the public has access.

However, from February 2010 the scheme scope was expanded to be the same as the scope for the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) and will remain anchored to this scope.

At the time of drafting this guidance the scope extends to establishments supplying food directly to consumers, this includes restaurants, cafes, takeaways, sandwich shops and other places that people eat food prepared outside the home, as well as food retailers.

4. When are eligible premises assessed for an Award?

Local Authority Officers assess food businesses against the set criteria during planned food hygiene inspections.

5. What happens if premises request special inspections in order to obtain an Award?

Local Authorities are free locally to consider some special inspections if they choose to do so, including the option of bringing forward inspections. However Local Authorities are **not** required to do this.

6. What standards have to be met to obtain an Award?

The Award criteria are set out in Appendix 1.

7. Who is the Award made to?

In the case of:

- (a) **A Privately Owned Establishment** - the Award is made to the proprietor
- (b) **A Franchised Operation** - the Award is made to the franchisee and relates to the outlet in question
- (c) **A Centrally Managed Chain** - the Award is made to the proprietor and/or company (but relating to the outlet in question).

8. What should happen at subsequent re-assessments?

Re-assessment of food businesses for retention of the Eat Safe Award takes place again during planned food hygiene inspections. If the food business still meets the Eat Safe Award criteria the business retains the Award.

9. Under what circumstances should the Award be withdrawn?

Local Authorities may withdraw Award certificates at any time if:

- (a) The food business fails to meet the required criteria at the time of inspection.
- (b) A visit to the premises for any reason e.g. sampling, complaint etc. reveals that the criteria are no longer met.
- (c) There is, for any reason, a confirmed fall in standards (e.g. justified food poisoning investigation, enforcement action necessary, failure in Food Safety Management System/record keeping).
- (d) The food business ceases to trade.
- (e) The food business is taken over by a different proprietor/franchisee/company.

10. What happens if a food business holding the Eat Safe Award changes hands?

Firstly, the existing Award must be withdrawn. If at the time of inspection, the new food business is found to comply with the Scheme criteria then an Eat Safe Award may be granted to the new proprietor/proprietor/franchisee/company.

11. What is the life of an Award?

Certificates last from one planned food hygiene inspection to the next unless withdrawn by the Local Authority as indicated earlier. Certificates are undated and renewal consists of leaving the certificate in place if the Award criteria are still met at subsequent planned food hygiene inspections.

12. Is there an appeal procedure?

As Award criteria are clearly defined and made known to food business operators, it is considered that a formal appeals mechanism is unnecessary.

13. What are the training requirements of the Award?

The training requirement criteria is that all food handlers must be supervised by a person holding either the elementary food hygiene certificate or, when higher-risk operations are carried out, the intermediate food hygiene certificate.

This is intended to continue to allow lower risk operations to require only that the supervisor has the elementary food hygiene certificate. In most food businesses there will be times of day when only such lower risk operations are carried out. However, the vast majority of food businesses would involve higher-risk operations during much of each day.

For very small businesses where no higher-risk operations are involved, FSS considers that the training/supervision requirements combined with the existing requirements for a documented food safety management system meet the requirements of the Award.

14. How can the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) based food safety management training requirement of the criteria be met?

Training does not have to be achieved by sitting a formal training course. This requirement would be met by staff responsible for the development and maintenance of HACCP based food safety management systems demonstrating understand of the requirements and implement of the system in full.

15. What is the Food Hygiene Information Scheme?

The Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) is designed to provide consumers with information about hygiene standards at food premises and has been rolled out across Scotland. Each business is given a rating to reflect the standards found at the time of its statutory food hygiene inspection. This type of scheme is intended to allow consumers to clearly differentiate between businesses that meet legal requirements and those that have failed to meet these requirements. The Food Hygiene Information Scheme is voluntary for local authorities to operate and for businesses to display their 'Inspection Outcome' on the door of their establishment; however the web display is not voluntary.

16. How long has the Food Hygiene Information Scheme been running?

The Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) was established in 2006 as a pilot *Scores on the Doors* project in Scotland in partnership with five volunteer Local Authorities. In December 2008 the Food Standards Agency Board recommended continuation of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme as the appropriate format for a food hygiene ratings scheme for Scotland.

17. Can the Eat Safe Award Scheme and the Food Hygiene Information Scheme operate together?

The Food Hygiene Information Scheme is entirely compatible with the Eat Safe Award scheme. The two schemes although separate, have operated side by side without difficulty since the two-year Food Hygiene Information Scheme pilot.

The Food Hygiene Information Scheme is designed to rate hygiene standards against the legal requirements and is distinct from the Eat Safe Award scheme, which is designed to recognise businesses that have achieved standards **over and above** the legal requirements.

Appendix 1 Scheme Criteria

LEGAL COMPLIANCE	
Food Hygiene & Safety (handling practices, procedures, temp. control)	Structural
Good compliance with Regulation (EC) No 852 on the hygiene of foodstuffs and The Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006, Schedule 4 – Temperature Control Requirements.	Good compliance with Regulation (EC) No 852 on hygiene of foodstuffs. Any non-compliance minor in nature only and not critical to food safety.
HACCP BASED FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In addition, whether or not flexibilities might otherwise apply with regard to the application of Article 5 of EC Regulation 852/2004. A documented HACCP based Food Safety Management System appropriate to the nature of the business is in place such as CookSafe, RetailSafe, ButcherSafe, businesses own system or local authority own system. 2. Audit by Local Authority confirms general compliance with documented Food Safety Management System. 	
TRAINING ¹	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All food handlers to receive the essentials of food hygiene instruction before starting work and further food hygiene awareness instruction within 4 weeks (8 weeks for part time staff) of commencing employment. 2. All food handlers involved in preparation and handling of high-risk open (unwrapped) foods will have been successful in an examination taken following an elementary² level food hygiene training course, or equivalent in-house training³ within 3 months of commencement of employment. 3. All food handlers that have not achieved the elementary level food hygiene competence set out in the preceding bullet point must be supervised by a person who has that level of competence or intermediate⁴ food hygiene level where the next bullet applies. 4. Where a business handles either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. open ready to eat foods and unwrapped raw meat/poultry or unwashed root vegetables at the same time, or b. unwrapped high risk (perishable) ready to eat foods, All food handlers must be supervised by a person who has been successful in an examination taken following an intermediate level food hygiene or equivalent in-house course⁵. 5. A food handler holding the elementary food hygiene or, where required under bullet point 4, the intermediate food hygiene certificate may work without supervision by a person trained to that standard. 6. Staff responsible for the development and maintenance of Food Safety Management System have received appropriate training in the application of HACCP principles⁶. 7. Certificates and/or the training records available to prove these competencies. 	

¹ Officers should use discretion in applying training criteria e.g. businesses should not be refused an Award merely because one or two food handlers were not trained within specified time periods or if certificates have not yet been received from the Awarding body.

² Equivalent to Level 2 Food Hygiene Award in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

³ The onus for demonstrating the equivalence of in-house training and subsequent assessment of competence rests with the business

⁴ Equivalent to Level 3 Food Hygiene Award in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

⁵ At least one person with intermediate training would be present in the premises in normal circumstances at times when these operations are being carried out. Practical allowances for holidays or short absences due to other business needs may be necessary, however, arrangements should be in place in the premises to ensure the food hygiene management and HACCP arrangements are working effectively during any such absences.

⁶ As set out in Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs / The Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006.