GOVERNMENT KEY PROJECT

Setting Up a Meat Establishment

Guide for Small and Medium-sized Businesses

Evira

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Contents

Introduction of the Guide

In this guide you will receive important information on how to set up a meat cutting plant or a plant producing minced meat or meat preparations. You will also receive information on how to run things properly in your meat establishment, for example, with regard to hygiene and other regulations.

It is important that you know in advance what to do in each phase and how to work in a meat establishment. If you do, everything will go well and both the customers and food inspector will be happy.

This guide has been divided into six sections.

- **Section 1, Setting Up.**
  Section 1 is a summary of information needed for setting up a meat establishment.
- **Section 2, Premises.**
  Section 2 contains information about the requirements associated with appropriate premises.
- **Section 3, Operations.**
  Section 3 contains requirements for operations.
- **Section 4, Staff.**
  Section 4 contains requirements for staff.
- **Section 5, Own-check plan.**
  In section 5 you will find information about own-check activities. This information helps you to create an own-check plan for your meat establishment.
- **Section 6, Terminology.**

This guide does not contain general information on setting up and running a business. Links to such information are provided on the web page **www.evira.fi/en/operatorguidance**.

Some words in the text have been underlined. You will find explanations for them in section 6.

You will receive information on these topics, among others:

- How can you ensure that the premises are suitable for your facility?
- How can you apply for approval for your facility and operations from the authorities?
- What are the requirements for meat-processing premises?
- What other things are required in the operation of an establishment where meat or products of meat are handled?
- What are the requirements for the staff of establishments where meat or products of meat are handled?
- What is meant by a meat-handling establishment's own-check plan?

Section 1, Setting Up

In this section you will learn

- What should you bear in mind in the set-up stage?
- How can you ensure that the premises are suitable for your operations?
- What kind of competence is required from you and your staff?
- What else is required of you?
- How can you apply for approval for your facility's operations?
- What does the approval inspection involve?
- What other important matters should you bear in mind?
- What is the own-check plan and where can you get help for drawing it up?

Suitable premises

When you find premises that you like, check with the municipal building supervision authority that they are intended for the purpose you had in mind. This will normally guarantee that the building or premises are technically suitable for a meat establishment, for example, that they are adequately ventilated.

It is also good to contact the municipal food control authority at this early stage. From the authority, you can confirm that the premises are suitable for your intended purpose.

What does "use prescribed in the building permit" mean?

The municipal building supervision authority approves the use of premises or a property as, for example, a restaurant, shop, office or industrial facility.

The intended use of premises is specified in their building permits, and the premises may not be used for other purposes than those approved in the building permits.

What happens if the premises have not been approved for the use that you require?

If you want to use the premises even though their intended purpose is not suitable, you will require a building permit for changing the prescribed use of the premises.

You may need to make major renovations to, for example, the ventilation or water fixtures.

Check with your municipality's building supervision whether you can apply for the building permit yourself or whether it is the task of some other party, such as the housing company.

When you are applying for a change to the prescribed use of premises, please keep in mind the following considerations:
In these situations, you will have to be prepared for planning costs, such as hiring a designer. Find out the competence requirements for designers from the municipal building supervision authority.

Building may not start until the building permit is final. Premises may not be put to a new use before the building supervision authority has approved it in a final inspection.

Can there be other obstacles to the operation of the meat establishment apart from those related to the building permit?
Check with the housing company that your intended operation can be run in the property you had in mind. The company's articles of association can include provisions regarding the use of premises.

Are the premises suitable to run your meat establishment?
When evaluating the suitability of premises for your purposes, you should, at minimum, consider whether it is possible to arrange your operations sensibly on the premises. For example, you should find out whether the premises are equipped with a sufficient number of storage rooms, water fixtures and floor drains. Pick sufficiently large or easily modifiable premises from the start if you think you might want to expand your operations at a later date.

Also consider whether the processing of foodstuffs would require a large and expensive surface renovation. The food inspector and advisory organisations will be able to advise you on these matters. Information on advisory organisations is available via the links on our website.

The Premises section of this guide also contains additional information on the requirements for premises.

Design the premises so that the following will be easy to implement:

- Do not allow customers or other outsiders entry into food-processing areas. Pets are not permitted on the premises.
- Retail sales functions must be placed in a separate space from meat-cutting and grinding and the production of meat preparations. Other processing areas, such as the packing areas, can be separated in time from retail sales. In this case, the products are packed in the shop area when the shop is not open for business. This requires the approval of the supervisory authority.
- Locate your food preparation and processing areas so that employees cannot pass through them into, for example, dressing rooms or food storage areas.
- Store non-food products so that odours or flavours cannot migrate from them into food. Also ensure that they will not pose a danger if they break.
- Remove any unnecessary items, such as non-used furniture, devices and equipment from the premises, because they gather dust. They also take up room and make cleaning more difficult.

How do you apply for the authorities' approval for your facility?

You can only begin operating after obtaining approval from the authorities. As a rule, approval is applied for in writing from the food control authority of the municipality in which your facility is located.

If the facility is connected to a slaughterhouse, approval is applied for from the Finnish Food Safety Authority, Evira.

However, reindeer slaughterhouses and facilities connected to them are approved by the Regional State Administrative Agency of Lapland.

You must describe the nature of your planned operations in the application for approval. In addition, you will need to describe your production facilities.

The easiest way is to use the application form provided by the relevant authority. The form is available from the municipality's website or food inspector. Alternatively, you can file a free-form application.

The application for approval must include the following information at minimum:

- your name, municipality of residence and contact details
- the business ID or, if you do not have one, your personal identity code
- the facility's name and street address
- the operations that will be performed at the facility (e.g., cutting plant, plant producing minced meat, plant producing meat preparations, plant producing mechanically separated meat, plant producing meat products)
- planned production volume
- estimated start date of operations
- a report of ventilation, water supply, plumbing, waste management and by-product processing
- the surface materials of production, storage, cleaning and transport facilities, as well as staff facilities
- description of any special arrangements regarding the use of the premises (such as the separation of functions in time, i.e., performing different types of work at different times)
- information on any seasonal operations

In addition, the application must include the following attachments:

- the layout, floor plan and HPAC drawings indicating:
  - the food-processing areas, the nature of the work performed in each area and the placement of equipment and furniture
  - transport routes for raw materials, ingredients and finished goods, packaging materials, by-products, and waste
  - the borders of hygiene zones, such as the borders between food-processing and waste storage areas
  - staff access routes (including maintenance, transport and cleaning)
  - locations of water fixtures, washing and disinfection facilities and floor drains
- temperatures of refrigerated facilities
- information about the purpose of each facility approved by building control authorities and any pending applications
- an own-check plan for inspection

What if you will make substantial changes?
You must apply for advance approval for any substantial changes. Substantial changes include, for example,

- starting to produce minced meat at a cutting plant;
- producing a significantly higher volume of products than stated in the application for approval; or
- expanding the facilities.

A change is substantial if it changes the nature of the operations approved by the authorities.

You may also require approval if you change the purpose of the premises. For example, if you change a packaging material storage area into a meat-processing area.

What happens after you submit your application for approval?

As a general rule, the supervisory authority is required to issue a decision on the matter within 60 days of receiving your application.

This processing time can be extended for special reasons. For example, an incomplete application can extend the processing time. The authority may ask you to provide additional required reports and documents.

Approval inspection

Before the supervisory authority can approve your facility, it must conduct an acceptance inspection.

The inspection will be carried out after you have submitted your application. In addition, the inspection cannot be carried out before your facility is almost ready to begin production.

The authority will evaluate your own-check plan

You must draw up an own-check plan before starting operations. The purpose of the own-check plan is to help you describe your operations and manage the food hygiene risks associated with them.

Before approving your facility, the authority will also evaluate whether your own-check plan covers the required matters.

You can find materials for drawing up the plan in this guide and on the websites of many food control authorities.

Drawing up the own-check plan will be discussed in more detail in the Own-check plan section of this guide.

Approval decision

When your facility is compliant with the statutory requirements, the authority will approve it. You will receive a written decision on the matter.

Your operations must correspond to a valid approval decision. If you want to change your operations at a later date, you will have to apply for approval.

When can your facility obtain a conditional approval?

In exceptional cases, the authority can issue a conditional approval for your facility even if it does not comply with all requirements.
In such cases, the basic structure and equipment of your facility must nevertheless be compliant with regulations. The basic structural requirements mean that your facility's walls, ceilings, floors, water supply, plumbing, ventilation and lighting must be in order.

In order to be approved conditionally, your facility must have only minor shortcomings, which you must subsequently fix. Only then will you receive final approval for your facility.

An example of a minor shortcoming would be an unfinished water fixture in a facility equipped with several water fixtures.

A conditional approval can be granted for a maximum of three months at a time. The authority will conduct a new inspection before the end of the three-month period.

Can your application be rejected?

The authority can reject your application for the following reasons:

1. If the structures or equipment of the facility endanger food safety and you do not fix them when requested.

2. If your application is incomplete and you do not supply the missing information when requested.
3. If the own-check plan is missing or lacking important information.

Such important information can include, for example:

- the food sampling and inspection plan; or
- the cleaning and sampling plan for premises and equipment.

Approval for the separation of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) risk material

TSE diseases include 'mad cow disease' or bovine BSE and sheep and goat scrapie.

TSE risk material in cutting plants consists of the following material from animals aged over 12 months

- bovine head meat
- bovine spinal cord left in the carcass at the slaughterhouse, for example due to a splitting error
- sheep and goat spinal cord

TSE risk material constitutes by-products of the highest risk category and must be delivered for destruction. This prevents the spread of TSE diseases.

