

TRACEABILITY OF FOOD

WHAT DOES THIS LEAFLET COVER?

This leaflet is intended to give basic information of food businesses on the legal requirements for traceability and unsafe food.

Legislation

Under The General Food Regulations (NI) 2004 all food businesses are required to implement basic traceability systems.

WHAT IS TRACEABILITY?

Traceability is in essence a joined-up record-keeping system which brings together information collected at key stages in the production and supply process.

In simple terms, all food businesses are required to:-

- Identify the suppliers of all ingredients which are incorporated into their food.
- Identify the businesses to which products have been supplied.
- Identify the nature of the products, the date of transaction and the volume or quantity.
- Maintain appropriate records and ensure that this information is made available to competent authorities (e.g. Environmental Health).

WHY HAVE A TRACEABILITY SYSTEM?

- To provide information within your business to assist in process control and management (stock control, material usage and quality control).
- To assist when problems arise. Traceability systems are important to support effective withdrawal of products.
- To help support labelling claims about your product and provide information to consumers.

HOW LONG DO I KEEP RECORDS?

There is currently no prescribed period for which your traceability records must be maintained. However, you are advised to keep records for as long as the food is in circulation.

Notification of Unsafe Foods

If you have reason to believe that any food you have dealt with might be unsafe and the food has left your control, that food must be withdrawn from the market. You must also notify your District Council (Tel) and the Food Standards Agency (028 90417700). The withdrawal and notification must be done as soon as possible to minimise the potential public health risk.

Where unsafe products have reached the consumer they must be informed of the reason for the withdrawal – any products already supplied must be recalled.

In order to satisfy the requirement to recall unsafe foods you should draw up an action plan or recall procedure.

PLEASE NOTE, THIS LEAFLET HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THE GUIDANCE OF TRADERS BY BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL. IT IS NOT AN AUTHORITATIVE DOCUMENT ON THE LAW AND IS ONLY INTENDED FOR GUIDANCE. IT IS NOT NECESSARILY COMPREHENSIVE AND IS SUBJECT TO REVISION IN THE LIGHT OF FURTHER INFORMATION. FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT.