

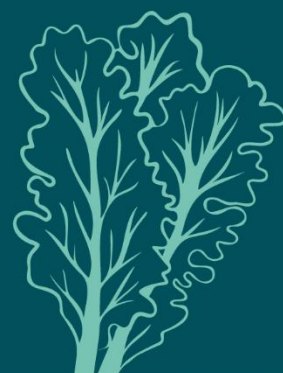


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THE BRÁ SCHEME

GUIDANCE FOR FOOD BUSINESSES



THE BRÁ SCHEME

People are increasingly interested in the food they consume. An important part of this is whether food safety and hygiene conditions are satisfactory. To promote transparency in food inspections in the Faroe Islands, a regulatory framework has therefore been established to ensure public disclosure of inspection results.

The purpose of the BRÁ scheme is to provide consumers with clear information about whether food safety conditions are satisfactory. At the same time, the scheme is intended to ensure that food establishments are subject to a consistent and reliable inspection system, carried out in accordance with clear and transparent rules. Experience from other Nordic countries shows that food establishments are generally positive towards such schemes, not least because the requirements are clear and predictable.

Most food establishments invest considerable time and effort in complying with the applicable requirements and in maintaining a high standard of food safety. Nevertheless, situations may arise in which deficiencies occur that reduce food safety and increase the risk of consumers becoming ill from the food.

The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority carries out regular inspections of food establishments. The BRÁ scheme applies to food establishments that are open to the public and sell food directly to consumers, such as restaurants, takeaway establishments, shops and similar businesses.

When an inspection is carried out at a food establishment that is covered by the BRÁ scheme, the establishment is issued with a BRÁ display. The display must be posted in a visible and easily accessible place. It shows the result of the most recent inspection, any identified non-compliances, as well as the results of the three previous inspections.

The inspection result is presented using a brá, i.e. a facial expression, which makes it easy for consumers to see whether food safety conditions are satisfactory or whether improvements are required. Three different inspection results are possible: a happy brá (fegið brá), serious brá (strangt brá) or an unhappy brá (misnøgt brá). The three brá results indicate the following:



The Food and Veterinary Authority has no remarks.



The Food and Veterinary Authority has identified non-compliances with the legislation and has, for example, issued orders, imposed prohibitions or required corrective measures.



The Food and Veterinary Authority has identified serious non-compliances with the legislation or repeated breaches of the legislation.

About this guidance

Food business operators are responsible for ensuring that hygienic conditions are satisfactory. This guidance for food business operators, who are part of the Brá scheme, explains most of these conditions.

Authorisation and inspection of food establishments are carried out based on the Food Act and the regulations authorised under it. This guidance is intended for the industry as an aid to understanding and complying with the provisions of the legislation. It is, however, important to be familiar with the acts and executive orders on which the Brá scheme is specifically based on. These acts and executive orders are listed at the end of the guidance under Sources.

The guidance is divided into four main areas:

- Procedures and management
- Premises and equipment
- Handling and preparation of food
- Traceability, labelling and recall

For each area, the applicable requirements are described. References are made to the legal basis, and it is explained how the requirements can be complied with. Key points are summarised using keywords.

These four main areas in the guidance are also reflected on the Brá display, which the food establishment must post. On the Brá display, a Brá is issued for each inspected area. In addition, an overall Brá, representing the main inspection result, is issued.

The overall result is always the poorest result. This means, for example, that even if the area “procedures and management” receives a happy Brá, the food establishment will receive a serious Brá, as the overall result, if the area “premises and equipment” receives a serious Brá.

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1. Procedures and management

1.1 Responsibility of the food business operator

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 3 on general obligations.

Her manglar eitt reglubrot:

The food business operator is the physical person who has the overall responsibility of the food establishment. The food business operator owns or operates the food establishment, and he/she must ensure that the food establishment is complied with the Food Act and the regulations authorised under it.

The food business operator does not need to always be present at the food establishment. However, the operator must ensure that responsibilities at the establishment are clearly defined and that staff have been appointed to hold the onsite and daily responsibility of the food production.

During inspections, inspectors speak with the staff present at the establishment, usually the person with the highest onsite responsibility. Conditions and procedures at the establishment are assessed. If the person present during the inspection is not the food business operator, The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority may need to contact him/her either during or after the inspection, if serious non-compliances are identified.

If The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority identifies non-compliances, it is the responsibility of the food business operator to ensure that these are corrected.