If you want to remove TSE risk material at your cutting plant, you will require a decision by which the authority approves your facility as a TSE risk material separation institution.

Are you allowed to produce minced meat and raw meat preparations in the same room where you cut the meat?

The supervising authority may approve the production of minced meat and meat preparations in the same room where you cut meat.

In this case, the production must take place

- in an area sufficiently far away from other operations; or
- at a separate time – i.e., not at the same time as cutting meat, and the area must be cleaned between different operations.

Approval number and identification mark

After approving it, Evira will issue an approval number to your establishment. This number will be included in your establishment's identification mark, with which you must label all products packaged at your establishment. The approval number or identification mark must also be included in the commercial documents of meat deliveries.

The authorities may reserve a number for your facility from Evira in advance, before your establishment has been approved. Such a reservation does not mean that you are allowed to begin operations. However, it will give you the opportunity to, for example, have packaging materials and document templates printed in advance.

What are the costs of supervision by the authorities?

The supervisory authority will charge a fee for the approval of your establishment and recurring fees for regular supervision. Food inspectors can make inspection visits unannounced or agree on inspections with you in advance.

The amounts of the fees are determined by the municipality's tariffs. The tariffs are listed on the website of the municipality in which your establishment is located.

More information on official supervision is available via the links on our website.

Requirements for kitchen staff

Persons who process perishable foods professionally must have a hygiene passport and wear appropriate protective clothing.
A hygiene passport is a certificate of competence for demonstrating familiarity with food hygiene.

If necessary, the employees must also be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have salmonella infection.

The purpose of all these requirements is to ensure the safety of foodstuffs.
These personnel requirements will be discussed in more detail in the Staff section of this guide

Summary

When you are setting up a meat establishment:

- Contact your municipality's building supervision authority and food control authority to make sure that the premises are suitable for your establishment.
- File an approval application for setting up your establishment.
- Make sure that personnel who handle meat have hygiene passports, health certificates and protective clothing.
- Draw up an own-check plan.

Section 2, Premises

In this section you are introduced to the requirements for appropriate premises and how they contribute to food safety and hygiene.

When planning your meat establishment, take the sensible placement of the following premises and functions into account:

- Food processing, production and storage facilities
  - The required equipment and utensils
  - Cold storage facilities
  - Water fixtures and plumbing
  - Non-toxic, easy-to-clean and smooth surface materials
- Space for the cleaning and storage of dishes and delivery boxes
- Waste and by-product storage facilities
- Facilities for the storage and maintenance of cleaning equipment
- Other necessary storage spaces
- Floor drains in facilities whose cleaning requires washing
- Toilet facilities
- Staff dressing rooms
- Smoking areas

Food processing, production and storage facilities

When processing and storing food, it is vital to ensure that the foodstuffs are protected from dirt, harmful bacteria, viruses and harmful substances.

This requires adequately sized facilities that enable the different functions to be placed in a sensible manner. In addition, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be safe and may not leave harmful substances in the food.

The layout of the premises must enable the separation of raw materials and finished products.

You must also be able to segregate allergens. They must be kept separate from each other as well as from food they are not intended for. A list of substances and products that cause allergies or intolerances is provided in the "Food information management" section of this guide.

Examples of foods to be kept separate from each other

- Keep raw materials and finished products separate from each other. For example, meat must be kept separate from tartare steaks and minced meat, and carcasses must be kept separate from cut meat.

- Keep raw poultry meat separate from other foods. Store and handle unpackaged raw poultry meat so that it cannot come into contact with other unpackaged foods.
- Meat from different species of animal must also be kept separate by handling different species either at different times or in different areas.
- Keep ingredients and products that cause allergies and intolerances separate from each other and from foods they are not intended for. Significant work stages to consider with regard to separation of foods and handling of cross-contamination are for example: purchasing and accepting ingredients, labeling, storage and handling of foodstuffs, planned order of work and cleaning.
- Keep packaged and unprotected meat or processed meat separate from each other. Also, separate packing operations from other meat handling so that the packaging material does not contaminate meat or processed meat.
- Foods that are subject to special conditions for placing on the market should be marked and kept apart from other foods.

Water fixtures and sinks
Food preparation and processing facilities must be equipped with a sufficient number of water fixtures.

You should consider the need for water fixtures when planning the facilities, since retrospective changes are both difficult and expensive to implement.

Several water fixtures
A meat handling area requires several water fixtures. Separate fixtures are required, for example, for washing hands and the surfaces of the area.

The establishment must have a dedicated point for washing dishes, equipment and utensils. The washing point must be easy to clean and built of rustproof materials.

Floor drains are important in areas that are washed with water or that contain equipment and utensils washed with water.

Sufficient water supply and cleanliness
All sinks and washing equipment must have a sufficient supply of both hot and cold water.

The sinks and cleaning equipment must be kept clean and disinfected when necessary.

One washing point for multiple purposes
Compromises may be required in older premises.

A washing point can be used for one purpose in the morning and for another later in the day. For example, a hand-washing point can be used to rinse tools after the work day. Please remember that the wash basin must be cleaned between functions if necessary.

If you need advice on the number and locations of water fixtures, you can ask the food inspector when you are planning the premises.

Number and placement of hand-washing points
A sufficient number of hand-washing points must be reserved for washing hands.
They must be placed sensibly with regard to operations. The hand-washing points must be located close to the food-processing areas.

What equipment is needed at hand-washing points?

- Running hot and cold water is required at an appropriate hand-washing point.
- Automatic or pedal-operated taps are required in hand-washing points located in areas where unprotected food is handled or employees wash their hands before entering the production area.
- Liquid soap is part of a well-equipped hand-washing point.
- Disposable towels are appropriate for a hand-washing point. In this case, a bin will also be required.
- A roller towel is also a good choice for a hand-washing point.
- A dirty cloth towel is not appropriate for a hand-washing point. Cloth towels can be used if everyone has their own towel that is replaced on a daily basis.
- The hand-washing point must also be clean. It must not be cluttered with unnecessary things.

Disinfection of tools

Employees of cutting plants and establishments that produce meat preparations and minced meat must have the opportunity to disinfect their tools with hot water. This requires a minimum water temperature of 82 °C. Such disinfection devices are commonly called knife sterilisers.

A different system with an equivalent effect is equally suitable for this purpose, for example, disinfection with alcohol.

Meat quality assurance before cutting

The cutting plant must include a well-lit area for checking the quality of the meat before cutting. The inspection area must be equipped with a hand-washing point and knife disinfection equipment, since it may be necessary to clean the meat before cutting.

Cold storage facilities for foodstuffs

Different foods require different storage temperatures. Therefore, you will need a number of storage spaces, and their temperature must be monitored with measuring equipment or thermometers.

Foods that require cold storage should not be left at higher temperatures, even for a short time. Only take the required amount of such food out of cold storage for preparation.

The cold chain may not be broken at any time. Also keep the cold chain in mind during delivery, acceptance of deliveries and transfer to cold storage facilities.

Examples of food storage temperature limits

- Poultry or rabbit carcasses and meat: 4 °C or below
- Other carcasses and meat: 7 °C or below
- Meat preparations: 4 °C or below
- Organs and blood: 3 °C or below
- Minced meat: 2 °C or below
- Frozen or deep-frozen meat or processed meat: -18 °C or below
- Frozen poultry meat: -12 °C or below.

Short-term deviations from these temperatures are allowed.

Cooled areas

Establishments that handle meat usually also ensure the correct temperature by cooling the meat-handling area. For example, the maximum temperature in cutting plants is normally 12 °C. If air in the cutting plant is warmer than this, the establishment must demonstrate that the temperature of meat cut at the plant constantly remains below the above-mentioned limits.

What do you need to know if you freeze or deep-freeze meat or processed meat?

1. Start freezing or deep-freezing as soon as possible after the preceding work stage.
2. Store and transport frozen and deep-frozen meat at temperatures of -18 °C or below.
3. Exception: frozen (but not deep-frozen) poultry meat for sale can be stored and transported at -12 °C or below.

What do you need to know when thawing meat or processed meat?

1. Thaw frozen and deep-frozen meat and processed meat at temperatures that do not pose a health risk. It is safest to thaw the products in a refrigerated area.
2. You should drain the thawing fluids into a sewer. They must not create a risk of contamination to other food products.
3. Minced meat and meat preparations may not be frozen again after being thawed.

Fill the cold store or refrigeration appliance correctly!
Do not overfill the cold store or refrigeration appliance. When you fill the cold store or appliance correctly, the air will circulate as intended and keep the food at the right temperature.

Packaging and wrapping material storage areas

Also remember to plan the storage of food packaging and wrapping materials.
Store such materials in a protected location separate from the food-processing areas.

Do not take more than one day's worth of packaging and wrapping materials into the food-processing areas at a time.

Staff dressing rooms

The staff must have a dressing room with space for storing off-duty clothes.
In exceptional circumstances, the supervisory authority may allow the dressing room to be located in a separate area or building.

Keep your own clothing separate from protective clothing and your shoes off the floor
Keep your own clothing separate from protective clothing in order to keep it clean. Also provide racks or another storage solution for work shoes. This keeps the dressing room floor easy to clean.

Toilet facilities

Employees must be provided with toilet facilities. With the permission of the supervisory authority, toilet facilities can be located in a separate area or building.

In some cases (such as in small establishments), a dry toilet kept in good condition can be accepted. Temporary use of a portable chemical toilet, a so-called bajamaja, can be permitted.

Any exceptions must always be discussed with the food inspector.

