Food Allergen Risk Assessment for Caterers

People with food allergies have to take great care when eating out to avoid certain foods that could cause them harm. As a business you have a legal obligation to ensure that any food you produce or prepare is safe. There is, from December 2014, now a legal requirement to provide information to consumers about allergenic foods sold unpackaged, you should be able to provide information on allergenic ingredients when asked. You may provide it by talking to your customers, as long as you have signs saying so, and that you have staff who can do this at all times.

Main Food Allergens:

- Peanuts
- Nuts
- Crustaceans
- Molluscs
- Fish
- Eggs
- Milk
- Cereals containing Gluten
- Soya
- Sesame seeds
- Celery
- Mustard
- Lupin
- Sulphur Dioxide

The risk assessment has been divided into three sections covering Overall Management & Training, Kitchen Procedures and Front of House. This will allow you to assess whether the controls you currently have in place are effective and if any improvements can be made to ensure that the food you serve is safe.

If you are not certain that you can provide food that is suitable for someone with a food allergy then you should tell them so, they can then decide whether or not to eat the foods you provide.

More guidance and online training can be found on the Food Standards Agency at http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/guidancenotes/labelregssguidance/nonprepacked

Allergen Management & Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Notes to consider</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you have a written policy on food allergies and intolerances?</td>
<td>You should consider the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
<td>a) Read the Food Standards Agency Guidance (see the link above)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Are your first aid emergency procedures up to date and rehearsed?</td>
<td>b) Identify the allergen risks</td>
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<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
<td>c) Decide who is to have overall management responsibility for allergens and food safety</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Ensure training is given to all staff (both permanent and temporary) and that there is always a trained member of staff on duty during opening hours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e) Plan how to minimise the risks</td>
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<td>f) Display notices to remind staff of the risks</td>
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<td>g) Plan how to communicate the risk between members of staff, and to customers</td>
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### Training

3. Have all kitchen staff received food allergen awareness training?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

4. Have front of house staff received food allergen awareness training?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

   It is good practice to ensure all training given to staff is recorded and kept on file and that refresher training is given on a regular basis.

5. Have your staff demonstrated to you that they understand and can follow the training?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

### Kitchen Procedures

#### Allergenic Ingredient Identification

6. Which food allergens do you handle?
   - [ ] Cereals containing gluten: wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut and their hybridised strains.
   - [ ] Crustaceans (– e.g. prawns)
   - [ ] Molluscs (– e.g. mussels)
   - [ ] Eggs
   - [ ] Fish
   - [ ] Peanuts
   - [ ] Soybeans/soya
   - [ ] Milk
   - [ ] Nuts: almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, Brazil nuts, pistachios, macadamias, and Queensland nuts
   - [ ] Celery
   - [ ] Mustard
   - [ ] Sesame seeds
   - [ ] Sulphur dioxide and sulphites often expressed as \( \text{SO}_2 \), used as a preservative and often found in wine and dried fruit.
   - [ ] Lupin

Prepare a list and how you will control their use, and prevent cross-contamination.

See separate grid you can use for ingredients and for menu dishes

You must tell the customer the allergen present **using** the terms listed left

**You need to take steps to ensure this is carried out so you can comply with legislation to supply safe food.**
6. Have you checked for allergens in ingredients you use? Including checking the labels of prepared food, sauces, and seasoning mixes?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Does your supplier provide you with adequate labelling information?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Do you check to see if any substituted items that have been deliveries contain allergenic ingredients?
   - Yes
   - No

9. Do you re-check for allergens if you have to change supplier?
   - Yes
   - No

You should consider the following:

- If receiving food not prepacked or without full labelling information: Contact your supplier for the information, and make sure they understand why you need the information.
- Ensure they provide you with clear information and that they update you should the ingredients or their processing change. They are required by law to do this.
- Think about how you can make staff remember to check for allergenic ingredients in new or replacement ingredients, for example a delivery checklist.
- All food should be labelled in English, if it is not you should ask that your supplier provides ingredients details in English. You can then show customers what the food contains if needed.

10. Do you record any of the above checks?
    - Yes
    - No

You should consider how you would be able to demonstrate what steps you have taken to prepare safe food. For example,

- Written records
- How frequently are records made?
- Who checks information is being recorded correctly?

STORAGE

11. Do you have a storage system to prevent cross-contamination of ingredients with all allergenic ingredients?
    - Yes
    - No

12. If you transfer ingredients from packaging into storage containers or fridges/freezers, do you have a procedure for retaining product information such as date codes, batch codes, allergen information?
    - Yes
    - No

You should consider the following:

- A colour code for allergenic ingredients.
- A spillage plan to clean up allergenic ingredients.
- How do you control transfer of ingredients and foods so that labelling is retained, so that all foods are clearly identified so that staff can check what allergens are in it?

PREPARATION

13. Do you follow any procedures when preparing food for a customer with a food allergy?
    - Yes
    - No

You should consider the following:

- Check ingredient labelling for allergenic ingredients.
- Consider dish preparation, separate equipment & utensils, storage, cooking/reheating, separate preparation area.
- Thorough cleaning before and afterwards.
Are the procedures clear to staff?
14. If yes, have you considered all aspects listed in the right hand column?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Surfaces, containers, utensils, storage and preparation areas all must be regularly cleaned.
d) Adequate hand-washing.
e) If you re-use cooking oil, there is a probability that allergens such as nut proteins/fish proteins/gluten will still be present.
f) Serving Procedures; for example, garnishes, topping a dessert with almonds, preventing cross-contamination when food is served in a buffet style.