Keywords: Well-organised production, a clear division of responsibilities and good internal communication are key to complying with the overarching obligation.

1.2 Authorisation of food establishments

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: sections 4–5 on authorisation of food establishments.

The Authorisation Regulation: sections 4–5 on authorisation and registration of establishments.

The Brá Regulation: section 7 on change of ownership, etc.

Under the Food Act and the Authorisation Regulation, all establishments that produce food must be either authorized or registered with The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority.

Applications for authorisation or registration must be submitted using the relevant form available on the website www.hfs.fo and sent to hfs@hfs.fo. The application must describe, among other things, the type of establishment and the activities carried out. Activities may begin once authorisation or registration has been granted.

The food business operator is subject to a duty to notify. This means that the operator must ensure that The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority continuously receives updated information about conditions that affect the original basis for authorisation or registration.

Notification must be given when significant changes are made, for example to production units or buildings, the layout of the establishment, production methods or the product range. This can be done by submitting the same type of form as used for the original authorisation or registration.

The purpose of the duty to notify is to ensure that The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority always has correct and up-to-date information. This information is necessary when assessing hygienic risks and planning inspections.

An authorisation at a food establishment may be transferred to a new owner. This is only possible if the activity remains exactly the same (i.e. the same production and the same layout) and if the new owner is aware of any outstanding requirements from The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority.

A transfer of authorisation must be notified no later than on the date of takeover, using the specific form available on the website www.hfs.fo. Once the change of ownership has been notified, The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority removes the Brá display of the previous owner. A new Brá display is issued once a new inspection has been carried out.

Keywords: Correct and up-to-date information is key to ensuring that authorisation and registration arrangements are in order and to complying with the duty to notify.

1.3 Visible Brá display

Regulation

The Brá Regulation: section 3 on public disclosure.

The Brá display must be posted immediately after it has been issued by The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority. It must be displayed in a visible location directly at the entrance, so that consumers can easily see the inspection result.

If the establishment does not have its own entrance, the Brá display must be posted in a way that still allows consumers to easily familiarise themselves with the inspection result.

If the Brá display is lost or damaged, the establishment may request a new one. It is important that the display is posted immediately. During inspections, inspectors only assess whether the Brá display is posted in a visible location. It is not considered a mitigating circumstance that the food business operator intends to request a replacement.

A Brá display that is not posted in accordance with the requirements of the regulation may result in a serious or unhappy Brá. The Brá display must be posted even if the food business operator has appealed the inspection result or has requested a new inspection.

Keywords: A visible Brá display is key to complying with the requirement for public disclosure of the Brá display.

1.4 Food safety management system, production control and hazard analysis

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 2, item 6 and section 6 on production control and hazard analysis, as well as Annex 1 on production control and hazard analysis and Annex 11 on guidelines.

A internal control system is the system used by the establishment to ensure that food is safe to eat and complies with applicable requirements.

The food business operator is required to implement a internal control system based on HACCP principles (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points). This is a recognised method for identifying hazards and implementing measures to ensure safe food. The aim is to prevent or eliminate hazards, or to reduce them to an acceptable level.

The requirements for the internal control system are set out in Annex 1 to the Hygiene Regulation. Guidance on food safety management systems at food establishments is available on the website www.hfs.fo and is called "innaneftirlit á minni heimamarknaðarvirkjum".

For the internal control system to function properly, basic conditions such as layout of the premises and waste handling must be in order. In addition, production must be organised according to good hygienic practices (GHP). This means that procedures must be in place for matters such as maintenance, cleaning and personal hygiene.

Once these prerequisites are in place, the production process can be reviewed to identify and control potential hazards. This includes hazard analysis and the identification of critical control points (CCPs).

Hazard analysis means that the food business is aware of relevant food safety hazards in its foods and processing stages. Hazards may be biological, physical or chemical and may pose a potential risk to health or affect the condition of the food.

A critical control point (CCP) is a point, procedure or step in the process that can be controlled in such a way that a hazard is eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level, for example by ensuring sufficient heating.

Hazard analysis and identification of CCPs may be carried out by:

- describing product groups, i.e. describing a product from receipt of raw materials/ingredients to the finished product (e.g. a pizza or a sandwich),
- preparing a flowchart showing all processing steps, describing all processing steps from raw materials/ingredients to finished product (e.g. receipt of raw materials, storage, thawing, heating, cooling),
- carrying out a HACCP-based hazard assessment based on the flowchart (see Annex 1 to the Hygiene Regulation).