Requirements for staff toilets
The lavatory door may not open directly into food-processing premises. For this reason, staff toilets must either be located behind two doors or be placed at a greater distance from premises where food is processed.

In old buildings, this may not be possible. Acceptable solutions will be found for such buildings on a case-by-case basis.
You should discuss the matter with the food inspector and ask for advice.

Hand-washing points of staff toilets
If unprotected food is handled at your establishment, hand-washing points must be equipped with automatic or pedal-operated water taps. Hand or arm-operated taps are not permitted.

Automatic or pedal-operated taps are required in the hand-washing points of staff toilets.

Food-poisoning bacteria and viruses spread easily through contact, for example through the handles of toilet doors and manually operated water taps.

Cleaning equipment storage and maintenance facilities

Good storage and maintenance facilities for cleaning equipment are equipped with

- Adequate ventilation, preventing the growth of mould.
- Racks and shelves for cleaning equipment and detergents.
- A water fixture and drainage sink for rinsing and washing cleaning equipment.
- A drying rack for damp cleaning equipment.
- A floor drain facilitating cleaning of the storage space.

The cleaning equipment and agents should be stored hygienically and separated from the food preparation area.

Cleaning equipment should not be stored in toilet facilities, since it may be contaminated with harmful bacteria and viruses. Dirty cleaning equipment will spread dirt when you clean.

Storing cleaning equipment further away
The supervising authority may also permit you to store and maintain cleaning equipment in a separate area or building. If necessary, you should discuss this with the food inspector in advance.

Waste and by-product storage facilities

A waste bin must be placed close to the areas in which food is handled. Containers for collecting by-products should be provided for work stations that generate by-products. For example, by-products are created when deboning meat.

By-products and waste must be removed from the food handling areas sufficiently often, at least once per day. By-products and waste must be stored in a dedicated place sufficiently separated from the establishment's other operations and foodstuffs.

Waste and by-product storage areas must be planned and managed so that they can be kept clean at all times.

Waste and by-product bins located outside must be enclosed to prevent the waste and by-products from attracting pests.

If TSE risk material is separated from meat at your cutting plant
You must ensure that the TSE risk material will not contaminate the meat at your cutting plant. TSE risk material must always be collected, handled and stored separately from foodstuffs.

TSE diseases include "mad cow disease" (bovine BSE) and sheep and goat scrapie. TSE risk material constitutes by-products of the highest risk category and must be delivered for destruction. The risk material must be dyed before delivery for disposal. This prevents the spread of TSE diseases.

Smoking areas

Smoking is only permitted in a separate, dedicated area. Smoking should be arranged so that it will not pose a risk to food hygiene. Staff who go outside for a smoke should change or cover their work uniforms.

A dedicated space for the inspector of the establishment

If requested by the inspector, you must provide him or her with at least a desk and lockable cabinet.

Summary

When planning to set up a meat establishment:

- When you are looking for premises, consider their suitability for your business in advance.
- For example, are the premises large enough to enable the hygienic placement of different functions?
- Is there a sufficient number of separate storage facilities for different foodstuffs?
- Are there enough water fixtures, sinks and floor drains?
- Do the premises have dressing and clothes storage premises for staff?
- Are the toilet facilities and plumbing appropriate?
- What is the correct way to store cleaning equipment?
- Has smoking been arranged in an appropriate manner?
- Where will the inspector's space be located?

Section 3, Operations

In this section, you will be introduced to these issues, for example:

- What must the surfaces of your establishment's workbenches and work areas be like?
- What materials are permitted in dishes, tools and food packaging?
- How will you ensure the safety of water?
- What should be taken into account when buying raw materials?
- Why do you need to know the origin of raw materials and destination of finished products?
- What information must be stated on food packages?
- What should be taken into consideration when transporting food?

Cleaning and cleanliness of surfaces and equipment

The surface materials of the facilities, utensils and appliances must be non-toxic and easy to clean. If necessary, such as in food-processing premises, the materials must be able to withstand washing with water and mechanical cleaning, such as with a brush.

Materials that do not have a smooth, water-repellent and hard surface absorb dirt and odours and cannot be kept clean in practice. Such materials are not suitable for food preparation, processing or storage facilities, in which cleanliness is particularly important.

Broken and rusty surfaces are also difficult to clean. This is why you should favour durable and rustproof materials. The condition of the surfaces must be monitored and broken surfaces repaired or replaced.

The use of wood in establishments handling meat

Avoid the use of wood as a surface material in areas where meat is handled.
Wood cannot endure frequent washing.

Do not use wooden cutting boards in establishments in which meat is handled. Plastic cutting boards should be replaced or ground smooth when grooves appear.

Wooden pallets should not be taken into meat-handling areas.

Cleaning the premises

Premises, devices and utensils used in food production must be cleaned carefully, at least at the end of each day or shift. If necessary, the premises must also be disinfected.
Cleanliness must be ensured before starting work.

Keep surfaces and utensils that come into contact with food as clean as possible during the working day.

Food-processing areas, equipment and utensils must always be cleaned in a manner that does not damage the food. This means, for example, that premises may not be washed when they contain food. If the premises contain empty food storage containers, these must be carefully covered for the duration of washing.

Only use clean cleaning equipment
Cleaning equipment must be cleaned or changed frequently enough. If this is neglected, they will spread dirt, bacteria and viruses between surfaces.

Dedicated cleaning equipment for premises in which food is prepared or processed
Food preparation and processing premises need their own cleaning equipment. The equipment may not be used to clean other premises. This prevents the spread of bacteria and viruses that cause food poisoning through the cleaning equipment. Toilet facilities also require their own cleaning equipment.

Label your cleaning equipment
It is a good idea to label cleaning equipment with its purpose and area of use. In this way, the equipment for different premises and surfaces will not get mixed up. For example, the use of different-coloured cleaning equipment for different purposes is a common method.

Do not forget the ceiling and other high surfaces
Dirt, harmful bacteria and viruses may contaminate unprotected foodstuffs and processing surfaces from many places and for many reasons.

Dirt, bacteria, and viruses may originate from, for example,

- human hands
- the air, or
- high surfaces, such as the ceiling or shelves with flaky paint or mould.

For this reason, unprotected food should not be processed in premises whose high surfaces are in poor condition.

Sufficiently effective ventilation
The ventilation in food premises must be powerful enough to prevent humidity from accumulating in the structures, leading to the growth of mould.

Mould can easily enter foodstuffs, either directly or via the processing surfaces. Dripping moisture from roof structures can contaminate food and processing surfaces.

Efficient ventilation also removes heat, which is important for the operation of refrigeration equipment.

Different activities require different kinds of ventilation. You can ask the building supervision authority for more information.

Dehumidification
Water frequently condenses on the cold surfaces and refrigeration equipment of refrigerated areas. This is called condensed water or condensation. The dripping of condensation into food must be prevented, for example with condensation basins and drainage pipes. Alternatively, the surfaces must be dried often enough to prevent water from dripping. Moisture left by washing must also be prevented from dripping into food.

Design and maintenance of ventilation equipment
Ventilation systems must be designed with easy access to filters and other parts that require cleaning or replacement.

Ventilation equipment must be kept clean and serviced on a regular basis.

Prevent the following contamination risks:

1. Design the ventilation so that the air from unclean areas will not flow into areas in which food is handled. Unclean areas include, for example, by-product and waste storage areas.
2. Also design your plumbing so that it will not cause a risk of contamination to foodstuffs. For example, the washing water from unclean areas must not flow into areas in which foodstuffs are handled.

Pests must be kept from food premises
Pests, such as rats, mice, cockroaches, flies and silverfish bring dirt, bacteria and viruses with them. It is important to prevent pests from entering premises where food is processed. The dirt, bacteria and viruses carried by pests frequently originate from outside or from the sewers. They can cause food poisoning if allowed to contaminate foodstuffs.

Materials suitable for use with food

All materials coming into contact with food must be suitable for use with food and for their intended purpose. This ensures that harmful chemicals will not migrate from the materials into the food.

In the industry, we talk about 'contact materials'. This refers to all materials that come into contact with foodstuffs, such as work surfaces, dishes, utensils, appliances and packaging materials.

How do I know whether a material is suitable for use with food?
You need to confirm the materials' suitability for use with food. In the first instance, you should ask the material, device or goods supplier for compliance documentation. Such documents include, for example, a certificate of suitability for use with food or declaration of conformity. The above-mentioned documents are normally not available for older devices, and you must ensure their suitability through other means. For metal parts, for example, it is sufficient to know the type of steel used and the device's maintenance history.

For utensils such as knives and ladles, the wine glass and fork symbol is normally sufficient proof of suitability for use with foodstuffs.

In small-scale operations that purchase their materials and supplies from a wholesaler, it is sufficient that the purpose of use of the material or article is indicated in the trade name, such as "barbeque bag", "meat wrapper" or "marinade bowl".

Wine glass and fork symnbol

What other, specific restrictions have been issued?
The use of a material can be subject to further restrictions regarding, for example, the temperature, fat content, acidity or usability period of the food. Information on such restrictions is found in the compliance documents or package markings of the article.

What will I do if a product's purpose is not indicated by its packaging or instructions?
If the purpose or conditions of use are not clear, you should always confirm the matter with the material, device or goods supplier. In this case, for example, additional information obtained by e-mail can be sufficient.

If you buy your materials/articles directly from manufacturers or importers, request them to provide compliance documents that include instructions.

Especially fat content, heat and acidity can contribute to the migrate transfer of harmful chemicals from materials to foodstuffs. For this reason, it is important to use materials according to instructions and only for the purposes for which they are intended.

