

Stannington Village Hall

Food Hygiene Policy

1. Introduction

Stannington Village Hall (SVH) complies with Food Standards Agency legislation on 'hygiene of foodstuffs' and 'general food law.' The Hall aims to ensure that all food sold is safe for human consumption or adulteration. This applies to all types of food or drink sold or supplied in the Hall. It is an offence to sell food that does not comply with legislative requirements (which may include preparation in unsafe or unhygienic circumstances), or is not of the nature, substance or quality expected e.g. is contaminated with a foreign body.

These regulations apply where food or drink is prepared, stored, sold or supplied whether or not for profit. They lay down minimum legal standards which local authority environmental health officers have a duty to enforce. Local authorities have the power to serve Hygiene Improvement Notices in cases where the regulations are not being observed, stating what is wrong and the period allowed for carrying out the improvement. It is an offence not to comply with a Hygiene Improvement Notice. In extreme cases a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice may be served, prohibiting a particular process, equipment or the use of a building (or part of it) for food preparation.

2. Food Hygiene and Safety

The SVH management committee is aware of the following:

- The need to prevent the contamination of food, including requirements concerning the condition and cleanliness of the premises and any equipment used, the cleanliness of food handlers and the safe handling of food and the disposal of waste material.
- Some foods stored outside temperature control may support growth of harmful bacteria or the formation of toxins, which may cause food poisoning.
- With certain exemptions, the food should be kept either chilled at a maximum of 8C or hot at a minimum of 63C. Food must be stored in accordance with the manufacturer's directions, where provided.
- The premises must be kept clean and in good condition, and the entry of birds, or rodent or insect infestation prevented, so far as is practicable.
- The siting of the Hall should not lead to contamination of food by vermin, insects, dirt, odour or bacteria.
- The premises should be well lit and ventilated.

3. Registration

Legislation requires the operator of each separate food business using the Hall to register, so the Hall's management committee is not responsible for registering the Hall as a food business. It is therefore feasible for several food businesses to be registered at the Hall, the operator of each being responsible for the safety of the food prepared and handled in the course of their own business.

The Hall will adhere to the principles with regard to maintaining high standards of maintenance and hygiene such that the facilities provided aid the safe preparation and handling of food.

4. Food Handlers and Preparation of Food

Legislation requires all food handlers at the Hall to be supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work. This is the responsibility of the person or organisation providing the catering or running a food business.

For those regularly engaged or employed in catering the general minimum standard of training is the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate.

Organisations using the Hall to prepare food on an occasional basis should be aware of and take into account the following points:

- Take all necessary precautions to prevent food becoming contaminated.
- Identify the potential hazards (things that may go wrong e.g. contamination, conditions which would allow food poisoning bacteria to grow etc) and what are the critical steps in the food activity.
- Introduce and maintain adequate food safety controls (e.g. adequate refrigeration, separation from cleaning chemicals, use of good suppliers etc.).
- Review them, as necessary.
- Keep work clothes and utensils as clean as possible.
- Wear a clean, washable light-coloured apron or overall.
- Cover wounds, cuts or abrasions with a waterproof dressing, preferably a coloured one.
- Refrain from spitting.
- Do not smoke in food areas.
- Do not handle food if suffering from skin, nose, throat or bowel infections.
- Screen or protect open food awaiting preparation, serving or sale, from any risk of contamination.
- Observe temperature control requirements for certain food.

A notice is displayed in the Hall kitchen, outlining good kitchen practice.

5. Food Prepared off the Premises

Activities will take place in the Hall where the food is prepared off the premises and brought to the Hall for sale and consumption. This is not recommended as good practice by environmental health officers and should be avoided or kept to a minimum. Hirers, external caterers and any contractors that use the Hall will be made aware of the list of points at 4 for maintaining good hygiene standards and are compliant with the requirements established in the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006.

6. Kitchens

6.1 Guidelines

The following guidelines are for kitchens where some food preparation and cooking is carried out, but where there is regular large-scale catering, stringent higher standards may apply. The guidelines are intended as a summary and more detailed information will be available from the local environmental health officer.

Floors are in good condition without crevices or splits, durable, non-absorbent anti-slip and easily cleaned. Carpeting or bare wood floors are not acceptable.

Walls are light coloured, smooth, impervious, non-flaking and cleanable. Low lead gloss paint is suitable. Sinks, wash hand basins and worktops have a tile or stainless-steel splashback.

Ceiling finishes are smooth, impervious, and easily cleaned. They are well insulated to avoid condensation and the growth of mould.

Woodwork such as window and door frames, shelving, are sealed so that it is smooth, impervious, and easily cleaned.

Work surfaces are durable, impervious, and easily cleaned. There are sufficient work areas to allow the separation of raw and cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination.

Electrical supplies: an adequate number of power points are available to avoid the need for lengthy flexes.

Water supply and drainage: water supplies are of water which is fit to drink. Public mains water supply is acceptable. If a private supply is used, it is the Hall's responsibility to ensure that it is fit for food use. There should be an adequate supply of hot and cold water and an adequate trapped drainage system which can cope with peak loads.

