



Food for Fundraising

The following advice is taken from the Food Standards Agency website

I run a small club and we serve tea, cakes and biscuits to members. Do we need to follow food hygiene regulations?

If you run a club, or similar small group, and provide food to members at meetings or other events, then you might have to comply with food safety and hygiene legislation. This is still the case if you don't make a profit from the refreshments.

There isn't a straightforward answer to which clubs are covered by the regulations and which aren't, because this depends on the individual circumstances. If you serve refreshments to a few friends at home, then the regulations probably wouldn't apply, because food prepared at home for domestic purposes is exempt.

If, for example, your club is more formally organised, then food safety and hygiene legislation might apply to you. Local authorities are in the best position to decide whether the legislation applies to clubs, according to individual circumstances.

You might also need to register with your local authority if you meet frequently and provide food at the meetings. One-off or annual events are unlikely to require registration or be covered by food hygiene regulations. But you must make sure the food you supply is safe to eat.

To find out more about what regulations apply to your situation, contact the environmental health department at your local authority.

Whether or not the regulations apply to your club, you should always follow good hygiene when preparing food for yourself or other people. For example, you should do the following things:

- Always wash your hands before preparing food.
- Keep ready-to-eat foods, such as cakes and biscuits, away from raw food, especially raw meat.
- Keep cakes and desserts in the fridge if they contain fresh cream or butter-cream icing. Don't leave them out at room temperature.
- Use clean tongs or a cake slice to serve cakes.

The parent-staff association at my children's school would like to have a stall selling home-made cakes at the school fair. But some people are concerned about hygiene. Is this kind of stall OK?

Home-made cakes should be safe to eat, as long as the people who make them observe good food hygiene, and the cakes are stored and transported safely.

At home, people making cakes should follow these tips:

- Always wash your hands before preparing food.
- Make sure that surfaces, bowls, utensils, etc. are clean.
- Don't use raw eggs in anything that won't be thoroughly cooked, such as icing or mousse.
- Keep cheesecakes and any cakes or desserts containing cream or butter icing in the fridge.
- Store cakes in a clean, sealable container, away from raw foods, especially raw meat.

On the day, people bringing in cakes from home or running the stall should follow these tips:

- Transport cakes in a clean, sealable container.
- Make sure that cheesecakes and any cakes or desserts containing cream or butter icing are out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.
- Avoid handling cakes. Use tongs or a cake slice instead.

If you would like more advice, contact the environmental health service at your local authority.



How long can I leave food out on a buffet?

In general, foods that need to be chilled (which include most of the foods people tend to serve on buffets and most sandwich fillings) should be left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible. If they are left at room temperature for a long time, bacteria can grow or toxins can form, and both of these could cause food poisoning.

If you are preparing a buffet at home for friends or family, there aren't any regulations that specify a maximum time that food can be left out but, in the interests of safety, you should try and keep it short (not more than two hours). Then any remaining food should be thrown away or put back in the fridge. If you keep leftovers in the fridge, don't let them stand around at room temperature when you serve them again.

However, if you are preparing a buffet (or any other food) as part of a business, which in some circumstances could include charitable or community events, you must follow food safety regulations. The law requires caterers to keep certain foods at specified temperatures for food safety reasons. Chilled foods must be kept at or below 8°C, while foods that are being kept hot before serving should remain at or above 63°C. Contact the environmental health service at your local authority for more information on what regulations apply to you.

The law allows food to be left at room temperature for limited periods during service or when on display. The temperature of chilled foods can exceed 8°C for up to four hours, while the temperature of hot foods can fall below 63°C for a maximum of two hours. However, these flexibilities can be used only **once** for each batch of food. In other words, the same food can't be left out at room temperature for more than one period, even if the separate periods add up to a combined total of four (or two) hours. After one period at room temperature, food should be thrown away or chilled until final use.

Do I need to label cakes and jams sold for charity?

If you sell food for a charity, you might have to follow food labelling regulations. There isn't a straightforward answer to whether the regulations will apply to you or not because this will depend on how the food is sold and the organisation or charity selling them.

In general, the Food Labelling Regulations 1996 don't apply to food that isn't prepared as part of a business. So this means that most food being sold for charity won't need to be labelled, including food sold at one-off events such as church fêtes and school fairs.

But if you regularly sell packaged food for charity (for example, jars of jam or boxed cakes), you might have to follow the regulations. This is still the case if you don't make a profit.

Foods that are sold loose don't need to be labelled. So if you sell unpackaged cakes and buns, you wouldn't need to label them even if you sell them regularly. However, if any of the ingredients had been irradiated or genetically modified, you would need to declare this.

To find out more about what regulations apply to your situation, contact the trading standards department at your local authority. You may also need to follow food hygiene regulations – ask the environmental health department at your local authority for more information.

If you're not legally required to label a food, you could do it voluntarily, giving the product name, a list of ingredients (in descending order of weight) and details of any ingredients that could cause an allergic reaction, such as nuts. If you do label a food, you must make sure that the information you provide is accurate.