

Setting up a mobile food business

What is a food safety management system?

It is a document that covers all the food safety hazards inherent to your work activity. In producing this document you explain what your rules are to minimise these risks. Whilst you can produce your own document from scratch, the Food Standards Agency has produced a comprehensive template which is very user friendly (called Safer Food Better Business for caterers or SFBB).

Anything else?

Health and Safety issues must also be considered (making sure that your gas bottles are secure, properly fitted and ventilated, that your electrics has been properly checked and that you have a first aid kit). **Most importantly you must ensure that vents are fitted to the ceiling and floor of the van/trailer. Simply opening the hatch is not considered an adequate means of ventilation.**

An onsite visit by a Food and Safety Officer is strongly recommended before you start trading, as soon after you do start trading you will be formally inspected, therefore it is better to have addressed all issues before you get cooking. Following your first formal inspection you will be given a **hygiene star rating** – see www.babergh.gov.uk/babergh/scores.

Please note that spot checks and food samples may also be taken from your van/trailer by other local authorities (if you are trading within their boundaries). If you attend events outside Babergh District Council other local authorities may also contact us to check that you are registered and inspected by us.

Useful numbers:

Babergh District Council Development Control Team	01473 825 858
Babergh District Council Food Safety Team	01473 825 890 or go to:
www.babergh.gov.uk Environment and Health / Food and Safety / Registration	
Suffolk County Council (Highways)	0845 606 6067
Suffolk Police	01473 613 500
Food Standards Agency	0845 606 0667

Babergh District Council
Corks Lane, Hadleigh, IPSWICH IP7 6SJ
Email: food.safety@babergh.gov.uk

Minicom: 01473 825878

If you need help to understand this information in another language or would like it in another format (audio version or large print) please call 01473 826622



Setting up a mobile food business:

A few things you should know



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If you are planning to start a mobile food business but are unsure of what you are required to do before you start cooking, then read on...

Do I need to let anyone know of my plans?

Yes you do. As a food business you will need to get in touch with Babergh District Council's Food and Safety Team, and because of the nature of your business you may also need to contact Babergh's Development Control Team, the local Highways Authority, and the Police.

That seems a bit over the top for a simple mobile food vehicle?

It may look that way but certain rules and street trading restrictions mean that non-compliance may lead to you being moved on from your pitch or even being fined.

When I am not trading, can I park my van/trailer wherever I like?

Not quite, when not in use your van/trailer is likely to be kept in a different place to where you normally trade. More often than not this parking place is your home address...

...So?

Sometimes planning permission may be required to park your van/trailer at home because in doing so you are technically changing the use of the place where you live. As such it may be regarded as having an affect on the character of the area concerned.

Are there any other instances where planning permission is required?

There are, for example getting permission from the land owner to trade from their property may not suffice, if you become a regular trader on that land then planning permission may be required, as this may also be seen as a "change of use" of that land.

In both cases you should seek advice from **Babergh District Council's Development Control Team**.

As in most instances the land from which most mobile van/trailers operate is owned by the **Local Highways Authority** (in this area run by **Suffolk County Council**), their consent should be sought prior to pitching your van/trailer.

Are there any other issues that I need to consider?

Yes, and one is to ensure that the area where you pitch does not cause an obstruction or nuisance. Whilst your location may be perfectly safe for all users, your business may indirectly create a nuisance (for example the amount of parked vehicles your customers generate and the ensuing disruption to passing traffic this may create). In such circumstances you may be asked to move elsewhere.

To avoid such occurrences you should notify the **Police** of your intentions.

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You should also be aware of the prohibitions and restrictions that apply in certain areas of Babergh District Council:

- Daytime street trading in Sudbury town centre is prohibited (except for licensed stalls on the two markets on Thursday and Saturday). Trading between 18:00hrs and midnight is permitted on the Market Hill only subject to a Street Traders Licence.
- Street trading is prohibited at Pin Mill, Chelmondiston.
- Street trading between St. Catherines Road and the bridge in Hall Street, Long Melford is permitted only with the prior consent of the District Council and certain conditions and restrictions may apply to any consent given.
- Trading on the Babergh half of the bridge forming the boundary between Ipswich Borough Council and Babergh District Council at Wherstead Road, Ipswich is prohibited.
- Exemption from street trading laws apply where a road closure order is in effect (eg. for a temporary market).
- Even if the street trading is taking place on 'private' land, for example a private car park, it may still be prohibited or controlled for street trading purposes if the public have access to the area without making any payment.

Can I start cooking now?

Not quite yet. Once you have addressed all these issues, you then need to consider your obligations towards food safety:

As a new food business you will be required to register with your relevant local Authority. This means the Authority where your vehicle is kept when you are not trading.

If Babergh District Council is this authority then you can download a registration form from the Council's website or call the **Food Safety Team**.

Can I use any material to fit my vehicle?

Not exactly, you need to ensure that the design, construction and condition of your vehicle allows for it to be kept clean, and maintained in good repair and condition. Surfaces in contact with food are to be in sound condition and be easy to clean (e.g: made of smooth, washable, corrosion-resistant, and non-toxic materials). You must also have an adequate supply of potable water, and appropriate means of disposing of waste. Hand washing facilities must be provided (with hot and cold water, soap and drying facilities) and must be separate from your means of washing-up for utensils and equipment.

Do I need any training?

You need to have received an adequate level of training in food hygiene for the type of cooking you are planning to do. If you employ someone then training this person in the requirements of your **food safety management system** may be enough.