

## **SIMPLY SAFE – JUNE 2008**

### **ALLERGENS.....THEIR LIVES IN YOUR HANDS!!!**

When someone has a food allergy, eating even a small bit of that food can make them very ill, and in severe cases, it can lead to death. When you are at work, it's very important for you to take food allergies seriously. Food businesses selling food prepared or wrapped on site are not required by law to indicate whether it contains ingredients that people may be allergic to such as nuts, wheat or eggs, although more and more businesses are taking the responsibility to do so. Eating out and buying food that is not pre-packed can be particularly difficult for customers with allergies as there is less information on which allergens are present in food. This makes it harder for them to know which foods are safe for them to eat. Communication between staff and the customer, and staff within the premises is the key to ensuring that customers receive accurate information about the food on sale. Below, is a list of the main allergens, and some of the places where they may be found:

- **Peanuts** - sauces, cakes, desserts, groundnut oil, peanut flour
- **Nuts** - sauces, desserts, crackers, bread, ice cream, marzipan, ground almonds, nut oils
- **Milk** - yoghurt, cream, cheese, butter, milk powders, foods glazed with milk
- **Soya** (as tofu or bean curd) - soya flour and textured soya protein, some ice cream, sauces, desserts, meat products, vegetarian products
- **Mustard** (including liquid mustard, mustard powder and mustard seeds) - salad dressings, marinades, soups, sauces, curries, meat products
- **Lupin** - lupin seeds and flour in some types of bread and pastries
- **Eggs** - cakes, mousses, sauces, pasta, quiche, some meat products, mayonnaise, foods brushed with egg
- **Fish** - some salad dressings, pizzas, relishes, fish sauce and some soy and Worcestershire sauces
- **Shellfish** - prawns, mussels, scampi, crab, oyster sauce, shrimp paste
- **Gluten** - cereals such as wheat, rye and barley and foods containing flour, such as bread, pasta, cakes, pastry, meat products, sauces, soups, batter, stock cubes, breadcrumbs, foods dusted with flour
- **Sesame** - bread, breadsticks, tahini, houmous, sesame seeds and sesame oil
- **Celery** (including celery stalks, leaves and seeds and celeriac) - salads, soups, celery salt, some meat products
- **Sulphur** - meat products, fruit juices, dried dioxide fruit and vegetables, wine, beer

### **TOP 7 TIPS**

1. When someone asks you if a food contains a particular ingredient, always check – never guess. If you check but you're still not sure, tell the customer so they can decide for themselves.
2. If you are selling a food that contains one or more of the ingredients which can cause a problem, list them on the label or menu – and make sure the information is accurate.
3. Keep ingredient information from labels for any ready-made foods that you use (e.g. sandwich fillings).
4. When you are making food, make sure you know what is in all the ingredients you use, including cooking oils, dressings, toppings and sauces.
5. If you change the ingredients of a recipe, make sure you update your ingredients information and tell staff about the change.
6. If someone asks you to make food for them without a particular ingredient, don't say yes unless you can make sure that absolutely none of that ingredient will be in the food.
7. If you're making food for someone with an allergy, make sure work surfaces and equipment have been thoroughly cleaned, and wash your hands thoroughly before preparing that food.

***These are a few simple tips, which, if followed, can protect your customers from a life or death situation!!***

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## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF TRAINING**

Over 200 people are killed each year in accidents at work and over one million people are injured. Over two million suffer illnesses caused by, or made worse by, their work. Preventing accidents and ill health caused by work is a key priority for everyone at work. As the owner or manager of a business you know that competent employees are valuable. Providing health and safety information and training helps you to:

- ensure your employees are not injured or made ill by the work they do;
- develop a positive health and safety culture, where safe and healthy working becomes second nature to everyone;
- find out how you could manage health and safety better
- most importantly, meet your legal duty to protect the health and safety of your employees.

The **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** requires employers to provide information, instruction, training and supervision as necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of their employees. This is expanded by the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, which identify situations where health and safety training is particularly important, e.g. when people start work, on exposure to new or increased risks and where existing skills may have become rusty or need updating. The **Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006** states that food handlers must receive appropriate supervision, and be instructed and/or trained in food hygiene, to enable them to handle food safely. All training must be recorded. The following is a guide for who must receive training and when it should be carried out:

- Manual handling – all staff- on induction, then every 6 months
- COSHH – staff exposed/handling chemicals - on induction, when new chemicals are purchased or when work procedures change
- Risk assessment - all staff - on induction, when new risk assessments are developed and whenever there are changes to the existing risk assessments
- Fire (inc evacuation drills) - all staff - on induction, then every 6 months
- Essentials of food hygiene – all food handlers - on induction
- Foundation Food hygiene – food handlers preparing open high risk food – before they start the job, then every 3 years

This information relates to basic health and safety and food hygiene training requirements. Please be aware that staff may require specific training for specialist work activities they undertake.

***Once completed, training must be evaluated to ensure that staff have understood what they have been taught. This can be achieved through supervision, observation and asking questions as that is the only way to assess the level of understanding. For further information on training, contact Perry Scott Nash on 01438 745771.***

## **RECENT PROSECUTIONS**

### ***Pub owner fined over £20,000 for fire safety offences***

The owner of a fire damaged pub was ordered to pay in excess of £20,000 after admitting seven health and safety offences. A fire last year, caused by a faulty gas-fired fryer damaged 60% of the kitchen. In April, an EHO visited after receiving a complaint, and found a fire door had been removed from the kitchen. An expert report dated 15 March, confirmed that none of the call points tested activated the fire alarm. When the fire had broken out, the alarm had not sounded, despite attempts by an employee, who had run to customers telling them to leave. The fryer had been faulty in the three days prior to the fire and a gas engineer had been out to fix it four times during March. Fire-fighters had also been called to kitchen fires at the pub three times between September 2002 and October 2007. The owner had failed to provide employees with appropriate training and implementing risk assessments and monitoring systems. Magistrates fined the owner for offences including failing to report a fire, failing to ensure gas appliances were maintained and failing to ensure the electrical installation was maintained safely. All premises must ensure equipment checks are carried out so that defective equipment is identified. Any faulty equipment found must not be used. It is also imperative to ensure that all fire safety checks are carried out on time, and action taken where faults are found. Ignorance is not a defence in the eyes of the law!

### ***National pizza restaurant chain fined £7,000 and ordered to pay £8,460 costs.***

A major restaurant chain flouted food hygiene regulations by failing to keep the premises and equipment clean and in good condition. EHO's found extensive dirt and food debris throughout the premises during a routine food hygiene inspection. The company carried out a deep clean, however, when a follow-up inspection was carried out, poor conditions were found again, with accumulations of dirt found everywhere. More worryingly, it appeared to have accumulated over days rather than weeks, without any action by numerous managers! Cleaning schedules must be followed, and managers must check to ensure staff carry out cleaning to the required standard. Premises that continually breach the law are doing themselves no favours, as this will affect their star rating and EHO's will not think twice about taking legal action against them.

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