

HANDLING SANDWICHES

Sandwiches have long been an important and nutritious part of the British diet. Unfortunately like many other foods they can cause problems if handled badly, and in recent years there have been a number of food poisoning outbreaks associated with the consumption of sandwiches.

This guidance note is intended as a guide to good practice for those who produce and sell sandwiches for consumption by the general public.

ADVICE TO PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Raw Ingredients

You should satisfy yourself that you are purchasing the ingredients for your sandwiches from suppliers with a good reputation for hygiene and quality. Remember the reputation of your own business may depend on the actions of others.

High-risk foods which may be at risk for contamination should be stored immediately on delivery in a refrigerator at 8° c or below. High-risk foods include meat, meat products, fish, cheese, eggs, mayonnaise and dairy products.

Do not place raw food next to cooked foods in a refrigerator. Cooked foods should be stored on shelves higher than raw foods to prevent the risk of contamination.

Sandwich Production

You must try to keep high-risk food at room temperature for as short a time as possible and never more than 1^{1/2} hours in total. Germs multiply rapidly at room temperature.

Salad vegetables may be contaminated and should be thoroughly washed before use.

Cooking and Cooling Foods

You should cook foods thoroughly and then cool within 1^{1/2} hours and place in a refrigerator. Check the temperature of large joints of meat or poultry with a probe thermometer during cooking. The centre of a joint should reach at least 75° c. Smaller joints cool more quickly than large ones and are therefore safer to use.

Preparation

You will need to clean and sanitise all food preparation surfaces and utensils after handling raw meat, fish or poultry and before handling cooked foods.

Staff must keep hands clean at all times and hands should be washed before starting work, after handling raw foods, after using the toilet and after smoking or eating. You should provide clean, washable overclothing to all food handlers each day.

Storage

You need to give written advice to your retail customers about the storage and display of your products. Sandwiches containing high-risk ingredients should be stored below 8⁰ c and displayed for sale for no longer than 2 days. Some sandwiches may need to be marked with a '**use-by**' date - contact Trading Standards on **292523** for further information.

Advice to Retailers

It is risky practice to keep a sandwich or roll filled with meat, fish, eggs, cheese, mayonnaise or dairy products at room temperature when germs capable of causing food poisoning multiply rapidly.

You should therefore store sandwiches and filled rolls below 8⁰ c and display them in a chilled cabinet. If you are preparing your own sandwiches or filled rolls and you do not have a chilled cabinet then you may display the sandwiches and rolls for no longer than 4 hours at room temperature after which time they must be thrown away.