

Food Waste

Good Hygiene Practice
Guide No: 18



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Food Service & Display

Good Hygiene Practice Guide No: 11



HACCP Chart Reference

Hot Hold / Counter Service / Bar / Hospitality

Background

Did you know:

- Approximately one third of all food produced in the world is wasted.
- Food waste is estimated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to contribute 8-10% of the total man-made greenhouse gas emissions.
- If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter after China and the USA.

Reducing food waste will:

- Save you money on purchasing and waste disposal costs.
- Generate more profit and reduce your operating costs.
- Improve your reputation and reduce your environmental impact.

Definition

Food waste is classified as 'Any food or ingredient removed from the food supply chain to be disposed of'.

Where is food wasted?



Spoilage: Food that is damaged, or that has exceeded its use-by date and is no longer fit for human consumption.



Trimmings: Food waste that is generated from preparing food on site, such as offcuts, bones, skins, fruit and vegetable peelings, and eggshells.



Cooking error: Food that is wasted due to errors in handling, such as burning it, mistakes in the cooking method, or dropping it on the floor.



Over-production: Food that is cooked or prepared but not used during service that ends up as waste.



Plate waste: Food that is served but not eaten; it's left on the customer's plate and ends up in the bin.

We have identified a 3-pronged approach to minimise food waste:

Prevention - Reduce the amount of food that is not sold or eaten

Recovery - Repurpose food, for example by donating it to charities

Recycling - Divert food waste from sewer and landfill

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Prevention

The unit manager is responsible for looking for opportunities to reduce food waste. Food waste can occur as a result of poor menu planning, over-purchasing, incorrect storage, poor food preparation, lack of portion control, over-production, and uneaten plate waste.

1. Tracking Food Waste

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure”

Units get valuable information from tracking their food waste. This helps understand how much food is being wasted and how much it’s costing your unit. It will get your teams thinking about where food is being wasted and why, so that you can start creating ideas to reduce the amount of food that is thrown away.

All food waste should be recorded daily on the relevant digital system. This allows for the accurate reporting of food waste and gives us insightful data. Refer to the ‘Managing Food Waste’ guidance document for everything you need to know. This can be accessed on the **NetZero Hub**.

2. Menu Planning

As a rule, the more ingredients you have to buy, the more food waste is created.

- Where appropriate use Source approved recipes, which indicate the correct ingredients and quantities to be used for each dish made, to avoid over-production.
- Review your menu regularly to help identify and remove slower moving dishes.
- External factors could affect menus. Check the weather forecast and keep a diary of national/local events and adjust orders accordingly.
- Check use-by dates when stock is delivered. Frozen or dried ingredients have the longest shelf life and can help reduce spoilage waste.
- ‘Specials’ or a ‘Dish of the Day’ are a good way to use up stock approaching its use-by date.
- Consider what food is prepared or made on-site and what can be bought in prepared or ready-made. This can reduce labour and waste.
- Use seasonal and local ingredients where possible, as these will be fresher. This also helps reduce your environmental impact.

3. Food Storage

- Keep food in its original packaging if it’s in good condition and durable.
- If decanting foods, always use a food grade container with firmly fitted lids and ensure the Allergen information and shelf-life dates are transferred onto the new container from the original packaging.
- Storing dry goods, particularly grains and powders in plastic lidded containers can help to preserve the food once opened and avoid spillages.

Shelf life:

- Organise your food storage areas such that stock with the shortest shelf-life is used first.
- Follow the relevant shelf-life guidance for in unit made food.
- Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions when applying a shelf-life to opened sauces, condiments and other foodstuffs.

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Temperature control:

Ensure food is kept at the correct temperature to best preserve the condition of foods:

- Ambient food should be kept in a clean, dry, cool and well-ventilated place.
- Ready-to-eat food must be stored at 5°C or below.
- Frozen food should be kept between -18°C and -23°C.

4. Preparation & Cooking

- Ensure food trimmings are kept to a minimum - only remove the necessary inedible parts of the food item. Consider possible re-use of trimmings in stocks or sauces, where appropriate.
- Cook meals in small batches to minimise waste and allow unused batches to be cooled and refrigerated / frozen for re-use at a later point.
- Consider cooking to order for certain high value foods, e.g. steaks or other meat, fish, and poultry items.

5. Food Service & Display

- Ensure that food display units are maintained and suitable to keep food at the required temperatures.
- Do not overstock display units and don't place food on display until required.

6. Portion Control

- Keep portion sizes consistent; use portion spoons or 'Spoodles' to serve accurate portions.
- Standardise portions: use ramekins or serving bowls to prepare and serve average portions of vegetables, sides or toppings.
- Offer a range of plate sizes; this could be particularly useful for children.
- Introduce weigh and pay systems so that the customer pays for the amount they take.
- Raise awareness, by displaying friendly posters to remind customers to only take what they can eat.
- Offer doggy bags; refer to relevant guidance available on the Compass HSE website.

