

SIMPLY SAFE FEBRUARY 2010

FOOD SAFETY - EGGS

Eating food containing raw or undercooked eggs can cause salmonella food poisoning, especially in vulnerable people such as the young, elderly, pregnant or those who are unwell. When preparing eggs you must make sure the eggs are cooked until the white and yolk are solid. Caterers preparing dishes with raw eggs should only do so if they are using pasteurised eggs as the pasteurisation process kills bacteria such as salmonella.

Look for the Lion Quality mark on the egg shell and egg box - it shows that the eggs have been produced to the highest standards of food safety. During food preparation, bacteria can spread very easily from eggs to other foods, via hands, utensils and work surfaces as there are often high levels of bacteria on eggshells, therefore it is important to follow these simple rules when handling eggs:

- Keep eggs separate from other foods before and after you have cracked them
- Be careful not to contaminate other foods, work surfaces or utensils
- Dispose of shells immediately, do not put them on the work surface
- Always wash and dry your hands thoroughly after handling eggs
- Clean surfaces and utensils thoroughly, using warm soapy water, after working with eggs.



Foods which are commonly made using raw eggs include: home-made mayonnaise, béarnaise/hollandaise sauces, salad dressings, ice cream, icing, mousse, tiramisu and other desserts. If you make any of these items you should ensure pasteurised eggs are used. If you buy commercially produced mayonnaise, salad dressings, sauces, ice cream, desserts, or ready-made icing, these will almost always have been made using pasteurised eggs. However, you should always check the label if you are not sure. The storage of eggs is also important therefore, follow these simple do's and don'ts to ensure you are storing your eggs safely:

- Do store eggs in a cool, dry place, ideally in the fridge
- Do store eggs away from other foods
- Do eat dishes containing eggs as soon as possible after you've prepared them, if you're planning to eat them later, cool quickly and store them in the fridge
- Don't use eggs after their 'best before' date
- Don't use eggs with damaged shells, as dirt or bacteria may have contaminated them

A TO Z OF FOOD SAFETY

R is forReady-to-Eat

Ready-to-eat foods are foods that will not be cooked or reheated before they are eaten. These include sandwiches, salads, cooked meats such as ham, cheese, quiche, cream cakes and desserts. These foods are also known as high-risk foods because they have a high moisture content and are high in protein, and therefore provide the right conditions for bacteria to grow if handled or stored incorrectly. These foods are also commonly associated with causing food poisoning and therefore must be kept separate from raw foods such as raw meat in order to prevent cross-contamination. Work surfaces and utensils must be clean (and disinfected if you have prepared raw meat/poultry) and food should be protected from contamination by covering it or keeping it in suitable display equipment.

MANAGING CONTRACTORS

Contractors can introduce an additional hazard in your premises when onsite and you have a responsibility for ensuring theirs and your employee's safety. Prior to any work commencing, employers should hold preliminary discussions with the contractor, and as a minimum standard, employers must comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974 and any relevant associated regulations. These require, as far as is reasonably practicable, that contractors are not put at risk by your business activities, and employees or others will also not be put at risk by the works being undertaken by the contractors. The following list is a reminder of issues which must be considered when contractors undertake work at your premises. This list is not exhaustive, and should be used as a guide only. Always consult your Health and Safety Policy or Perry Scott Nash for further guidance.

- Employers should only appoint contractors who have demonstrated their competency in health and safety.
- Employers should assess the competency of the contractors **before** works commence.
- Contractors must provide risk assessments for all tasks to be undertaken and, where necessary, a method statement. Risk assessments and method statements should be site specific and relevant to the task being undertaken.
- All contractor personnel must report to the employer and be signed in and out of the premises as appropriate.
- Employers should complete a daily site safety check each day contractors are on site.
- Employers must ensure that contractors are provided with site safety rules regarding health and safety issues, which are associated with the job(s) they are engaged to do and with relevant information on any site specific hazards associated with the activity being undertaken e.g. the presence of asbestos.
- It will be the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that they provide all necessary tools and personal protective equipment. The employer must not allow the contractor to use their equipment.
- Permit to work procedures should be followed for high risk activities such as hot work, working at height, electrical work, working in confined spaces etc.
- Employers must ensure that contractors comply as far as reasonably practicable with all legal duties in respect of fire safety and shall agree the means of escape, likely fire risks etc.
- The employer must ensure that the contractor is made aware of the fire evacuation procedure and assembly point for the premises.
- Should any contractor deem it necessary to have information on any hazards identified in the premises, they must be provided with a copy of the Risk Assessment Manual.
- Contractors will be responsible for reporting any accidents or incidents that are notifiable to the enforcing authority under RIDDOR, if such accidents or incidents involve his operatives or sub contractors.
- Should a contractor be seen to be or appear to be, operating in an unsafe manner which could jeopardise the safety of employees, others in the vicinity, or even the contractors team members themselves, then the employer must instruct the contractors to cease work immediately.



Recent Prosecution

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has warned about the importance of robust and well supervised systems of work when dealing with the isolation of electrical systems after a worker was knocked unconscious following an electric shock. The electrical contractor responsible was fined £50,000 with costs of £20,000. The company had been found guilty at an earlier hearing of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, namely failing to protect those not in its employment. The prosecution concerned an incident at a supermarket in 2006. Major refurbishment works were being carried out when the store was closed and a groundworker's subcontractor suffered an electric shock after coming into contact with a live cable during the replacement of lighting columns in the car park. He was unconscious for a short period and suffered burns and bruising. The HSE Inspector said: "The risks of working with electricity are well known and this incident could easily have been avoided. Effective identification and isolation of the electrical supply, together with clear instruction and supervision from the very beginning and throughout such work, are essential in preventing such incidents from occurring. By failing to implement simple and well documented controls over such work, electrical contractors place not only themselves, but others who may come into contact with their work, at risk of very serious injury." It is therefore important to ensure that you employ competent contractors with robust safe systems of work and procedures.