Front of House

15. Do you inform customers about dishes that contain particular allergens, and ensure that information is available and clearly displayed?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

*Legally required from December 2014 to provide all allergen information on menu or display a sign inviting customers to ask a member of staff. See sign on page 5.

The sign must be prominent and where customers make their choices – at the bar, at waiting and eating areas, on all menus, blackboards

You should:
a) **Ask your customers** if they suffer from any food allergies, and identify any dishes that they will not be able to eat. (Including for advance or group bookings and telephone orders)
b) Highlight on menu by including the allergenic ingredient in the name of the food description if not obvious.
c) What about garnishes of nuts/breadcrumbs / croutons / sesame seeds etc: Are they stated on the menu?
d) Providing allergenic information on notices detailing the name of food at self-service counters, salad bars. Ensuring foods containing no allergenic ingredients are sufficiently separated from food containing allergenic ingredient, and in a way to prevent any falling food contaminating it. Do you provide enough utensils to prevent cross-contamination?
e) Guide/Symbols to indicate which dishes contain certain allergenic ingredients are only allowed if full details are given
f) Notices/details in menus (see suggested wording below)
g) Is any information available on your website?

Think Allergy
I have an allergy to:

Please check my meal does not contain this food.
Just a small amount could make me very ill.

Customers may show you them
http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/chefcard.pdf

Phone & Internet Orders, Home Delivery

16. On taking orders do your staff ask if anyone has any allergy or intolerance to foods?

17. Do you use internet websites to advertise and take orders? How is the

Invite the discussion with your customers when they contact you.
a) Staff must know how to provide the information over the phone or on email/website orders.
b) Do the staff have access to correct up to date list
<table>
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<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>18. How do you ensure that the kitchen staff receive understand and act on the request for meals without a particular allergen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Are there any particular language &amp; communication difficulties? From the consumer? Between staff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Are meal containers clearly labelled to say which contain specific allergens?</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. You may, in addition, identify clearly which container has food made without a named allergen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>The allergen information must be available to the customer at the moment of delivery of the food. How do you ensure allergen labelling on home delivery containers? Examples could include: - Stickers applied to each container when filled in the kitchen. Coloured stickers with the allergen name on it. - Pre-printed list on containers - Handwritten in permanent ink – it must be readable - A separate sign/menu/sheet of paper – but it must be possible to clearly identify what allergen information relates to which food product, and it must not be confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffets &amp; Platters &amp; Event Catering etc</td>
<td>Labels/signs must be clear and with the food at all times, whilst consumers are serving themselves. Think how you group food platters etc – segregate by allergens? What controls help prevent cross-contamination? a. Separate serving utensils b. Segregation of particular foods depending on the allergen(s) present c. Layout of buffet food, for example salads presented first, dressings containing allergens offered at after d. Specific allergen-restricted food identified, separated and protected</td>
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It is suggested you display one of these posters in staff areas:
The top poster is available from Northamptonshire Trading Standards.  
www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/TSBusiness-support

Copies of the second poster are available in different languages,  
and lots more resources are available from the Food Standards Agency website
http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide

For online training and more advice please see
http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/

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Information for Customers with Food Allergies

Benefits of using the signs like the ones below:

- Use the words ‘Food Allergies & Intolerances’ - so only customers who do have an allergy or intolerance need to read it.
- It invites the customer to share their problem – “we’ll help if we can, and if we can’t, we’ll say so”.
- It says to your customers
  - “We have a system in place - please ask and we'll listen to you too”.
  - “We are quite entitled to use these things in our products and only use them when appropriate, but also recognise that for some people they are very dangerous. So we will take care”
- Having the notices raises awareness amongst the general public, and particularly acts as a reminder to all staff - including new or temporary.
- It can be very useful to change these notices regularly. Using different colours and images helps to keep staff and customers alert to the problem.

Display on your premises everywhere that your customers choose food & drink,  
include on your menus:

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**FOOD ALLERGIES & INTOLERANCES**

Please speak to a member of staff about the ingredients of your meal before ordering.

Thank you
ALLERGIC REACTION

Emergency Action

If an allergic customer becomes ill, it is likely that person – or someone with them – will say that he/she is suffering an allergic reaction.

They may use the word

“ANAPHYLAXIS”

This is what to do:-

Immediately send someone to dial 999, giving the following information:

“THIS IS AN EMERGENCY. A CUSTOMER HAS COLLAPSED AND WE BELIEVE THEY ARE SUFFERING FROM ANAPHYLAXIS.” (Pronounced ANA-FILL-AXIS).

ASK FOR AN AMBULANCE WITH A PARAMEDIC

SPEAK CLEARLY SO THAT THE AMBULANCE CREW WILL KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO COME

TELL THEM THE POSTCODE: XX## #XX.

- Someone should stand at the entrance to direct the ambulance crew to the patient.
- Any staff trained in First Aid should learn what to do if someone has an Anaphylactic reaction.
- Ask other customers if there is a Doctor in the Restaurant.

Remember death can take place within 10 minutes.

Prompt and immediate action is vital