

Allergen Advice for Food Businesses (Takeaway & Delivery) in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, some food businesses will be offering takeaway and/or home delivery services for the first time. The laws surrounding home delivery and many takeaway services are different to those which apply to restaurants and cafes.

If you are offering new food takeaway or delivery services to customers, it is critical that you understand the laws that apply in order to safely serve customers with food allergies.

Food businesses **must provide allergen information** about any of the 14 major allergens (see link below) when they are used as ingredients in the food and drink, they provide. This applies to all foods sold at a distance, whether that is through an **online** platform or **app**, or over the **telephone**.

The allergen information must be available to the customer at **two** stages through the ordering process as follows:

- Prior to the point of ordering – this can be given verbally or in writing (**all online menus**) **AND**
- At the point of delivery – if a ‘no contact’ delivery is planned, with no opportunity to speak to the customer, this will need to be in writing (for example, chefs cards (see link below) stickers or written on packaging)

You must provide the information above so that a customer does not eat something which could **risk their life**.

As a business you must ensure that if customers are ordering online or via apps, that customers are able to communicate clearly to the business any allergens which affect them. Some apps may not allow customers to communicate specific information to businesses with regards to allergens, therefore it is essential that you speak directly to these customers to ensure clarity via the telephone.

The allergy information will need to be reviewed regularly and specifically when changes to recipes are made or when suppliers or ingredient branding changes. You must ensure that all staff including food handlers are suitably trained with regards to allergens-see link to free training.

It is vitally important that when working in your kitchen you know what allergens you have and that you handle and are aware of the potential for allergen cross contamination. This will include delivery of foods into your business, where and how you store foods, preparation of dishes and final service of the menu item. In most kitchens you will be handling a range of different ingredients and likely to have foods that contain more than one allergen. Therefore, in your kitchen there will be a range of allergens present.

It is unlikely that you will be able to safely provide assurance to your customer that a menu item will not have a specific allergen in it. It is therefore important to tell your customers that you handle a range of products in the same kitchen including allergens and you cannot guarantee that any one menu item will not contain an allergen. Bear in mind that you are not legally required to offer an allergen-free meal at the request of a customer.

As a food business operator, you are **legally** required to provide clear allergy information for your customers. Equally, you are legally required to ensure that any food you produce is **safe** for consumption. Failure to comply with this legislation may result in legal action being taken by this Service.

Should you have any further questions, our staff will be available to discuss via this email address - food.advice@fife.gov.uk

Please also see further advice relating to COVID-19 on Fife Council's website for Businesses and Employers:
<https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/health-and-social-care2/coronavirus-covid-19/businesses-and-employers>

Useful links for Food Businesses

[Allergytraining.food.gov.uk](https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk)

<https://www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/for-caterers>

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/publications/allergen-management-house-rules>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/recipe-sheet.pdf>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/allergen-chart.pdf>

Useful links for Members of the Public

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/treatment/>

<https://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/schools/schools-what-is-anaphylaxis/>

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/food-allergies/ordering-food-or-a-takeaway-safely>