Protect foodstuffs from aluminium
Do not use aluminium dishes to store acidic foods, such as a lemon marinade. Do not use aluminium dishes with steel utensils, since steel scrapes off aluminium, which then migrates into the food stored in the dish. Aluminium foil may not be used to protect steel dishes because the steel will make holes in the aluminium, leaving traces of it in the food.

Opened tins
When you have opened a metal tin, transfer the contents to another container for storage.
Why?
An opened tin will come into contact with oxygen. That can cause tin or other metals to come off into the food.

Choose appropriate disposable gloves
Vinyl plastic disposable gloves are not always suitable for the processing of fatty foods. Regular vinyl gloves, for example, are thus not suitable as general-purpose gloves for working with food. If the glove package does not indicate which foods the gloves can be used with, confirm this from the supplier.

Water source

Most establishments use water from the public utility network in their operations. The waterworks monitor the quality of public water. However, establishments that handle meat are also required to take water samples themselves.

Evira has issued recommendations on the number of samples and types of analyses. More samples are required if you use water from your own well or another water source or install water filters on taps.

Non-potable water must be kept separate from drinking water
If your establishment uses water from a source other than the public utility network for purposes such as fire-fighting, vapour production or cooling, this water must circulate in a separate, marked system.

Non-potable water must not be connected to the public utility network or be allowed to flow back into it.

Purchasing ingredients and accepting deliveries

Be prepared to check accepted raw material deliveries at the intervals specified in your own-check plan. You should keep track of the reliability of deliveries and, especially, the temperature of the cargo.

When a delivery arrives, it is extremely sensible to unload raw materials directly into cold storage and frozen products into a freezer. In this way, the cold chain will not be broken.

Also remember to ensure that the information on the products matches the information contained in the documents.

Purchasing meat for cutting
The meat used at your establishment must be inspected at a slaughterhouse or game processing facility.

You must conduct an acceptance inspection of the carcasses. In the inspection, you check that the carcasses are clean and their temperatures are as required.

As a rule, the meat must have been refrigerated before you start cutting it. The maximum temperature of poultry and rabbit meat is 4 °C. The maximum temperature of meat from other animals is 7 °C.

If the meat is transferred to a cutting plant from a slaughterhouse located in the same building, it can be cut warm. In this case, the meat must be refrigerated immediately after cutting and possible packaging, before the start of transport or further processing. The required temperatures are the same as stated above. These temperatures must also be maintained during transport.

Purchasing meat as raw material for minced meat and meat preparations
You can use entire, fresh skeletal muscles and fatty tissue connected to them to produce minced meat and meat preparations. Use of other meat, such as cutting waste, is not allowed.

If you are preparing minced meat or meat preparations from frozen or deep-frozen meat, the meat must, as a rule, have been cut before freezing or deep-freezing. However, minced poultry meat and raw poultry meat preparations must always be made from fresh meat that has not been frozen or deep-frozen.

More information on the requirements for minced meat and meat preparations can be found on our website.

Freshness requirements for the raw materials of minced meat
If you are making minced meat from refrigerated meat, you must mince

- poultry within three days of slaughter
- meat of other animals within six days of slaughter.

If you are making minced meat from deboned, vacuum-packed beef, it must be minced within 15 days of slaughter.

Acquisition of organic raw materials
If you sell or deliver organic products to your customers, you will be subject to control of organic origin in addition to regular food control. More information on control of organic origin is available via the links on our website.

Foods that are uncommon or unknown in Finland
You may want to use or produce a plant or animal product the use of which is not known in Finland. In that case, before using the product, you must find out whether or not it has been used as food in another EU Member State. If the product has not been used as food, its use may require a novel food authorisation. More information is available via the links on our website. You can also contact the municipal food inspector.

The import of food products
The import of many foodstuffs is subject to special requirements. You must determine such requirements before starting to import the products. More information is available via the links on our website.

Traceability

It must be possible to trace the origin of foodstuffs and their ingredients. Traceability means that you will need to be able to demonstrate from where ingredients and other products were purchased and where the finished products were delivered. You must also know the purchase and delivery times of ingredients and products.

Efficient tracing enables the effective limitation of issues related to food safety. For example, poor-quality ingredients or ingredients that cause food poisoning can be removed from the food chain when their origin or place of delivery is known.

The better you are able to connect the information of ingredients you have purchased and food you have delivered, the better you will be able to limit financial losses and health hazards in the event of an incident.

You must be able to demonstrate the origin of beef

There is a mandatory marking system in place for beef. The combination and distribution of each batch must be fully traceable. You must also keep records.

You will need to be able to demonstrate the origin of beef for each batch, at all stages of meat handling and production.

Country of origin of pork, poultry, mutton and goat

You must always be able to demonstrate the country of origin of pork, poultry, mutton and goat. This means being able to connect the country of origin information indicated on the package markings to the corresponding commercial documents for each batch.

Commercial documents include, for example, covering letters, delivery notes, dispatch lists, cash receipts (e.g., from a cash-and-carry shop), invoices and consignment notes.

Composition and recipe management

You must have written recipes for all products you make, stating the names and amounts of ingredients used for each product. Recipes and labelling must correspond to each other. When you change ingredients or recipes, you must update the recipes and labels accordingly. You must keep your recipes up to date.

Comply with requirements when creating recipes

When planning recipes, you need to take into account the requirements of food legislation regarding, among other things, additives, salt and other substances potentially added to your products. By calculating from the recipe and, if necessary, own-check inspections, you can make sure that you do not exceed the maximums for additives in your products, for example.

Only use additives and other food improvement agents (flavourings and enzymes) that are permitted for your products. The amounts of some food improvement agents have been limited. Further information is available from Evira's website.

Keep your recipes and labels up to date

You will need to make changes to your recipes in the event of changes to the law or composition of your product, or when changing raw material suppliers, for example. In order to be able to keep your recipes up to date and accurate, it is important to always obtain accurate, up-to-date product information or specifications from your raw material supplies.

When you make changes to recipes, make sure that the information about the changes is conveyed through all the handling and labelling phases, i.e., throughout the food chain.

Remember all of these steps:

- acquisition of raw materials
- labelling
- data systems
- consumer and customer information.

Manage your production process

Production process management includes, for example,

- following the recipe;
- the correct dosage of ingredients (such as salt and additives);
- preventing the contamination of products with foreign allergens; and
- ensuring that the right products are packaged in the right packages.

Your measures and scales can be manual or automatic. Make sure that you use them correctly.

Food information management

Labels must always include the statutory information if the products are delivered to consumers or catering customers such as restaurants.

You are responsible for the food information of food marketed under your name or company name.

Packages must contain the following information:

- name of the food
- ingredient list
- ingredients that can cause allergies or intolerances (a list is provided on the following pages) must be emphasised in the ingredient list
- the amounts of ingredients or ingredient groups when the ingredient is emphasised in the labelling
- the amount of food contained in the package
- the best before (e.g., frozen products) or use-by date and, if necessary, the freezing date of deep-frozen meat and meat preparations
- special storage and/or use conditions
- the producer's name or company name and address
- if necessary, the country of origin or place of departure
- instructions for use
- nutritional values
- a batch ID identifying the food products belonging to the same batch
- an identification mark for food of animal origin
- a high salt content marking if required
- any other markings required by special legislation

When labelling your products, make sure that:

1. The information provided on your food products are accurate and sufficient. They must not be misleading.
2. The labels are legible, noticeable and clear. The minimum size of a small x is 1.2 mm. The goal is for a person with normal eyesight to be able to read the label without effort or the use of aids, like reading a newspaper or book.
3. All the necessary markings are present on the package. The required markings include those provided for in the EU food information regulation and those required by special legislation where applicable.
4. The markings have been made in accordance with statutory requirements. For example, additives have been indicated with both their group name and the name or E code of the additive.

5. Compulsory labelling is in both Finnish and Swedish. Labels in one language are sufficient for products sold in monolingual municipalities.

These allergy- and intolerance-causing substances and products must be emphasised

- cereals containing gluten, i.e., wheat, barley, rye, oats and products made of these cereals;
- crustaceans and crustacean products;
- eggs and egg products;
- fish and fish products;
- peanuts and peanut products;
- soy beans and soy bean products; and
- milk and dairy products.
- nuts and nut products;
- celery and celery products;
- mustard and mustard products;
- sesame seeds and sesame seed products;
- sulphur dioxide and sulphite in concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/l;
- lupin and lupin products; and
- molluscs and mollusc products.

Also check that the labels and other information provided on the food correspond to the product:

- the recipes/production methods/finished products are consistent;
- the name of the food is correctly formulated;
- all ingredients used have been indicated in the ingredient list;
- compound ingredients have been correctly itemised in the ingredient list;
- ingredients that can cause allergies and intolerances have been indicated;
- the ingredients are stated in the correct order;
- the amounts of ingredients, such as meat content, are correct;
- salt content has been calculated and determined using sodium (salt = sodium × 2.5). This formula takes account of both the sodium contained naturally in the ingredients and sodium from added salt.
- the origin of the food is stated correctly; and
- the use of claims (e.g., lactose-free, gluten-free, milk-free or additive-free) is justified.

More information on food information
Examples of meat, minced meat and meat preparation labels can be found on our website.

More information on the management of food information is available in Evira's food information guide (only available in Finnish).

Food transport

If you deliver food to customers, you must make sure that its safety is not compromised during delivery.

The means of transport and containers must be clean and they must protect the food from dirt, harmful bacteria and viruses and other harmful substances.

