



OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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New Regulations relating to Food Labelling

On 13th December 2014, the UK Food Information Regulations 2014 come into force. This will change the way food is labelled. These Regulations implement a new EU Regulation on food labelling which will amend current food labelling laws in the United Kingdom. EU Regulation 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, will replace the Food Labelling Regulations 1996.

The new Regulation will help to make food labels clearer and also improve nutritional and allergen information to consumers. It will apply to all food intended for the final consumer, including foods delivered by mass caterers, and food intended for supply to mass caterers. Although many provisions will remain unchanged, there are significant changes being introduced that will mean most Food Business Operators will be affected in some way. The changes include;

- Nutrition labelling – this will become mandatory on pre-packaged food from 13th December 2016 (excluding those packed from the same premises from which they are sold)
- more country of origin labelling
- improved date marking (including date of first freezing)
- clarity and legibility of food information, including minimum font size
- labelling of non pre-packed foods
- allergen information, including on food sold loose and in restaurants, cafes etc

Advice for people selling loose food including caterers

The EU law has listed 14 allergens that need to be identified if they are used as ingredients in a dish. This means that from 13 December 2014, all food businesses will need to provide information about the allergenic ingredients used in foods sold or provided by them.

As a food business serving loose foods, you will have to supply information for every item on your menu that contains any of the 14 allergens as ingredients.

Details of these allergens will have to be listed clearly in an obvious place such as:

- a menu
- chalkboard
- information pack
- If it is not provided upfront, you will need to signpost to where it could be obtained, either in written or oral formats.

If the allergen information is provided orally there must be a way for:

- this information to be checked
- by others (verifiable)
- it to be confirmed as accurate
- the same information to be
- given every time (consistent)

The FSA has provided some good guidance for caterers on this subject – please follow the link below.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf>

Businesses must make sure that they can identify and control all of the allergens present in the food they supply. This includes right from the goods coming in to the manufacturing processes.

Prepacked food

The definition includes any single item put into packaging for the final customer in such a way that the contents cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging, but does not cover foods packed on the sales premises at the consumer's request or packed on the same premises for which it is sold, or sold from mass caterers.

The main changes affecting prepacked foods are:

- Commercial sales – Previously food supplied between some businesses was exempt from labelling requirements. However now everyone in the supply chain must ensure mandatory information is available on the food labelling or in commercial documents (such as delivery documents or invoices) so that those further down the supply chain can meet their obligations.
- From 13th December 2016, nutritional information will have to be provided on the labelling, such as energy, fat, carbohydrates, protein and salt. Previously nutritional information was only required where a claim such as 'low in fat' was used but is now mandatory even where no such claims are used. Even if you already provide this information you will need to amend the labelling the information has to be provided in a different order and the salt content is required rather than sodium.
- Allergenic ingredients must be emphasised in the ingredients list e.g. by use of font, style or colour. The use of a 'Contains: followed by a list of allergens' statement will no longer be permitted. Note that voluntary statements highlighting the risk of cross contamination with allergens may still be used. The 14 substances or products causing allergies or intolerances are: fish, crustaceans, molluscs, nuts, peanuts, milk, eggs, soybeans, celery (including celeriac) , mustard, sesame seeds, lupin, sulphur dioxide and sulphites (at concentrations more than 10mg/kg) and finally cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut)
- A minimum font size has been set for all mandatory information, the height of the letter 'x' in the chosen font must not be less than 1.2mm.
- Country of origin labelling has been extended to the meat of pigs, sheep, goats and poultry. These rules are contained in Commission Regulation 1337/2013 and come into force in April 2015. Beef, fish, honey, olive oil, fresh fruit and vegetables already required this.
- Distance selling – all mandatory information must be provided both before the purchase is concluded (except for durability date) and at delivery.
- The name of food – this has always needed to include a reference to the physical condition or treatment the food has undergone such as 'powdered', 'dried', 'smoked', 'concentrated' etc. but this has been extended to include an indication if the food has been defrosted. The word 'formed' must be used when meat or fish products have been made from different pieces of meat and yet have the appearance of a whole piece of meat.

- The date of first freezing is required on meat and fishery products.
- European compositional standards and additional labelling requirements are laid down for prepacked minced meat. If you are selling only in the UK different rules apply and a 'national' mark must be used. This requirement applies from 1 January 2014.
- The source of any animal or vegetable oil or fat ingredient must be provided e.g. Beef fat, palm oil, and the description 'fully or partly hydrogenated' if it is.
- Compositional standards in the Food Labelling Regulations for milk, cream, ice-cream and cheese may expire after December 2014.
- The field of vision requirements no longer include durability; Only the name of the food, net quantity and alcoholic volume need to be able to be read by the consumer from a single viewing point.

Guidance

There is a lot of useful information available about the Regulations. You can find links to the Guidance here:

Guidance in relation to allergens in loose foods;

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/loosefoodsleaflet.pdf>

Allergen technical guidance for small businesses;

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/guidance/allergen-labelling-technical-guidance.pdf>

Technical Guidance to the Regulations in general

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82663/consult-fic-guidance-20121116.pdf

Trading Standards can offer advice to Oxfordshire businesses – please contact us on 01865 815000 trading.standards@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Links to the Regulations

EU Regulations 1169/2011

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011R1169&from=EN>

Food Information Regulations 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1855/contents/made>