7. Over-Production

Over-production is **the leading cause of food waste in food service and hospitality**. Whilst an element of waste will be generated to maximise sales, there are ways to improve operational efficiency without compromising on customer satisfaction or menu choice:

- Track how much food is produced versus how much is served or sold - the difference is waste.
- Adjust production volumes to meet demand, considering promotions, weather and events.
- Switch from bulk production to cooking in smaller batches or cook to order.
- Ask your kitchen porter to alert the chef of items that regularly come back to the kitchen and ask your serving and waiting staff to feed back to the chef on issues with menu items.
- Help your clients/customers make the link between service expectations and the impacts of food waste (financial, environmental and social).
- Consider a reduced service at quieter periods.

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8. Plate Waste

- Monitor what customers are leaving behind on their plates and adjust your menu or portions accordingly.
- Look at portion sizes and ensure staff are adhering to agreed serving sizes.
- Try using smaller plates or removing trays for self-service to reduce multiple plates per serving.
- Include information about your portion sizes on menus, posters and table talkers.

Recovery

Repurposing Food

Repurposed food is the term we use when referring to excess or over-produced food left at the end of service that can be used elsewhere. This includes short-dated food (e.g. food that will expire while the unit is closed for the weekend), lines no longer being retailed, items with damaged packing, food not needed as a result of a cancellation etc.

What surplus food can be repurposed?

Excess food can be either repurposed internally or donated externally to our food charity partners, as long as it meets the following criteria. Ambient packaged, prepacked chilled food and packaged frozen foods must be sealed and labelled, and not exceed the use-by date. Pre-packed food must have full ingredient labelling, including allergens and shelf-life. For any loose foods allergen logs must be provided.

Food that has been on display, such as food from salad bars, buffets, counter service or deli counters, must not be repurposed for vulnerable consumer populations, such as those in Healthcare or Senior Living settings. Full temperature records demonstrating that food has been at or below 5°C or at or above 63°C at all times must be available and retained.



Packed ambient food

Including pasta, rice, cereals, spices, tins, condiments, crisps, chocolates, drinks etc.



Fruit and vegetables

Packaged or loose, in good condition



Pre-packaged chilled food

Including sandwiches, salads, yoghurts, fruit pots, ready meals etc.



Frozen food

Bought-in food in its original packaging. Wrapped and dated in-unit produced foods



Bakery items

Including bread, pastries, cookies, muffins and cakes



Food that has expired its Best before date

Items must be in good condition

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Hot food

Leftover hot food that has not been previously reheated and has been held at 63°C or above can be repurposed. These foods must have been under temperature control throughout, including hot hold temperatures every 90 minutes, and with temperature records available. Food can be repurposed hot or have been cooled down to 8°C (5°C in Republic of Ireland) or below following *GHP 10: Cooling & Reheating*.



Food that has been hot held on display **must not** be repurposed in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland or for highly vulnerable consumer populations, such as those in Healthcare or Senior Living settings. In Compass Ireland all donated food must be labelled with the donation labels from Café Brands and be recorded on the Kitchtech donation record.

Allergen information and guidance on storage and use must be provided. This guidance should state that food must be consumed within 2 hours or refrigerated and discarded after 24 hours, and that if reheating food, food this must be done to 75°C (piping hot) and any reheated food must be discarded if not consumed.

What food cannot be repurposed?



Food that has passed its use-by date



Food without allergen information



Food with damaged or dented packaging



Cold counter food, such as salad bar items



Hot food kept hot on display in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland



Cuisine Centre food

Further guidance

For further guidance on food donations, go to the Net Zero hub to access the Surplus Food Donations Guide and the relevant Surplus Food Disclaimer for Stock Donated.

Other guidance relating to repurposing food, such as Guidance on the Use of Spent Coffee Grounds, Doggy Bags and the Levy Pantry can be found on the Compass HSE website.



Recycling

1. Separate food waste collections

Food waste sent to landfill releases methane, a harmful greenhouse gas. If collected separately, food waste can be sent for anaerobic digestion (AD), or to compost where it is broken down in a controlled way and the methane is converted into biofuel, that can be used to generate electricity or fuel. The process also produces a nutrient-rich fertiliser (called digestate) that farmers can use in place of chemical fertilisers.

Food waste legislation varies across the UK and Ireland due to devolved governance, with some nations requiring separate collections, no matter the volume produced. For consistency and to support the measurement of food waste, Compass Policy is for all sites to separate food waste for collection.

Process

Provision must be made for the regular removal of food waste from the immediate food preparation area at the end of each production period.