Food must also be maintained at a safe temperature during transport. Foods requiring cold storage must be transported refrigerated and food delivered hot must be transported so that it will not cool.

Temperature limits for the transport of meat and processed meat:

- Poultry or rabbit carcasses and meat: 4 °C or below
- Other carcasses and meat: 7 °C or below
- Meat preparations: 4 °C or below
- Organs and blood: 3 °C or below
- Minced meat: 2 °C or below
- Frozen or deep-frozen meat or processed meat: -18 °C or below
- Frozen poultry meat: -12 °C or below.

Short-term deviations from these temperatures are allowed.

If the transport will take more than two hours, the vehicle must be equipped with a recording temperature management system.

Summary

When setting up a meat establishment, remember the following:

- Surfaces and utensils must be clean, intact and easy to clean.
- Make sure that materials that come into contact with foodstuffs are suitable for your purposes.
- Keep pests away from the premises.
- Each area needs its own, clean cleaning equipment.
- Monitor the reliability of raw material deliveries and the temperatures of delivered goods.
- Do not break the cold chain.
- Follow the regulations issued on the purchase of foodstuffs.
- Keep ingredients that cause allergies or intolerances separate from each other and from foodstuffs for which they are not intended.
- Ensure the traceability of food and raw materials and keep their documentation.
- Provide accurate and sufficient information on foodstuffs.
- If you transport food, maintain the correct temperature during transport.

Section 4, Staff

In this section, you will learn

- What is required from the staff?
- Who needs a hygiene passport?
- How should the state of health of employees be examined?
- What kind of protective clothing is needed?
- When and how to wash your hands?

Persons who process perishable foods professionally must have a hygiene passport and wear appropriate protective clothing. A hygiene passport is a certificate of competence for demonstrating familiarity with food hygiene.

If necessary, the employees must also be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have salmonella infection. The purpose of all these requirements is to ensure the safety of foodstuffs.

A hygiene passport

Personnel processing perishable foodstuffs must demonstrate an adequate working knowledge of food hygiene. This can be demonstrated by a hygiene passport received through a competence test or as part of a food industry degree.

The employer must ensure that all persons who process perishable foods have a hygiene passport. The hygiene passport must be obtained no later than three (3) months from the start of employment. Competence tests are organised and hygiene passports issued by competence testers approved by Evira.

Employees' state of health

If necessary, the employees must provide a health certificate or, in practice, proof that they do not carry salmonellosis. The aim is to find carriers of the salmonella infection and to prevent the spread of salmonella through food-processing personnel.

New employees require a health examination at the employer's occupational health care provider. If necessary, a salmonella test will also be taken.

Salmonella tests should also be taken immediately if there is cause to suspect a salmonella infection. For example, if the employee has been travelling abroad and manifests symptoms of a stomach disorder.

Employees with a stomach disease are not permitted to process food. In addition to salmonella, many other bacteria and viruses can also cause stomach disorders. More information on stomach disorders transmitted through food is available on the website where the link to this guide is found.

What is salmonella?
Salmonella is an intestinal bacterium that can be transmitted through contaminated food or water and causes food poisoning.

The symptoms of a salmonella infection or salmonellosis can include

- nausea;
- abdominal pain;
- diarrhoea;
- fever; and
- headache.

How does salmonella spread?
Salmonella is most commonly transmitted through raw or poorly cooked poultry or pork, or through raw milk and vegetables.

Salmonella can also spread through foodstuffs contaminated by an infected worker.

Protective clothing

Employees who process food must wear appropriate protective clothing. The purpose of protective clothing is to prevent the contamination of foods being processed. Protective clothing must be changed and washed sufficiently often.

The establishment is responsible for protective clothing
The establishment must provide appropriate protective clothing, headgear and work shoes for staff working in food production areas and for the establishment inspector. The establishment must also keep the clothing clean and in good condition.

You should also provide cut-resistant gloves and plastic aprons to employees working at a cutting plant. Cut-resistant gloves contain or are made of steel mesh.

Take into account different hygiene levels and access routes between different hygiene zones
Consider your establishment's various hygiene levels in the use of protective clothing and shoes and the access routes between different hygiene zones.

Beware of cross-contamination, i.e., bringing dirt from other parts of the establishment into 'clean areas'. Clean areas are the areas in which you handle unpackaged, perishable foodstuffs.

Covering your protective clothing when you go out
If you go outdoors, you should change out of or cover your protective clothing.
For example, you can put on an overcoat to protect your protective clothing.

Protective gloves
Employees can also wear protective gloves. Protective gloves are intended to protect food from dirt and harmful bacteria and viruses, which may spread through the hands of employees.

When must protective gloves be used?
Protective gloves must be used at least by employees with

- artificial nails;
- jewellery; or
- cuts on their hands.

Personnel who use protective gloves must change them often enough and wash their hands sufficiently often.

There are different kinds of protective gloves. You will need to select gloves appropriate for your purpose. The processing of fatty foods requires different protective gloves than processing dry food.

Use of jewellery and working with food?

- **What is the principal rule regarding the use of jewellery?**
  Employees working with food, especially ones processing non-prepacked foodstuffs, should not wear jewellery. The use of jewellery can be allowed, however, if they are covered with protective clothing.
- **Why is jewellery a risk?**
  Wearing jewellery can pose a food hygiene risk. For example, moisture and dirt can accumulate under a ring. A piece of jewellery or part thereof can break off and end up in the food.
- **Are false eyelashes permitted?**
  Use of false eyelashes is not recommended. They can be permitted if there is no possibility of them falling into the food.
- **Which piercings are forbidden?**
  The use of visible piercings is forbidden if they cannot be covered with protective clothing.
- **Why are piercings a risk?**
  Piercings break the skin and mucous membranes and pose a hygiene risk. A large number of bacteria live on the skin and mucous membranes and can be transmitted into food through the hands.
- **Are piercings permitted on the inside of the mouth?**
  Piercings inside the mouth can be permitted.

Washing hands

Hands have their own natural bacteria and can pick up bacteria from dirty surfaces. Some bacteria are harmless, but others may cause food poisoning.

For the prevention of food poisoning, it is essential to wash the hands sufficiently often when processing foodstuffs.

Wash your hands carefully:

1. always before starting work;
2. during work if necessary;
3. between work stages, for example if you have to clean clotted blood, abscesses or other altered or dirty parts of the carcass;
4. after visiting the bathroom;
5. after smoking; and
6. after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

A cut on your hand? Follow this procedure:

1. Protect the wound with, for example, a plaster.
2. Wear protective gloves.

When you use protective gloves, you prevent the spread of bacteria from the wound to unpackaged food.

Summary

- Those processing food must be able to demonstrate the ability to process it hygienically. This is demonstrated with a hygiene passport.
- Personnel who process food must provide a health certificate at the start of employment and whenever necessary thereafter. The certificate demonstrates that the employee does not carry salmonella or other infectious diseases.
- Employees who process food must wear protective clothing.
- At establishments in which meat is handled, protective clothing includes at least an appropriate uniform, headgear and work shoes.
- Protective gloves are used if necessary.
- Follow the instructions on hand-washing.

Section 5, Own-check plan

In this section, you will be introduced to the own-check plan.

- What is it and why is it necessary?
- How is it drawn up?
- What do you need to take into account in the plan?
- How is its implementation monitored?

You must draw up an own-check plan before starting operations. The purpose of the own-check plan is to help you describe your operations and manage the food hygiene risks associated with them.

What is the own-check system and what is it needed for?

As an operator in the food industry, you are responsible for the safety of your food. In addition, you must ensure that accurate and sufficient information is provided on your food.

In practice, you will ensure this through own-check activities. The own-check system is your own system. In it, you plan in advance how to manage the risks posed by your operations and how to correct any mistakes if necessary.

Through own-check activities, you can ensure, for example, that the storage and cooling temperatures and times of foodstuffs are in order. In addition, you can ensure that food is processed hygienically at every stage.

You can also use own-check activities to guarantee allergen safety and that the composition of your food products is compliant with requirements.

Other things ensured through own-check activities include, for example,

- the condition and cleanliness of premises and equipment;
- the correspondence of recipes with food information; and
- sufficient competence in food hygiene among your staff.

Make sure that your own-check activities are effective:

1. before starting any operations;
2. at least once a year; and
3. whenever your operations change.

Own-check activities are mandatory, but a well-designed own-check system will also provide direct benefits to you:

- It reduces the likelihood of food poisoning.
- It helps keep customers happy.

- It reduces the need for costly official supervision.
- It will reduce waste and errors.

What must the own-check plan include?

The own-check plan covers all work stages essential to food safety. You must also indicate how and through what measures you will manage risks.

Work stages essential to food safety can include:

- the purchase and acceptance of meat and other raw materials
- storage
- refrigeration
- cutting of meat
- mincing of meat before refrigeration
- ingredient dosage.

Terms related to own-check system

Hazard analysis
A hazard analysis identifies all possible hazards to food safety at the different stages of production.

Such hazards can include, for example, the reproduction of pathogenic bacteria in the raw materials or products, chemical traces and foreign objects. In the hazard analysis, you will also consider how to manage these hazards in your operations.

Support system
The own-check support system refers to the methods that are bottom line requirements for safe food production. These include, for example, hygienic work methods, ambient temperature management and pest control.

Critical control point
A critical control point is a work stage that is of material importance for the prevention or elimination of a food safety hazard or lowering the hazard to an acceptable level. In production of meat products, for example, the sufficient heating of the products in order to kill bacteria can be a critical control point.

The HACCP system
The HACCP system is adopted when you decide to manage hazards with critical control points. The HACCP system has its own requirements, more stringent than those applied to your other own-check activities.

