

INSTITUTE OF FOOD SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (IFST)

Guidance for SME food operations | COVID-19

We understand and appreciate that operating a small food business at any time is challenging. These challenges have been exacerbated by the current COVID-19 crisis, and the aim of this document is to provide help and guidance. The best way to protect your customer and your business is to ensure you continue to follow your existing Food Management and Quality Management Systems. Staff shortages, operational difficulties and changes in demand may tempt you to drop your guard. It is vital that you continue to operate high standards of personal hygiene, cleaning, disinfection and other food safety controls as you would under normal circumstances. To assist you with this, we have created a Q&A page to answer some of the queries, which will affect small food businesses with respect to COVID-19 which include:

1. [Can I catch COVID-19 from food?](#)
2. [Will food run out?](#)
3. [Do I need to change my refrigeration, freezing and cooking procedures?](#)
4. [What special cleaning and disinfection measures do I need to apply?](#)
5. [Can I extend my shelf-life?](#)
6. [Can I use re-work?](#)
7. [What additional precautions do I need to take with respect to staff?](#)
8. [What should I do to decommission and re-commission my equipment/facility if I have to shut down all/part of my business?](#)
9. [Can I change my business to sell on food supplies to avoid costs?](#)
10. [What about distribution?](#)
11. [What else do I need to think about?](#)
12. [What should I consider if I am preparing food boxes and ready meals for home delivery?](#)

Further Information

- [Guidance for Food Businesses from the Food Standards Agency](#)
- [Webinar from Campden BRI relating to COVID-19](#)
- [IFST Webinar: Coronavirus: Food Safety Risk? \(Part 1 - video\)](#)
- [IFST Webinar: Coronavirus: Food Safety Risk? Your Questions Answered \(Part 2 - video\)](#)
- [Webinar from IFST SC20 series relating to COVID-19](#)
- [Food Agriculture Organisation \(FAO\) COVID-19 and Food Safety Guidance for food businesses advice](#)
- [Industry guides to Good Food Hygiene Practice](#)
- [Food Innovation Wales guidance](#)
- [Professional Distribution Drivers Guidance](#)

Trusted Resources:

Free Training Online:

- FSA E-learning on allergens, labelling, traceability, vacuum packing and root cause analysis
 - on labelling <https://labellingtraining.food.gov.uk/>
 - on traceability <https://traceabilitytraining.food.gov.uk/>
 - on allergens <https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/english/>
 - on vacuum packing <https://vacuumpackingtraining.food.gov.uk/introduction/>
 - on root cause analysis <https://rcatraining.food.gov.uk/#home>
- FSA training videos on 4C's - [hand washing, cross-contamination, clean, cook, chill](#)
- [CIEH: How to hand wash video](#)

Useful Guides:

- [UK Government Guidance for businesses and employers](#)
- [Food Standards Scotland guidance for food business operators and their employees](#)
- [European Commission Q&As on COVID-19](#)
- [Food Standards Agency sector-specific Safer Food, Better Business guides](#)
- [UK Hospitality advice for the hospitality industry](#)
- [UK Gov community cooking](#)
- [SOFHT Guidance to Cleaning & Disinfection Regime with respect to Coronavirus'](#)
- [Which? guide on freezing for consumers](#)
- [Food Standards Agency advice on Chilling](#)
- [British Frozen Food Federation Guidance on the freezing down of chilled and ambient product to preserve life](#)

Guidance from SALSA

Written by experienced food safety experts, SALSA is a robust and effective food safety certification scheme for the UK's smaller food producers and processors. Above all else, the SALSA scheme exists to encourage and assist small and micro businesses to implement practices and controls that produce food that is consistently safe.

SALSA approval is only granted to suppliers who are able to demonstrate to an auditor that they are able to produce safe and legal food and are committed to continually meeting the requirements of the SALSA standard. Approved suppliers can demonstrate that they operate to standards that are recognised and accepted across the industry and exceed the minimum standards expected by enforcement authorities. Our members' company profiles are visible to regional and national buyers through the [SALSA Directory](#)

The SALSA scheme aims to support, encourage and help develop small businesses as they grow - providing food safety training, an online library of technical guides and a dedicated Technical Helpline. Food businesses can also access 1-2-1 technical support from our national cohort of professionally qualified and trained mentors –

simply search the Mentor Directory or call the Technical Helpline on 01295 724248 to find out more.