



SAFER FOOD SCORES  
GUIDANCE

Tips for food  
allergen  
management



# Tips for food allergen management

1.5 million people in the UK have a food allergy or intolerance. Around 10 people each year die from eating something that they are allergic to and many more become severely ill. Food allergies are a major food safety issue and quite rightly command a great deal of attention from the Media and the Food Standards Agency.

Caterers have a legal responsibility to declare allergens in their products and to prevent them contacting other products. No-one could doubt that fully complying with these important regulations is the right thing to do but, unless you manage a food business, it is hard to imagine just how hard that can be.

Safer Food Scores provide a wide range of food allergen advisory services. We can supply allergen e-learning, carry out face to face allergen training, conduct allergen audits and risk assessments, provide food allergen policies, and check your allergen information. We can also guide you towards the best software solutions to manage your allergen information more easily. Please contact us on (01442) 877322 or at [hello@saferfoodscores.co.uk](mailto:hello@saferfoodscores.co.uk) to learn more.

## Train, train and train

Allergen management is dependent on humans and humans make errors. Sometimes due to lack of care, but often due to not knowing better.

Make sure all new starters and agency staff are given allergy awareness training on their first day and know to refer an allergic customer to a manager straightaway.



There are some great food allergy awareness e-learning courses available that will ensure staff understand the reasons why allergen controls are so important instead of seeing allergy sufferers as 'fussy' or difficult.

## Designate allergen champions



Choose back of house and front of house allergen champions and make sure at least one is always available in both locations.

They should attend the Level 3 Award in Food Allergen Management which is a one-day face-to-face course which will teach them to hazard spot and to predict mistakes that could lead to serious allergen incidents.

They will need to know and understand your allergen procedures and menu inside out. Providing them with 'allergen trained' badges will make sure your team know who to refer to.



## Encourage dialogue with allergy sufferers

A large proportion of allergy deaths occur in teenagers and young adults. It is believed this is because they are embarrassed to make people aware of their allergies and willing to 'take a chance'.

Making it a service standard to ask all customers if they have any allergies when they are served and the wearing of 'allergen trained' badges can make allergy sufferers feel safe and that their allergies will be taken seriously.



If you don't declare allergens on signage or labels, you are legally obliged to display a sign similar to 'if you have food allergies and intolerances, please let us know' so that customers are aware the information is available.

## Have strong communication channels



Often allergic incidents occur when a customer has made someone aware of their allergy, but this information has not been communicated clearly to the person responsible for preparing the food.

It is not unusual, either, for the wrong meal to be given to a customer due to poor communication between the chef and the server.

Allergy sufferers should be referred to a front of house allergen champion who will provide product information. They will then liaise with the back of house allergen champion who will supervise the preparation and service of the food.

## Review your allergen information regularly

Your supplier is not legally obliged to notify you when the ingredients within a product change, so you should ensure that they will and how they will do this before taking on any suppliers.

When ingredients do change, you may need to amend your menu planning software, allergen charts, labels, website, and promotional literature.



## Cautionary note

Any guidance given in this brochure is not official and Safer Food Scores can take no responsibility if the information is used to form part of any legal or regulatory compliance for your business. However, please do get in touch if you are interested in our support services and would like to benefit from official guidance tailored to your specific circumstances.

# Working with Safer Food Scores

If you are looking for food hygiene, allergen management and health and safety experts, consultants, auditors or trainers, Safer Food Scores can help. We provide food hygiene, allergen management and health and safety expertise, audits, compliance software, training courses and e-learning.

## We care about your business



We are passionate about food hygiene, labelling, allergen management and health and safety and know how important it is to motivate your teams. We do have excellent software to help streamline your operations and remove needless paperwork – but most importantly, we are there to keep you up to date and to provide trusted advice.

You can contact your client manager easily so do not need to explain your problems to a call centre that knows little about you and your operations. We get in touch with you regularly to advise on forthcoming legislation and industry guidance, to check that you are delighted with our services and, if there is anything that you are struggling with, to find cost-effective solutions.

## We know what we are doing

Our team has been carefully selected on the basis of their qualifications, experience, and attitude.

Our trusted advisers have been working in the regulatory and/or commercial fields for at least 10 years, as we do not feel that a recently qualified graduate is suitably experienced to be able to offer advice to your professional teams. Not knowing the law and science inside out or not having seen sufficient good and bad practice, can lead to consultants offering over-cautious and costly solutions.



## We would love to work with you.



To learn more about how we can help with your compliance challenges, please contact us at:

[hello@saferfoodscores.co.uk](mailto:hello@saferfoodscores.co.uk)

Or call us on (01442) 877322.