What constitutes sufficient hazard management according to Evira?
If you own a cutting plant or minced meat or meat preparation production facility, you can, in Evira's opinion, use a support system to manage the risks of your operations. In other words, it is Evira's view that you do not require critical control points and an HACCP system in such establishments.

Once you have analysed the hazards, however, you must decide for yourself whether you will need to implement critical control points and the HACCP system. More detailed information on these is available on Evira's website.

How to identify and manage hazards?
Hazards include everything that can cause persons eating the food a risk of falling ill or being harmed by the food. Once you have identified the hazards, you can consider methods and measures for their management. You **always** need to make a separate hazard analysis for each work stage, i.e., evaluate the risks and hazards entailed by each work stage.

Microbiological sampling is part of your own-check activities
You are required to take regular microbiological samples from both the food you produce and the surfaces and equipment coming into contact with it.

By taking samples, you can make sure that the quality and safety of your food and production hygiene at your establishment are at an acceptable level. The samples are inspected for, for example, total bacteria, enterobacteria, salmonella and the *E. coli* bacterium.

Send the samples to a laboratory for analysis. You can analyse surface cleanliness samples, which indicate the general level of cleanliness, yourself.

When you have drawn up the own-check plan:

- Keep the own-check plan up to date.
- Update the own-check plan after significant changes in your operations.

The own-check plan may be drawn up partially or entirely in electronic format.

Where can I get help drawing up the own-check plan?
Contact your municipal food control authority or advisory organisations. You can ask them for more detailed instructions for drawing up the own-check plan or templates.

What do you need to take into account in the own-check plan?

The contents of the own-check plan are always dependent on the extent and nature of operations. The most challenging preparation methods in terms of food hygiene require a more detailed description in the own-check plan.

In some cases, the plans can be very simple, such as work instructions. In such cases, it is not always necessary to present the plans in written format.

In companies with one or two employees, for example, all parts of the own-check plan do not need to be drawn up in writing. It will suffice if you can describe your procedures verbally.

You can sign an agreement with another company for parts of the own-check plan
Some sections of the own-check plan, such as “Pest Control”, can be managed through an agreement with another company. Even in such cases, however, the responsibility for compliance with the law remains with you.

Lightening/reducing own-check activities
In some cases, own-check activities can be lightened/reduced. Examples:

- The temperatures of the supplier’s products have consistently complied with regulations. In this case, you can decide to measure the temperature of this supplier’s products less frequently.
- The results of surface cleanliness samples have been good for a long time. In this case, you can reduce the sampling frequency.

How will the realisation of the own-check plan be monitored?

The implementation of own-check activities should be monitored and recorded.

In some cases, it may be to your benefit if you can demonstrate through own-check records that you have acted correctly. Such situations include, for example, suspected cases of food poisoning and customer complaints.
You will be able to demonstrate that the products have been prepared and stored in compliance with requirements.

In your own-check plan, you will specify the frequency of recording the various aspects. For some parts, it can be quite sufficient to only record deviations and the measures taken to correct the situations.

Examples of record-keeping
You must check every day that, for example, the facilities and surfaces are clean.
For cleanliness inspection records, it may suffice to record any observations of dirty surfaces and their washing.

You must regularly monitor and record the temperatures of food and its storage facilities.

Own-check records must be archived
You must archive the records of your own-check activities so that the inspector can inspect them. The records may be kept entirely or partially on a computer, or you can note the records down on paper.

The records must be stored for at least two years from the date of handling the food.

Records must be kept for longer than two years if the product has a long period of minimum durability. In that case, you must keep records of own-check activities for at least one year from the product's use-by or best before date.

Responsibilities

Employees must be familiar with the instructions and methods related to their own tasks and with an impact on food safety. These instructions and methods must also be complied with. Every employee is responsible for the safety of food.

You must appoint a person responsible for the own-check system. The person must have the knowledge and skills required by the task. This person must be familiar with the operations of your business and with the own-check system.

The own-check plan and the authorities
The inspector will assess whether your own-check system is functional and well implemented and notify you of any shortcomings if necessary. The inspector will conduct inspections and take samples.

You must ensure that the inspector will be able to inspect the own-check plan and your own-check records in connection with the inspection. If this is not possible in connection with the inspection, the inspector must be able to check the own-check plan and records within a reasonable time after the inspection.

More information on official supervision is available via the links on our website.

Summary

- You are responsible for the safety of food that you produce and sell.
- You are also responsible for ensuring that customers receive accurate information about your products, such as with regard to ingredients that can cause allergies.
- The own-check system is a way of ensuring the safety of food.
- In the own-check plan, you will consider and plan in advance how to manage the risks in your operations and correct any mistakes.
- The inspectors will also monitor the functioning and implementation of your own-check system.

5.1. Contents of the own-check plan

Observe these minimum considerations that need to be taken into account in the own-check plan.

Operation, products and product groups
Record the basic details of your operations in the own-check plan, for example,

- which species of meat do you cut and
- what products you prepare.

Access and transport routes
Plan the access routes of your staff.
Also plan the transport routes:

- for raw materials;
- for products;
- for packaging materials; and
- for by-products and waste.

Mark the access and transport routes on the floor plan.

Also plan the transport schedules.
Do all of this in a manner that does not compromise food safety.

Monitoring the health of employees
At the start of employment and whenever required after that, you need to ensure that employees who process food are free of salmonella infection. The necessity of a test is determined on a case-by-case basis for each employee.

The own-check plan must specify how records of tested personnel are kept and where those records are stored.

The actual health information of the personnel does not have to be stored at the workplace. The information can be managed by, for example, the occupational health care provider.

Orientation, guidance and training
Employees require orientation in subjects such as work hygiene and the requirements for protective clothing and own-check activities.

Plan the following:

- How to introduce employees to hygienic working methods and own-check activities?
- How to record orientation and training?
- Who will be in charge of orientation?
- What kind of protective clothing will the employees wear?
- Where will the protective clothing be stored and how will it be washed?

Ensuring the hygiene competence of personnel
The employer must ensure that personnel who process unpackaged, perishable food hold hygiene passports.

How and where are records kept of hygiene passports?
The records can consist of:

- copies of the hygiene passports; or
- a list of persons who have presented original hygiene passports.

In small businesses, it can suffice for the employees to present their original hygiene passports to the inspector.

Purchasing raw materials
Plan how you will handle the purchase of raw materials subject to special restrictions.
The purchase of such raw materials should be addressed in the own-check plan.

Acceptance inspections of raw materials
Plan the following:

- How often will you conduct acceptance inspections?
- How will you monitor the temperatures of refrigerated and frozen deliveries? They should be monitored.

Any special arrangements for the use of facilities
Separation in time means that different operations are performed in the same area, but at different times.
The premises must be washed carefully between different operations.

Make plans for the careful management of separation in time and washing the facilities and appliances.

Separation
Where necessary, ensure the separation of different foodstuffs or raw materials.

Plan how to avoid contamination when purchasing, accepting, marking, storing and handling foodstuffs and raw materials.

Examples of separation planning

- How can you avoid contaminating ready-to-eat foods with raw foodstuffs?
- How will you keep substances and products that can cause allergies and intolerances separate from each other and from food for which they are not intended?

A list of substances and products that can cause allergies and intolerances is available in the section ”Operations”, under the subject heading ”Food information management”.
More examples on separation are available on our website.

Also take into account the order of work and cleanliness of premises, appliances and utensils.

Plan the following:

- Will the production area have dedicated work stations and tools for foodstuffs that must be separated completely; or
  Will you use the same utensils and work stations and clean them between different applications?
- Will you also prevent contamination through the division of duties and work instructions?

The possible cutting of carcasses before receiving the results of the trichinella test
(If you have a meat cutting plant operating in connection with a slaughterhouse):
You can cut carcasses before the results of the trichinella test are in, provided that the supervisory authority approves the procedure.

Plan and record in your own-check plan how you will mark and separate such carcasses and parts from other meat until you receive the test results. Also describe the measures for tracing and rejecting any meat and other carcass parts found to test positive and unfit for use in the trichinella test.

Records of cutting meat upon which the inspecting veterinarian has imposed conditions for its handling
(If you have a meat cutting plant operating in connection with a slaughterhouse):
Plan and record in your own-check plan how you will keep records of cutting meat upon which the inspecting veterinarian has imposed conditions for its handling.

Freshness requirements for the raw materials of minced meat
Describe in your own-check plan, how you will make sure that the raw materials for minced meat comply with the freshness requirements.

More detailed information on the freshness requirements for minced meat is available in the section ”Operations”.

Refrigeration and storage of minced meat and meat preparations
Describe in the own-check plan how you will make sure that minced meat and meat preparations are refrigerated and stored at appropriate temperatures.

More detailed information on temperatures is available in the section ”Premises”.

Composition and recipe management
Plan how to ensure that your recipes and product compositions are correct and in compliance with legislation.

For instance, make sure that

- you are only using additives permitted for your product;
- your doses are correct;
- your recipes are kept up to date;
- you obtain sufficient and up-to-date information from your raw material suppliers;
- information on recipe changes is conveyed through all handling and labelling stages;
- the correct amount of food is packaged; and
- the right products are packaged in the right packages.

Temperature management
Plan the following:

- How will you monitor the temperatures of food and its storage facilities?
- What will you do in the event of problems with temperature management?
- From where will you measure the temperatures?
- How often will you take the measurements?
- How often will you record the results?
- What will you do if the temperature is not within the limits specified by law?

