

## Improving your food hygiene rating

### Don't ignore inspection reports

Look at your last food hygiene inspection report to check that you've taken all of the action needed to ensure that you meet legal requirements. If you can't find your last report, contact us and we will be able to forward a copy.

You should also make sure that you and your staff continue to comply fully with all other aspects of food hygiene law and that standards do not slip.

### Help and guidance

If you don't get the top rating and you have queries about the improvements you need to make to get a better rating, then the inspecting officer can give you advice. If it is in response to a recent inspection you should contact him/her directly. You can also arrange an appointment to see them at the Civic Centre if you wish.

### Training

Ensuring that you and your staff are adequately trained and/or instructed is an important part of food safety management. Food handling staff not only need to appreciate the fundamentals of food hygiene but also be instructed in the elements of the food safety management procedure that they are responsible for carrying out. It is recommended that food handling staff are trained to an equivalent of the CIEH or RSPH Level 2. The person responsible for maintaining your food safety management procedures (also known as HACCP) should also have a good understanding of how to manage food safety in that business.

### HACCP

If you do not have a documented food safety management system in place or keep records of your food safety checks it is unlikely that you will be able to score a very good food hygiene rating. Food safety management plans need not be very complicated.

You have three options: (a) Complete your own food safety management procedures; (b) Get a food safety consultant to help you; or (c) Use an 'off-the-shelf' resource. Your choice will depend upon how complex your operation is and the size of your business.

The Food Standards Agency have developed a resource called 'Safer food, better business' that can be appropriate in some businesses. It also comes in a range of languages and for different types of food business. Find out more at: [www.food.gov.uk/goodbusiness](http://www.food.gov.uk/goodbusiness)



## Your food hygiene rating

### Guidance for food business operators scoring less than 5



The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is designed to help consumers choose where to eat out or shop by giving them information about the hygiene standards in food outlets at the time they are inspected.

This guide provides information to food business operators scoring less than the top score.

### Key contacts:

**Commercial Environmental Health**  
Civic Centre, York Street  
Twickenham TW1 3BZ

Email: [commercialeh@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:commercialeh@richmond.gov.uk)  
Tel: 020 8891 7117  
Web: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)



## How your score was calculated

### Your inspection

At the inspection, the food safety officer will check how well you are meeting the law on food hygiene. Three areas will be assessed. These are:

- how hygienically the food is handled – how it is prepared, cooked, cooled, stored, and what measures are taken to prevent food being contaminated with bacteria
- the condition of the structure of the premises including cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation, equipment and other facilities
- how you manage and record what you do to make sure food is safe using a system like Safer food, better business

You will be given a score for each area – see below. Food safety officers use guidance to determine how to score each of these areas.

Criteria	Score					
	0	5	10	15	20	25
How hygienically the food is handled	0	5	10	15	20	25
Condition of structure	0	5	10	15	20	25
Management and documentation	0	5	10	20	30	
<b>Total score</b>	<b>0</b>	—————→				<b>80</b>
<b>Level of compliance</b>	<b>High</b>	—————→				<b>Low</b>

### Your food hygiene rating

The rating given depends on how well the business does overall – the total score. It also depends on the area(s) that need improving the most - the business may do better in some areas and less well in others.

To get the top rating, you must score no more than 5 in each of the three areas. All businesses should be able to get the top rating. You will automatically get a new rating at each planned inspection.

Total score	0 – 15	20	25 – 30	35 – 40	45 – 50	> 50
Highest permitted individual score	5	10	10	15	20	-
Rating						

## Your options if you are unhappy with your rating

### Option 1: accept & improve

If you understand why you have been awarded a poor rating you may accept that the rating was given fairly and work to address any deficiencies found.

Any legal contraventions are outlined in your food hygiene inspection report. You can also discuss the reasons for your poor rating with the inspecting officer who should be able to explain what you need to do to improve.

Your rating will be reassessed at the time of your next full inspection or audit. Premises scoring 0 or 1 are likely to be inspected every 6-12 months.

### Option 2: right to reply

If you have improved hygiene standards since your inspection, or if there were unusual circumstances at the time of the inspection that might have affected your food hygiene rating, you have a **'right to reply'** so that you can explain this to potential customers that look up your rating online. Your right to reply will be published online by the local authority along with the hygiene rating for your business.

If you wish to request a revisit you will need to **complete the appropriate form**. This can be obtained from our website or directly from us.

### Option 3: request a revisit

If you make the improvements to hygiene standards that are highlighted in your inspection report, you can **'request a re-visit'** with a view to giving you a new and higher food hygiene rating.

You can make this request in writing to the Team Leader but we recommend that you get in touch with the inspecting officer first who can explain how your rating was worked out.

If, after discussing your case, you wish to request a revisit you will need to **complete the appropriate form**. This can be obtained from our website or directly from us.

### Option 4: appeal

If you think that the rating is wrong or unfair – in other words it does not reflect the hygiene standards at the time of your inspection – you have 14 days in which you can **'appeal'** against this from the date of this letter.

You can make this request in writing to the Team Leader but we recommend that you get in touch with the inspecting officer first who can explain how your rating was worked out.

If, after discussing your case, you wish to appeal you will need to **complete the appropriate form**. This can be obtained from our website or directly from us.