To ensure safe food and maintain good hygienic practices (GHP), adequate procedures must be in place. Procedures may be oral or written. Some procedures are so fundamental that they must be documented in writing. This includes procedures for handling non-compliances and corrective actions, so that it is documented how deficiencies are identified, corrected and prevented from recurring.

Where records are kept, for example of temperatures, limit values must be defined. This allows staff to know when action is required.

Depending on the size and complexity of the establishment, additional written procedures may be necessary. This may include procedures for internal review of the internal control system and document control.

The food business operator is responsible for assessing which procedures must be documented in writing in order to comply with the regulation.

Not all establishments are required to document all HACCP elements, such as flowcharts or hazard analyses. However, the food business operator must be familiar with the HACCP principles.

In many cases, hazards can be effectively controlled through good hygienic practices (GHP). For example, procedures may ensure that raw materials have appropriate hygienic quality and that handling and storage do not expose food to contamination or microbial growth.

A internal control system that is active, effective and works well in practice will often make a positive difference in daily operations without requiring significant effort.

During inspections, The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority primarily assesses the internal control system based on procedures and working practices. Inspectors assess, for example, whether staff are trained in the correct procedures and know what to do when a non-compliance occurs.

An isolated non-compliance is not necessarily the same as a failure of the food safety management system. However, if similar non-compliances occur repeatedly, this may indicate a systematic issue and that the system is inadequate.

The purpose of the internal control system is to identify non-compliances and implement corrective actions to eliminate or limit systematic issues. Such non-compliances may affect the Brá result under the area “procedures and management”.

When inspecting the food safety management system, The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority pays particular attention to whether:

- non-compliances are isolated or systematic,
- procedures exist for recording non-compliances and corrective actions to prevent recurrence,
- procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect actual conditions. If any changes are made to the food, production or any processing stage, the food business operator is responsible for reviewing the relevant operating procedures and making necessary amendments,
- the establishment can demonstrate that specific hazards in food production are being effectively controlled.

Keywords: An effective, adequate and up-to-date internal control system is key to complying with the requirements for production control and documentation.

1.5 Training

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 15 on training and section 6(2) on production control and hazard analysis.

To ensure that procedures and working methods are followed correctly, staff must receive appropriate training and have the necessary skills.

Under the regulation, the food business operator is required to train and instruct staff in food safety in accordance with the tasks they perform.

Procedures must be in place to ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to comply with the food safety management system. The food business operator must assess whether these procedures should be oral or written.

Staff who are responsible for developing and updating the internal control system must have received adequate training in the application of HACCP principles.

If numerous or serious deficiencies affecting food safety are identified during inspections, this may indicate that training and instruction procedures are insufficient.

Training-related aspects of particular importance include:

- how procedures and working methods are communicated between management and staff,
- when staff have received relevant training and instruction,
- whether substitute staff receive adequate training and instruction.

Keywords: Well-organised training and instruction in food safety and GHP are key to complying with the training requirements.

2. Premises and equipment

2.1 General requirements for premises and layout

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 7 on layout, and Annex 2, Chapter I on general requirements for premises.

General hygienic requirements apply to all premises and fittings where food is present. This includes cold rooms and storage rooms, as well as premises where food is prepared, processed or otherwise handled.

The design, layout, location, construction and size of the premises must allow them to be properly maintained, cleaned and disinfected. This must ensure that food can be handled under hygienically satisfactory conditions. The premises must be protected against contamination and pests. Where necessary, facilities must be available for storing and handling food at appropriate temperatures. Adequate facilities must also be available for the storage of packaging materials.

The layout of fittings and equipment must prevent contamination from accumulating in cracks, joints or recesses.

The size, layout and condition of the premises must be suitable for their intended use. The decisive factor is not the age or size of the building, but that the premises are well maintained and laid out so that good hygienic practices (GHP) can be followed (see section 1.4).

The premises must primarily be used for food production. Other activities that may compromise food safety must not take place in the premises or immediately adjacent to them. If other activities nevertheless take place on site, food safety must be given primary consideration.

As a general rule, associated facilities such as cold rooms, toilets and changing rooms must be located in the same area as the food premises. If conditions allow, for example where distance does not compromise hygiene, such facilities may be located nearby, provided that appropriate procedures are in place.