At a minimum, confirm the temperatures during these work stages

- When accepting food deliveries
- When handling meat
- During refrigeration
- During cold storage

Traceability
How will you demonstrate the traceability of food and its ingredients?

- from where and when was it acquired; and
- to where and when was it delivered?

How will you ensure that the special requirements regarding beef, pork, poultry, mutton and goat meat are complied with?

How will traceability information, such as delivery lists and purchase receipts, be stored?

Remember that the traceability requirement also applies to the materials and equipment, such as dishes, utensils and packaging materials used at your establishment.

Food information management
In your own-check plan, you should plan how you will ensure that

- the labelling and other food information is in compliance with legislation, i.e., your products are correctly labelled; and
- the markings and information on your products correspond to your actual recipes.

Withdrawals
Withdrawal means that, if it is discovered that a food product does not comply with the requirements for the safety of foodstuffs, the product shall be withdrawn from the market.

Your own-check plan must include a plan for action in case of a withdrawal:

1. Preventing the entry of defective product batches to the market.
2. Withdrawing delivered product batches from the market.
3. Preventing withdrawn batches from being mixed with other raw material or product batches.
4. Act according to Evira's withdrawal instructions and contact the establishment's inspector.

Suspected cases of food poisoning
If customers complain that they have contracted food poisoning from food produced by you, you must notify the local food control authority of the complaints.

Record the contact information of the food inspector in the own-check plan.

Management of packaging and contact materials
Plan the following:

- From where will you acquire your materials?
- How will you confirm the materials' suitability for use with food?
- How will you make sure that the materials will be used according to their instructions?
- Where will you store certificates of suitability for use with food or declarations of compliance?
- How will you ensure the traceability of packaging and contact materials?

Cleaning of premises and appliances
Plan the following:

- How will you ensure the cleanliness of premises, appliances and utensils?
- How often will each area, appliance or utensil be cleaned?
- Who will be responsible for it?
- What tools and materials will be used for cleaning?
- Where will the cleaning equipment be stored?

If the cleaning is handled by an external company, ask it to provide this information.

Disinfection of tools
Cutting plant employees must have the opportunity to disinfect their tools. This is important in areas such as the carcass acceptance inspection point, where employees may have to remove spoiled parts of carcasses.

Make plans for monitoring that

- the temperature of tool disinfection water is at least 82 °C; or
- if you are using a different, equivalent system, state how you will monitor its functioning.

Sampling plan
You are required to take regular microbiological samples from both the food you produce and the surfaces and equipment coming into contact with it.

Plan and record

- how often and from where you will take samples and what analyses will be performed on them; and
- in which laboratory the samples will be analysed.

Additional information on the sampling frequency and sample amounts is available via the links on our website (microbe criteria regulation application instructions for operators).

Shelf-life tests
The shelf lives of products or product groups can be determined with shelf-life tests. The results of these tests indicate the use-by dates or best before dates of your products.

Make plans for conducting shelf-life tests in your own-check plan.

Water quality
You are required to take regular microbiological samples from the water you use. Plan and record how often and from where you will take samples, what analyses will be performed on the samples and which laboratory will conduct the analyses.

Maintenance of premises and appliances
Plan the following:

- How will you take care of the functionality and maintenance of premises, appliances and utensils?
- Who will be responsible for it?
- What scheduled maintenance or inspections will be performed?
- What will you do in case of problems?

Foreign object risk management
Plan the following:

- What kind of light bulbs will you choose for the facility? Will you choose lamps and bulbs that will not spoil the food if they break?
- What will you do if a glass container breaks during food processing?
- How will you prevent humidity and the flaking of paint in order to avoid flakes of paint ending up in the food?

Pest control
Plan the following:

- How will you prevent pests such as rats, birds and cockroaches from entering the premises?
- What will you do if pests do find their way into the premises?

By-products
You must ensure that by-products are treated, stored and disposed of in accordance with regulations. By-products must not cause a risk to food hygiene.

Plan and record the following in your own-check plan:

- What category of by-products will your establishment generate and how much?
- How will you mark them?
- How will you keep them separated from food?
- Where will you deliver the by-products and how?

If your cutting plant handles TSE risk material:

- How will you separate, store and dye the material?
- Where will you send the risk material for further processing?
- In your assessment, how much TSE risk material will you generate in a year?

TSE risk material is discussed in greater detail in the “Setting up” section of this guide.

Waste management
Append the following reports to your own-check plan:

- How will you handle waste?
- Where will you collect different types of waste?
- How often will you empty and wash the bins?
- Who will be responsible for it?

Transport
If you transport food yourself, plan the following:

- How will you ensure the safety of foodstuffs during transport?
- What means of transport will be used?

- How will the food be packaged for transport?
- How long will the deliveries take?
- How will temperatures be managed during transport?
- How will you ensure the functioning of the recording temperature management system for transport taking more than two hours?
- What will you do in case of problems?

If another company is responsible for your deliveries, the above-mentioned points can be addressed in that company's own-check plan.

Organic products and import

If your selection includes organic products, your own-check activities will entail special requirements with regard to organic production.

If you import animal products such as meat or cheese, it will entail special requirements on your own-check activities.

Section 6, Terminology

Some words have been underlined in the text.
These words have been explained in this section.
Terms are listed in alphabetical order.

Accessibility
Accessibility means that people with disabilities and other people with mobility difficulties have equal access to buildings, premises and services. Such people must also be able to function and receive services equally to others.

Additives
Food additives are substances that are not usually consumed as actual food. They are added to foodstuffs for reasons such as guaranteeing the shelf-life of the product or modifying its colour. The use of additives must comply with the requirements of EU legislation.

Allergen
An allergen causes an allergic reaction. Allergens include, for example, pollen, mould spores, pharmaceutical substances (such as penicillin), foodstuffs (such as peanuts, fish, egg whites and milk).
Almost any food can cause an allergic reaction.

Allergy
In food allergies, an ingredient of the food causes an allergic reaction. This can manifest as a rash, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, itching of the mucous membranes of the mouth and throat, swelling of the pharynx or nasal discharge. In severe cases, the allergy may be life-threatening and requires immediate treatment.

The most common allergies in children are to milk, cereals, nuts/seeds, eggs and fish.

In adults, the symptoms are often caused by intolerance of certain root vegetables, fruits and spices. Typical causes of food allergies in adults also include nuts and fish. Any food can cause an allergic reaction if the person has become oversensitive to the food or one of its ingredients.

Application for approval
You can only begin operating after obtaining approval from the authorities. As a rule, approval is applied for in writing.

You must describe the nature of your planned operations in the application for approval. In addition, you will need to describe your production facilities.

When your facility is compliant with the statutory requirements, the authority will approve it. You will receive a written decision on the matter.

Bacteria
Bacteria are small organisms or microbes. Some bacteria are harmful to humans, while others are useful. Bacteria are present almost everywhere: in waters, in the soil, on people's skin and in the intestinal tract. Some bacteria are unpleasant or even dangerous, since they cause diseases.

Bajamaja
A Bajamaja is a portable chemical toilet suitable for outdoor use.

Best before date
See "Date of minimum durability".

Building permit
All new buildings and major renovation projects require a permit.
This permit is called a building permit. In the first instance, the permit is applied for through the electronic permit service, but can also be applied for in writing from the building supervision authority of the municipality in which the building is located.

Building supervision authority
Municipal building supervision authorities grant building and minor construction permits and have a role in the supervision of construction work. They also provide assistance and guidance for building and repairs. Every municipality has a building supervision authority.

By-products
By-products refer to whole animal carcasses, carcass parts and other animal products that are not intended or fit for human consumption.

The by-products of establishments in which meat is handled can include, for example, carcasses or parts in which pathogenic bacteria have been

detected. For this reason, they will not be used as foodstuffs. By-products also include products that have fallen to the floor during processing. The use of such products is not permitted.

By-products are divided into three categories according to the severity of the risk they pose to human and animal health. They must be collected, stored and labelled in a manner that ensures they will not come into contact with foodstuffs.

More information on the requirements concerning by-products can be found via the links on the web page of this course.

Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment
The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment are responsible for the regional implementation and development tasks of the central government in Finland. There are 15 Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, and they are referred to with the abbreviation ELY Centre. More information about your local ELY Centre is available at the address **www.ely-keskus.fi/en/web/ely-en**.

Cold chain
The cold chain means keeping the temperature of food sufficiently low for the entire duration of transport from the place of production, **t**hrough the point of sale all the way to the consumer's refrigerator. An unbroken cold chain is one of the most important factors in safe food production and self-monitoring checks.

Colostrum
When a cow has given birth to a calf, it will produce colostrum for a few days. Colostrum is usually sold frozen since it is highly perishable.

Compliance documents (of contact materials), declarations of compliance
These are documents that indicate the purpose of use for which materials and articles are suitable and which statutory requirements they comply with.

Compound ingredients
Compound ingredients refer to food products used in the manufacture of other foodstuffs. A compound ingredient consists of more than one ingredient. For example, a chicken fillet roll containing the following compound ingredients: garlic cream cheese and herb pesto.

Contaminate, contamination
Food is contaminated when it contains a substance harmful to humans or a cause of food poisoning or spoilage. Contamination can take place directly from one food or ingredient to another. It can take place through dirty utensils and surfaces, the air or the hands of employees.

Vegetables can be contaminated during cultivation by coming into contact with contaminated irrigation water. Airborne contamination as a result of coughing or sneezing is also possible.

Date of minimum durability
The date of minimum durability or best before date refers to the date until which the food, properly stored, retains its typical characteristics, such as taste or colour. Products can be sold or used even after this date, provided that its quality has not deteriorated materially.