It is important to safely and hygienically remove food waste from the catering environment in order that it does not come into contact with food destined for human consumption, potentially causing cross-contamination of bacteria or mould spores.

- Food waste must be deposited in a separate bin. Foot-operated lidded bins are recommended to avoid hand contact when opening the bin.
- A bin bag should be used to contain the food waste. In Republic of Ireland a compostable bin bag must be used.
- Food waste bins must be clearly labelled - Waste bin signs are available on the Net Zero Hub on the MyLearning app on Connect.
- Suitable storage and frequent collection of waste is required in order to reduce the risk of pest infestation.
- Where possible ensure external food waste areas are well lit with a hard-standing solid floor area, enabling periodic cleaning and drainage.



2. Animal Milk Disposal

Animal milk must not be disposed of down sinks or drains as it is a highly polluting substance in watercourses. Where milk reaches watercourses, it encourages growth of naturally present bacteria, which uses up oxygen in the water, eventually resulting in aquatic animals suffocating.

Waste animal milk can be disposed as food waste. The volume of milk that can be decanted into food waste bins is set by the waste provider. For Biffa and Suez, 2 litres of milk (max) can be decanted into a 140-litre external bin, 3.5 litres of milk (max) into a 240-litre external bin. For other waste providers you will need to confirm the preferred disposal route directly.

To dispose of large quantities of milk exceeding the maximum permitted volume you must arrange for separate collection with the waste provider. Further guidance is available on the Net Zero Hub.



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3. Used Cooking Oil

Used cooking oil must be stored separately and collected by a licensed waste contractor for recycling. Ensure colleagues are trained on how to transfer used cooking oil to your collection point.

For used cooking oil collections, use one of our approved suppliers:

- UK-wide: Contact Lifecycle Oils Ltd on 01922 903388 customer.service@lifecycleoils.com
- Compass Ireland/NI: contact PureOil on 053913 4857

Waste contractor licences and certificates should be kept on file.

Make sure you know which drains could be affected by a spill from your site before choosing a location to store used cooking oil. Do a site walk, refer a map to identify them or discuss with the client where relevant.

Used cooking oil must be stored:

- Separately from other waste streams,
- More than 10 meters away from any drain, water course, vehicle route, ignition source, and protected from extreme weather (preferably indoors),
- In a strong container that will not burst or leak (such as the containers your oil was supplied in) and
- In a bund, sump or on spill pallet, which must:
 - sufficiently hold no less than 25% of the total storage capacity,
 - have a watertight base and sides,
 - not have drainage valves,
 - be protected from rainwater, and
 - be checked regularly for leaks, damage and accumulated rainwater.



Please make sure you have completed the **Climate Net Zero Toolkit - Food Waste: Disposal of used cooking oil** section to ensure you are storing used cooking oil correctly and managing pollution risks.

4. Macerators

Macerators and other food waste technologies that expel food waste to sewers are now illegal across the UK and Ireland, except for certain exemptions in rural Scotland.

If you still have macerators in use, they must be decommissioned, and a separate food waste collection system must be implemented through a waste provider. If the macerator and waste management system are owned by the client, you may need to consult them before making any changes.

Fats, Oils and Greases

It's important to keep fats, oils and greases out of the drain, because as they cool they congeal and harden, and stick to the inner lining of drainage pipes, restricting wastewater flow and causing pipes to block. Food residue left on plates, pots, trays and utensils should be scraped into the bin before rinsing or putting them in the dishwasher. Leave liquid food waste to cool and harden before scraping it into the bin. Place a strainer in the plug hole to prevent waste food from going down the drain. Scraps collected in the strainer should be emptied into the bin. In Republic of Ireland grease traps must be in use and you must have a FOG licence. Check with your client or HSE manager to ensure you have a FOG licence in place.



Additional Guidance

1. Food Labelling
 - Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No:5 - Shelf-Life and Labelling** for guidance on correct food labelling
2. Food Storage
 - Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No:6 - Food Deliveries & Storage** for guidance on correct food storage arrangements to ensure temperature control is maintained
 - Shelf-life Posters ([Bought In Product Shelf-Life Rules](#), [In Unit Made Food Shelf-Life Rules](#)), available on the Compass HSE website or on Linney MyStore)
3. Cooling
 - Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No 1 - Cooling and reheating** for guidance regarding safe cooling
4. Allergens

Refer to **Good Hygiene Practice Guide No 13 - Allergens** for guidance regarding allergen information
5. Repurposing Food
 - Refer to **Compass UK&I Surplus Donation Guide** available on the NetZero Hub, for guidance on donating surplus food
6. Animal Milk Disposal
 - Refer to **Animal Milk Disposal - Updated Guidance** available on the NetZero Hub, for guidance on disposal of waste milk