Ventilation: there is sufficient suitable ventilation to prevent excessive heat, steam and condensation, to remove odours and replenish fresh air. Natural ventilation will usually be sufficient, and care will be taken to prevent the entry of insects.

Lighting: suitable and sufficient lighting will be provided, including in storerooms and passageways.

Toilets will be provided. There is an intervening ventilated space between the sanitary accommodation and the kitchen.

Outdoor clothing and shoes will only be stored in kitchens if cupboards or lockers are provided for this purpose only.

Cleaning facilities: there is a double sink with an integral drainer. Sinks will have hot as well as cold water.

Washing facilities: there is a separate wash-hand basin with hot and cold water. Soap and a clean roller towel or paper towels are provided when the kitchen is in use. A hot air dryer is not suitable in a kitchen. All sinks and wash-hand basins will be kept clean and in good order.

Cleanliness: all cutlery, crockery, equipment and surfaces with which food may come into contact will be kept clean and in good condition.

Waste bins with lids are provided and suitably sited. Waste will not be accumulated in the kitchen or left overnight but should be transferred when the Hall is vacated, to suitably sited pest-proof refuse containers.

A first aid kit is easily accessible and suitably stocked.

Firefighting equipment will be as recommended by the fire officer and should include a fire blanket.

Refrigeration: the fridge will be kept clean and in good working order. Where food is stored, it will be kept 'on' and the temperature checked to ensure that it is working properly. If used only occasionally, it will be switched 'on' sufficiently in advance of use to allow it to cool to the right temperature.

Notices displayed in the kitchen will include 'No smoking', 'Basic Guidance on Food Handling' and 'Fire Precautions.'

6.2 Regular large-scale catering

Where regular large-scale catering is carried out, the Hall would have to meet higher standards. These are likely to include tiles or stainless steel on walls, powered ventilation, increased provision of sinks etc.

6.3 Kitchenettes

Small areas provided with a sink and kettle and intended for the making of drinks only will be kept clean but need not be provided with a wash-hand basin.

6.4 Occasional large catering

The Hall will not use inadequate equipment or facilities and additional facilities will be provided, e.g. refrigeration or even a purpose made portable kitchen unit. Past food poisoning outbreaks have been caused by cross-contamination due to too little space or food being left out of temperature control for too long, e.g. the buffet laid out too far in advance.

7. Temperature control requirements

7.1 Circumstances covered by temperature regulations

General temperature control requirements are set out in Schedule 4 of The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 and apply to commercial operations including food prepared and sold to the public in the Hall, and food prepared in domestic kitchens and brought to the Hall for this purpose. This would not apply to family events such as weddings where the catering is carried out by the family on a domestic basis, but they would apply if food is supplied by a commercial caterer. However, the temperature regulations are good practice and lay down standards that are sensible in most circumstances.

7.2 Refrigeration

Compliance with the temperature control requirements is the responsibility of those persons carrying out commercial activities in relation to food. This does not necessarily mean that a fridge should be provided in the kitchen. Indeed, this may not always be a good idea. If a fridge is provided, the Hall management committee will ensure that it is operating at the correct temperature and that it is cleaned and maintained to facilitate food safety. A thermometer will be available, and the temperature measured regularly enough to ensure that it is working properly. It is recommended that it is noted in a logbook together with any adjustment or repair work. An alternative method of keeping food cool is to chill it thoroughly first, and then place it in an insulated cold box together with cold packs. These boxes can equally well be used to keep food hot.

NB. The temperatures specified in the regulations relate to the food not the equipment. It is important to ensure that the means used is adequate and checking with a thermometer is recommended.

7.3 Hot and Cold Holding

Certain foods must be kept cold at a temperature no higher than 8C, or if they are already cooked and waiting to be eaten hot, they must be kept hot at a temperature of at least 63C. Where the producer or supplier has specified a temperature for chilled storage or display lower than 8C, the food must be kept at this temperature. Regulation stipulates that foods subject to the temperature control requirements with regard to chill holding would include:

Cooked products containing meat, fish, eggs; soft or hard cheeses; cooked vegetable dishes including cereals, pulses or vegetables; cooked pies containing meat, fish or vegetables; sausage rolls (unless intended for sale no later than the day after their production); smoked or cured fish; slices of smoked or cured meats (except uncooked bacon); prepared vegetable salads; uncooked or partly cooked pastry or dough containing meat, fish or substitutes; sandwiches or rolls containing meat, fish or substitutes;

7.4 Flexibility

Some limited flexibility in respect of holding temperatures is allowed, consistent with food safety, in relation to food which is for service or on display for sale and covers:

- food which is intended to be sold or consumed hot which may be kept at a temperature below 63C only whilst for service, or on display for sale, for a period of less than 2 hours and for one such period only.
- food needing to be held at 8C or below, which may be kept at a temperature above 8C, only whilst for service or on display for sale, for a period of less than 4 hours and for one such period only.

It is good practice for food on display for sale or for service only to be kept out of temperature control (whether chill or hot holding) if this is necessary, and, if so, for the shortest time possible. A food business operator would need to devise a way to ensure, and demonstrate, that food has been held within the parameters of these flexibilities, if they choose to use them.