

# Food safety - your responsibilities

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## Food inspections

You can be inspected by your local council at any point in the food production and distribution process. All inspectors must follow the [Food Law Code of Practice](http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enforcework/foodlawcop/) (<http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/enforcework/foodlawcop/>). Usually, you will not be told an inspection is going to happen.

How often you're inspected depends on the risk your business poses to public health. You might not be inspected as often if you're a member of a recognised assurance scheme. You can search for a registered assurance scheme online.

If you're a food retailer or caterer you'll be inspected regularly to make sure you comply with food safety laws. Check the [guidance for caterers](http://food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/hygleg/hyglegresources/sfbb/sfbbcaterers/) (<http://food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/hygleg/hyglegresources/sfbb/sfbbcaterers/>) and [guidance for food retailers](https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-for-retailers) (<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-for-retailers>).

Your premises, food, records and procedures can be inspected. Food samples can be taken as well as photographed.

Find your [local council enforcement officers \(http://food.gov.uk/enforcement/yourarea/\)](http://food.gov.uk/enforcement/yourarea/).

## After the inspection

You'll be sent a letter confirming any improvements you need to make and by when. Usually, you're responsible for confirming these improvements have been made.

For serious food safety problems you may be sent a 'notice'. The notice can include banning you from using certain equipment or processes until improvements have been made. Your business will be revisited to make sure you have followed the improvements in the notice. Example notices include a:

- Hygiene Improvement Notice
- Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices - banning you from using certain equipment or following certain processes

## Appeals

Your letter or notice should tell you how you can appeal a decision by an inspector.

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