If the food establishment shares changing rooms or staff toilets with persons not associated with the establishment, there is a risk of indirect contamination from people or surroundings outside the operator's control. This must therefore be considered in the hazard analysis (see section 1.4), and appropriate measures must be implemented to reduce the risk.

Ventilation and lightening

The premises must have adequate ventilation. They must be designed so that air flows do not transfer contamination from contaminated to clean areas, for example from toilets to food areas. Ventilation systems must be easy to clean.

Adequate working light must be provided. Light sources above areas where food is prepared or stored must be easy to clean and protected against breakage, so that glass or other small objects cannot fall into food.

Reception areas and storage rooms

Goods reception areas and storage rooms must be arranged so that the transport of goods into and out of the premises is both practical and hygienically satisfactory.

Hand wash bassins

A sufficient number of hand wash basins with hot and cold water must be available. Suitable facilities for hygienic hand washing and drying must be provided at the basins, typically liquid soap and single-use towels.

Sinks used for rinsing food must be kept clean and, where necessary, disinfected. As a general rule, sinks for rinsing food and sinks for hand washing must be separate, to prevent contamination from raw materials being transferred further.

If circumstances require hands to be washed in a sink that is also used for rinsing food or washing up, it must be ensured that contamination from raw materials or dirty equipment cannot be transferred. One possible solution may be to install an additional non-hand-operated tap.

Cleaning agents, equipment and tools

Cleaning agents, equipment and tools must be stored in suitable locations (or place) where there is no risk of contaminating food. Other toxic or contaminating substances must likewise be stored in a way that prevents food contamination.

Keywords: Hygienically designed and well-organised premises are key to complying with the requirements for premises and layout.

2.2 Specific requirements for premises

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 7 on layout, and Annex 2, Chapter II on specific requirements for premises where food is produced, prepared or processed.

Materials and equipment in premises where the core activities take place, such as production rooms, kitchens and preparation areas, must be designed so that good hygienic practices (GHP) can be maintained and contamination between work tasks prevented.

Floors, walls, ceilings, doors and other surfaces must be watertight, in good condition, and easy to clean and, where necessary, disinfect. Surfaces where food is handled, and especially surfaces in direct contact with food, must be smooth, watertight and capable of being disinfected where required. Materials must not release substances harmful to health and must not deteriorate easily.

Doors and gates leading to contaminating areas must be kept closed when not in use.

Windows, vents and air ducts must be designed to prevent the entry of pests such as mice, rats and flies. Windows that can be opened must be fitted with fly screens where necessary.

Suitable equipment must be available for cleaning and, where necessary, disinfecting tools and equipment. Such equipment must be easy to clean and keep clean.

Keywords: Hygienically suitable materials and equipment are key to complying with the specific requirements for premises where food is produced, prepared or processed.

2.3 Equipment and cleaning

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 10 on equipment, and Annex 5 on equipment.

Food may be contaminated by materials and objects in the production environment. Tools and equipment must therefore be made of suitable materials and designed so that they are easy to keep clean and do not cause contamination.

The risk of contamination can be reduced through effective and systematic cleaning. Tools, equipment and accessories that come into contact with food must therefore be cleaned thoroughly and regularly, and disinfected where necessary.

All equipment must have smooth, watertight surfaces and must be capable of being washed and, where necessary, disinfected. If equipment made of materials such as wood is used, potential contamination risks must be assessed. Where such use poses a risk, appropriate precautions must be taken. This may include, for example, not using wooden cutting boards for certain raw materials or foods.

Keywords: Equipment and tools that are designed to be cleaned and are kept clean are key to complying with the requirements for equipment and cleaning.

2.4 Handling of waste

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 11 on food waste and by-products, and Annex 6 on waste and by-products.

Food waste and by-products must be removed from areas where food is present as quickly as possible. As a general rule, waste containers must be closable, easy to clean and, where necessary, capable of being disinfected.

Suitable waste rooms or waste areas must be available. Waste rooms, containers and skips must be easy to clean and kept tightly closed to protect against pests. The surrounding area must also be well maintained and easy to clean, to avoid attracting pests.

Keywords: Proper placement and adequate maintenance of waste containers and waste storage areas are key to complying with the requirements for waste handling.

2.5 Prevention and control of pests

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 19(3) on protection against contamination, and Annex 6, Part 2 on waste and by-products.

It is important to prevent pests from entering the premises and contaminating food. Pests include, among others, rats, mice, birds and insects. The food business operator must therefore focus on preventive measures, such as:

- keeping doors and windows closed,
- using fly screens where necessary (e.g. windows),
- ensuring that ventilation systems are sealed and clean, and
- keeping the area around the building clean and tidy.

Professional assistance may be used, for example to install fly traps or set rat or mouse traps. Fly traps must be positioned so that they are not located directly where food is processed.

If pests are detected, appropriate measures must be taken promptly and carried out with guidance from persons with the necessary expertise.

If rats or signs of rats are detected, the establishment must notify the relevant municipality as soon as possible so that the rats can be eradicated. For other pests, companies in the Faroe Islands have the necessary expertise to carry out pest control.

The presence of live or dead insects, or droppings from mice or rats, may indicate that preventive measures are insufficient.

Keywords: Preventing pests from entering the premises and having procedures in place when pests are detected are key to complying with the requirement to protect against contamination from pests.

2.6 Hand washing facilities

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 7 on layout, and Annex 2 on layout and Annex 3 on mobile food units.

Hand wash basins in production areas must be sufficient in number and easily accessible. They are particularly important in areas where unpackaged food is present and where work involves switching between tasks that may cause contamination between raw materials or processing stages.

Hand wash basins must function as a hygienic barrier between work tasks, staff and the surrounding environment.

Each hand wash basin must have running hot and cold water and be equipped with facilities for hygienic hand washing and drying, such as liquid soap and single-use towels.

Hand wash basins and taps must not become a source of contamination. This can be ensured by using hands-free or automatic taps. Where manual taps are used, procedures must be in place to ensure hygienic hand washing and to prevent the taps from becoming a contamination risk.

As a general rule, hand wash basins must only be used for hand washing. Separate sinks must be available for rinsing food and dishwashing. If this is not possible, deviations may be permitted where hygienically justifiable and where contamination is avoided.

In retail outlets, mobile food units and similar settings where fixed water installations are not possible, the food business operator must assess which alternative solutions are appropriate.

Keywords: Adequate and well-equipped hand wash basins with appropriate hygienic facilities are key to complying with the requirements for hand washing.

2.7 Staff toilets and changing rooms

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 17 on changing rooms, toilets and hand wash basins.

As a general rule, changing rooms must be part of the establishment's premises. For small establishments with few staff, deviations from the requirement for separate changing rooms may be permitted. However, there must always be a suitable place for changing clothes, where private clothing and work clothing do not come into contact.

Staff toilets must also normally be part of the establishment's premises. Where toilets are located adjacent to areas where food is handled, a vestibule or intermediate area must be provided.

Toilets may be a source of contamination. To reduce the risk of contamination from outside, staff toilets must not be accessible to persons other than staff of the establishment.

Toilets must be provided with hand wash basins supplied with running hot and cold water. Suitable facilities and equipment must also be provided to enable hygienic hand washing and drying, for example liquid soap and single-use paper towels.

Keywords: Staff toilets and changing rooms that allow staff to change into work clothing reduce the risk of contamination and are key to complying with the requirements for staff toilets and changing rooms.

3. Handling and preparation of food

3.1 Personal hygiene

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 15 on training and section 16 on personal hygiene.

Staff who handle food must be trained in food safety. This includes being well informed about the importance of personal hygiene and being familiar with procedures that prevent food from becoming contaminated.

Staff must always wear suitable and clean work clothing.

Contaminated hands are one of the most common sources of contamination of finished food. Training in personal hygiene must therefore include clear instruction on how and when hands must be washed.

Staff who are ill or who have skin infections that may transmit infection must not handle food. In such cases, the staff member must inform the manager so that appropriate measures can be implemented. These measures must be in accordance with the establishment's procedures and hazard analysis. Where there is a risk of direct or indirect transmission of infection, the staff member must also not have access to areas where food is handled.

The food business operator must have written procedures covering at least the following:

- hand hygiene,
- work clothing, including when clothing must be changed or washed and how switching between tasks with different hygiene requirements is handled,
- use of protective equipment (e.g. gloves and hair nets),
- use of jewellery (e.g. earrings, rings and nail polish),
- staff movement within production areas.

Keywords: Good training and clear procedures on personal hygiene, particularly regarding hand washing, illness and work clothing, are key to complying with the requirements for personal hygiene.

3.2 Raw materials

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 9 on transport of goods and Chapter 5 on food provisions, as well as Annex 4 on transport (items 1 and 6).

The Non-authorized Food Production Regulation: section 1 on scope.

Food, raw materials, food additives and materials may contaminate finished products. Receipt control is therefore important to ensure that products have appropriate hygienic quality and do not pose a health risk or a contamination risk.

When carrying out receipt control, particular attention must be paid to:

- whether packaging materials are clean and intact,
- whether the temperature of chilled and frozen products is acceptable,
- whether food is damaged or past its expiry date.

Where necessary, the food business operator must obtain documentation confirming that packaging materials and food additives are suitable for contact with and use in food.

The food business operator must not accept goods or materials that may be contaminated if this could render the finished food unsuitable for consumption.

Food and raw materials must be purchased from authorized suppliers. An exception applies to certain Faroese products produced in accordance with The Non-authorized Food Production Regulation. These products are labelled as unauthorized (óløgilda) and bear the producer's registration number.

Keywords: Effective receipt control is key to ensuring that goods received by the establishment do not present a hygienic risk.

3.3 Water and ice

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 12 on water used in food production.

Food establishments must only use water of potable quality for food production.

Ice which comes into contact with food must be produced using potable water and handled under conditions that protect it from contamination.

Steam that comes into direct contact with food must not contain substances that may contaminate food or be harmful to health. Such substances may originate, for example, from pipes or other components through which the steam passes.

To ensure potable water quality, the food business operator should maintain contact with the municipality and follow its recommendations. The municipality carries out regular water analyses.

If the municipality issues a boil-water notice, the food business operator must ensure that water is not used without boiling where required. This applies, among other things, to:

- production of ice cubes or crushed ice,
- carbonated water produced on site,
- tap water served to guests.

Keywords: The use of potable water and awareness of boil-water notices are key to complying with water quality requirements in food production.

3.4 Protection against contamination

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 19 on protection against contamination and section 10(2) and (3) on equipment.

Food must be stored, handled and processed under hygienically correct conditions in order to ensure that food is not exposed, directly or indirectly, to contamination that may compromise food safety.

In order to prevent cross-contamination (i.e. contamination between food, raw materials, materials and equipment) appropriate measures must be implemented, such as:

- sufficient separation between different work areas, equipment and food, or
- effective cleaning between different processing stages (e.g. between handling of raw meat and preparation of ready-to-eat food such as sandwiches).

Where food at different processing stages is stored or handled in the same room or area, clear separation must be ensured through appropriate storage and handling procedures.

Clear separation must be ensured between:

- heat-treated and non-heat-treated food,
- raw materials and finished products,
- different raw materials (e.g. raw meat and vegetables),
- packaged and unpackaged food,
- food produced at authorized establishments and unauthorized products (non-authorized production),
- equipment used for food at different hygiene or processing stages (e.g. one cutting board for heat-treated food and one for non-heat-treated food),
- areas where food is stored or produced and areas used for storage of cleaning agents and similar substances.
- food that may cause allergies or intolerances (e.g. products containing gluten) and food sold as allergen-free (e.g. gluten-free).

Tools and equipment that come into contact with food must be cleaned thoroughly and frequently and, where necessary, disinfected.

As a general rule, food, materials and equipment must not be stored directly on the floor, as this may lead to accumulation of dirt and transfer of contamination to food handling areas and may hinder effective cleaning.

Keywords: Good conditions and clear procedures that ensure separation between raw materials, different stages of processing and sources of contamination during production and storage are key to complying with the requirements for protection against contamination.

3.5 Storage, transport and the cold chain

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 9 on transport of goods, section 19 on protection against contamination and sections 20–22 on temperature requirements, as well as Annex 4 on transport and Annex 7 on temperature requirements.

Food must be stored under appropriate conditions and protected against contamination. As a general rule, food must be stored in clean premises and in clean containers, boxes or similar. Food must be kept separate from other items and from raw materials where the hygienic status is unclear. Food must not be stored outdoors.

Visible temperature-measuring devices must be available in hot and cold storage areas. This is to ensure, that temperature regulations are met. If food is not stored at the correct temperature, disease-causing bacteria may grow or toxins may be formed, which may compromise food safety.

The following temperature requirements apply to storage and transport of food:

- chilled food must be stored at below 5 °C, unless otherwise stated on the packaging,
- frozen food must be stored at –18 °C or colder, unless otherwise stated on the packaging,
- food containing cream, whipped cream or mousse must be stored at below 5 °C. In bakery outlets, such food may be stored at below 10 °C if sold within 12 hours,
- warm held food must be kept at a temperature above 65 °C (see section 3.6),
- eggs must be stored at below 12 °C at the retail stage.

Transport of food must take place under conditions that prevent contamination. Vehicles and containers must be suitable for food transport and kept clean and in good condition. Temperature must be monitored during transport. The same temperature requirements apply as for storage.

Shelf life and storage temperature are closely linked. Lower storage temperatures generally result in longer shelf life, while higher storage temperatures result in shorter shelf life. Storage temperature is therefore an important part of food labelling.

It is the producer who determines the shelf life and storage temperature of food. Where food must be stored at low temperature, this temperature must be maintained until the product reaches the recipient.

Where the recipient is a food business operator, the product may either be processed further immediately or remain continuously within the cold chain. Further processing may include, for example, repackaging, heating, maturation or serving.

Short interruptions of the cold chain may occur in connection with further processing, provided that food safety is not compromised.

The food business operator must assess the shelf life and storage temperature of food produced or further processed at the establishment. As a general rule, perishable food must be stored below 5 °C.

Keywords: Together with well-organised purchasing and production, clean premises and transport vehicles, and correct temperatures during the storage and transport of food are key to complying with the requirements for storage, transport and the cold chain.

3.6 Heat treatment

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: sections 25 and 26 and Annex 9 on heat treatment.

Heat treatment is an important part of food production and is intended to reduce or eliminate disease-causing microorganisms. Heat treatment is often a critical control point (CCP) and must therefore be effectively controlled and monitored (see section 1.4).

Food that is heat-treated or reheated must be heated at a temperature and for a duration that ensures that the food is safe to eat.

As a general rule, food must be heated to at least 75 °C throughout the product. Exceptions are described in Annex 9 to the Hygiene Regulation.

Prepared food that is kept warm must, as a general rule, be kept at a temperature of at least 65 °C throughout the food. Any deviations must be documented.

Food that has been kept warm must not be cooled for later use or sale and must therefore be discarded.

Keywords: Heat treatment at a sufficiently high temperature and for a sufficient duration is key to complying with the requirements for heat treatment.

3.7 Cooling

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 21(1) on temperature requirements.

Food that is to be stored chilled or served cold must be cooled as quickly as possible after heat treatment or being held at room temperature, to a temperature that does not pose a health risk.

Bacteria grow rapidly at room temperatures. It is therefore important that food is cooled as quickly as possible in order to limit bacterial growth.

As a general rule, food must be cooled from 65 °C to 10 °C within 3 hours (the 3-hour rule).

Cooling equipment must be adequate to ensure sufficiently rapid cooling. In some cases, specialised cooling equipment may be necessary.

If a standard refrigerator is used for cooling, food must be divided into smaller portions with a large surface area in order to speed up cooling. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that other food in the refrigerator does not become too warm when warm food is placed inside.

Keywords: Rapid cooling of food and adequate cooling equipment are key to complying with the requirements for cooling.

3.8 Thawing

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 21(2) and (3) on temperature requirements.

Food must be thawed under conditions and at temperatures that minimise the risk of bacterial growth.

As a general rule, no part of the food must exceed 10 °C during thawing. Appropriate refrigeration equipment is therefore usually required.

During thawing, it must be ensured that liquid released from the food does not contaminate other food or the surroundings. This may, for example, be ensured by thawing food in a container with raised edges at the bottom of a refrigerator.

Thawed food must be stored correctly until use. If the product is chilled food, it must be stored at below 5 °C.

Keywords: Correct temperatures and conditions during thawing are key to complying with the requirements for thawing.

4. Traceability, labelling and recall

4.1 Traceability, labelling and recall

Regulation

The Hygiene Regulation: section 27 on traceability and section 28 on recall.

The Labelling Regulation: sections 8–9 on general provisions.

The Food Act: section 12 on marketing and labelling of food.

To ensure confidence that food is satisfactory at all stages, from distribution and production through to preparation and serving, effective traceability arrangements must be in place.

Where traceability is established, the food business operator is able to identify the origin of food, materials and raw materials used at the establishment (one step back). This enables the operator to take appropriate action where specific products are recalled or become subject to restrictions. Where required, the food business operator must also be able to identify the destination of products (one step forward), for example where food is supplied to other food businesses rather than sold directly to the final consumer.

These requirements apply at all stages of production and distribution. They apply both to food and to materials and articles intended to come into contact with food that are used in food production and placed on the market as part of a food product.

Labelling provides the information necessary to identify a product and to ensure traceability. Some of this information may be provided in a product description or in commercial documentation accompanying the product or batch, provided that it is clear which product the information relates to.

The food business operator must ensure that labelling information accompanies the product throughout production and distribution. This also applies where food or materials are transferred to other containers during processing.

Where the shelf life of a product is limited following determination of the product, the food business operator must ensure that the date of determination is recorded.

Where production is organised in such a way that products are further processed and stored, containers must, as a minimum, be labelled with the date of production and the contents.

Pre-packed food that is produced in advance, such as sandwiches or similar products, and that is not packed to order, must be labelled.

As a general rule, the following information must be provided on the sales unit itself or on each batch, for example food supplied to institutional kitchens or similar recipients:

- the authorisation or approval number, or the name and address of the producer or establishment,
- the name of the product,
- the shelf life,
- any special storage and conditions of use,
- the list of ingredients,
- the net quantity.

Labelling must be in Faroese or in another closely related language. Food labelling must be accurate and must not mislead the consumer. Where the omission of information could mislead the consumer, the country of origin must be indicated.

Keywords: Effective traceability of materials and raw materials, together with accurate and clear labelling, is key to complying with the requirements for traceability.

Legal basis

This guidance refers to acts and executive orders that are relevant to hygienic inspection. All acts and executive orders mentioned can be found on the websites www.hfs.fo and www.logir.fo. The legislation referred to in this guidance is adopted in Faroese. No official English translation is available.

The legal acts and executive orders referred to in this guidance are adopted in Faroese. Not all acts and executive orders are available in English. Where an English version is available on www.hfs.fo, the English title is stated in addition to the Faroese title.

Acts and executive orders:

Løgtingslóg nr. 58 frá 26. mai 2010 um matvørur v.m., sum seinast broytt við løgtingslóg nr. 102 frá 13. juli 2017 (*English: Parliamentary Act No 58 of 26 May 2010 on foodstuffs etc.*) (**The Food Act**)

Kunngerð nr. 34 frá 19. mars 2025 um heilsufrøðiligar treytir fyri framleiðslu av matvørum og krøv til høli í sambandi við matvøruframleiðslu (**The Hygiene Regulation**)

Kunngerð nr. 33 frá 19. mars 2025 um heilsufrøðiligt eftirlit og almannakunngerding av eftirlitsúrslitum (**The Brá Regulation**)

Kunngerð nr. 149 frá 27. november 2017 um framleiðslu og sølu av matvørum, sum ikki eru virkaðar á løggildum matvøruvirki, sum seinast broytt við kunngerð nr. 81 frá 18. mai 2021 (**The Non-authorized Food Production Regulation**)

Kunngerð nr. 25 frá 26. mars 1996 um at merkja liðugt pakkaðar matvørur (**The Labelling Regulation**)

Kunngerð nr. 128 frá 28. desember 2010 um løggilding og skráseting av matvøruvirkjum (*English: Executive Order No 128 of 28 December 2010 on the authorization and registration of producers of foodstuffs*) (**The Authorisation Regulation**)

Kunngerð nr. 154 frá 23. desember 2016 um útlatingarevni í matvørum (*English: Executive Order no. 154 of 23 December 2016 on food additives in foodstuffs*) (**The Food additives Regulation**)

Kunngerð nr. 9 frá 1. mars 2009 um mikrobiologisk metingarstöði fyri matvørur (*English: Executive Order No 9 of 5 February 2009 on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs*) (**The Microbiological Criteria Regulation**)

Guidance documents:

Additional relevant guidance documents are available on the website www.hfs.fo under “Matur og matvøruframleiðsla” (*Food and food production*), item “Matvøruframleiðsla” (*Food production*), in the section “Vegleiðingar til heimamarknaðin” (*Guidance for the domestic market*). These guidance documents are currently available in Faroese only.

This guidance on the Brá scheme was issued by The Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority (Heilsufrøðiliga starvsstovan) in June 2025. English translation: February 2026 (case no. 25/00395-13).

The guidance is based on the Norwegian guidance document “*Veileder til virksomhetene om smilfjesordningen*” (2018), issued by the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (Mattilsynet), and has been adapted to Faroese conditions.

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