Declarations of compliance
See “Compliance documents”.

Deep-freezing
Deep-freezing refers to the preservation of food products by freezing them as quickly as possible. Food is usually deep-frozen with an appliance specifically designed for the purpose. As a rule, food products cannot be deep-frozen with other, less powerful equipment, such as household freezers or other devices intended for the storage of frozen food.

Deep-freezing stops or significantly slows the the growth of micro-organisms that spoil food. After deep-freezing, all parts of the product must be maintained at a temperature of -18 °C or lower.

Deviation
A deviation can be, for example, an overly high temperature in a refrigeration appliance. Through your own-check activities, you can ensure that you will notice deviations and can rectify the situation. This may mean, for example, fixing the refrigeration appliance and disposing of the foodstuffs if the deviation has lasted for a long time.

Disinfectants
Disinfectants are used to kill microbes, clean surfaces and both human and animal hygiene.

Food companies use disinfectants for purposes such as cleaning facilities and equipment after they have been washed with detergent. In addition, disinfectants are used to clean the hands after washing them with soap.

***E. coli* bacteria**
Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) is a bacterium found in the gastrointestinal tracts of humans and animals. It can be transmitted to food from an employee’s unwashed hands, for example. Some *E. coli* bacteria can cause food poisoning in humans. One such pathogen is the EHEC bacterium, which causes bloody diarrhoea. In children and the elderly, infection can lead to particularly serious consequences, such as renal failure.

Enterobacteria
Some enterobacteria cause intestinal diseases. Enterobacteria include, for example, salmonella, *E. coli* and yersinia. Enterobacteria assays performed in a laboratory can be used to evaluate hygiene.

Evira
The Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira plans, directs, develops and carries out food control at the national level. The goal of Evira's operations is to ensure the safety and quality of foodstuffs and the health of plants and animals through research and control.

Final (decision, permit)
A decision made by an authority is final when the deadline specified in the decision for submitting an appeal or complaint has passed.

Final inspection
The final inspection checks whether the building corresponds to its building permit and that it has been built in accordance with the law. A record will be made of the final inspection. The final inspection must be requested while the building permit is still valid.

Food control authority, food inspector, supervisory authority
The municipal food inspector can be a veterinarian, a health inspector or other municipal food inspector. Food inspectors work for food control authorities, which can include, for example, environmental centres.

The purpose of food control is to ensure the safety of food and ensure that it has been labelled with the correct information.

The majority of food control is performed by the municipalities. Smaller municipalities have organised their food supervision jointly through dedicated co-management areas. Evira is responsible for the monitoring of slaughterhouses and facilities connected to them and for meat inspections.

Food group
Food can be divided into groups based on its characteristics. Food groups include, for example, raw meat and raw meat products, raw fish and raw fish products, dry bakery goods and ready-to-eat foods. The segregation of different food groups is important in order to ensure that, for example, bacteria that cause food poisoning or allergens are not transmitted to the food.

Food hygiene
Food hygiene refers to all measures intended to ensure the safety, healthiness and purity of foodstuffs from primary production to consumption, in other words, from the field to the table.

Food improvement agents
Food improvement agents refer to additives, flavourings and enzymes used in food products.

Additives and enzymes can be added to food to to improve its shelf-life or structure, among other things. Flavourings can also be used to improve or change the smell and taste of food.

The use of food improvement agents must comply with the requirements set for additives, flavourings and enzymes in EU legislation.

Food information regulation
The food information regulation refers to the regulation of the European Union on the provision of food information to consumers. The food information regulation specifies the consumer information that must be stated on the food's packaging or otherwise conveyed to the consumer.

The official title of the regulation is Regulation (EU) NO 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Food inspector
See "Food control authority".

Food poisoning
Food poisoning is a condition contracted from drinking water or food. What is normally called food poisoning is an intestinal infection contracted from food. Typical symptoms include diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and stomach ache.

In the worst case, food poisoning can lead to death.

Foreign object risk
Foreign object risk refers to the risk of objects or materials, such as glass, metal or jewellery worn by employees, being left in the food.

Freezing
Freezing refers to a less powerful freezing method than deep-freezing, such as one taking a considerably longer time.

Health examination, salmonella examination
If necessary, the employees must be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have salmonella infection.

A new employee's health must therefore be examined at the start of employment. If necessary, a Salmonella test will also be taken.

HPAC drawings
The HPAC drawings indicate the types of heating, plumbing and ventilation systems used on the premises.

Hygiene
Hygiene refers to the promotion and maintenance of health. In food companies, good hygiene ensures that disease-causing microbes, dangerous chemicals or other factors that can cause diseases do not end up in food. Good hygiene includes, for example, washing one's hands and surfaces.

Hygiene levels and areas
Hygiene levels and areas are determined by the work hygiene and cleanliness required by the tasks performed on the premises.

Examples of hygiene levels at establishments in which meat is handled:

- High-hygiene premises and areas
  - Processing areas of ready-to-eat food such as premises on which minced meat for steak tartare is prepared or ham is sliced.
- Hygienic premises and areas
  - Processing areas of unprotected ingredients, such as a cutting plant or meat preparation area.
- Hygienically neutral premises and areas,
  - for example, storage facilities and the dispatch centre for packaged products.
- Unhygienic areas
  - For example, waste-disposal rooms and by-product storage areas.

Hygiene passport
The hygiene passport is a certificate of competence. It proves that you know how to process food hygienically. You will need a hygiene passport if you process perishable, unpackaged foodstuffs in, for example, cafés, restaurants, institutional kitchens, food shops or bakeries.

Intolerance (food intolerance or food hypersensitivity)
Food hypersensitivity that does not fulfil the criteria of an allergy is called food intolerance. Lactose intolerance, for example, is caused by the inability of the body to digest milk sugar, i.e., lactose.

In coeliac disease, on the other hand, a protein contained in rye and barley, gluten, causes an inflammatory reaction in the mucous membrane of the small intestine, which interferes with the absorption of nutrients.

Meat preparations
Meat preparations refer to meat or minced meat to which, for example, salt, additives or spices have been added. Meat preparations are normally intended to be cooked before consumption.

Meat products
Meat products refer to, for example, cooked or dried foods with meat or organs as an essential ingredient. Meat products include sausages, cold cuts, ready-to-eat meatballs and dry-cured ham.

Mechanically separated meat
Mechanically separated meat refers to meat separated from bone with a mechanical squeezing process. This separation is performed after the carcass has been stripped of all meat that can be cut with a knife. Mechanically separated meat is used to supplement other meat in the production of sausages and meatballs, among other things.

Microbes
Microbes refer to micro-organisms that are not visible to the naked eye. Microbes include bacteria, viruses, fungi or moulds, yeast, along with parasites or protozoa, tapeworms and nematodes. The growths caused by moulds and yeast on the surface of food can, however, be seen with the naked eye.

Microbes in food can cause the food to spoil or can cause food poisoning in humans.

Microbiological samples and analyses
Laboratory tests for ensuring the quality, safety and shelf-life of food or ingredients.

Microbiological purity
A surface is microbiologically pure if it does not contain microbes. A surface that appears clean to the eye is not necessarily microbiologically pure. For this reason, food companies, for example, use disinfectants in addition to detergent. Disinfectants kill microbes. Microbiological purity is tested with tests specifically designed for this purpose.

Mould
Mould creates growths on the surface of food, spoiling it. Mould can be seen with the naked eye. Mouldy food must not be used. Do not eat or use, for example, bread if mould can be seen on its surface.

Novel food authorisation
A novel food authorisation is required if the product or ingredient has not been used as a foodstuff in the EU before May 1997. The authorisation is applied for from the European Commission. The application must include an account of the new food product's or ingredient's safety.

Organic products
Organic production generates products without causing harm to the environment or the health and well-being of humans, plants or animals.

In the production of organic food, the permitted additives and processing agents have been limited to the absolutely necessary. For example, artificial dyes and sweeteners are not allowed.

Own-check plan
The own-check plan is a document in which are recorded the measurements taken by food entrepreneurs themselves to control the safety and quality of food products.

Period of minimum durability
See "Date of minimum durability".

Perishable foods/foodstuffs
Perishable foodstuffs refers to food in which bacteria that spoil the food or cause food poisoning can grow rapidly if the food is not stored at/in the correct temperature and conditions. For example, meat, fish, grated carrots and raw sausages are perishable foodstuffs.

Non-perishable foodstuffs can keep for a long time at room temperature and dry conditions. These include, for example, nuts, spices and flour.

Pests
Pests include rats, mice, cockroaches, flies and silverfish.
Pests can spread diseases and spoil or soil foods or their packaging.

Process, processing
Processing food can consist of chopping, flavouring or cooking it.
Processing food in a food company requires a hygiene passport and health certificate.

Serving prepared food or moving packaged food from one place to another does not constitute processing that would require a hygiene passport or health certificate.

Raw milk
Raw milk is the milk of domestic animals which has not been heated to over 40 degrees Centigrade or processed in any other way. Nothing has been taken away from or added to raw milk.

Raw milk is also known as farm milk.

Regional State Administrative Agency
Regional State Administrative Agencies carry out executive, steering and enforcement tasks laid down in Finnish law. There are six Regional State Administrative Agencies. In addition, Åland has its own agency. Regional State Administrative Agencies are referred to with the abbreviation AVI. You can find more information and your area's Regional State Administrative Agency at the address **www.avi.fi/en/web/avi-en**.

Salmonella
Salmonella is an intestinal bacteria that can be transmitted through contaminated food or water and causes food poisoning.

The symptoms of a salmonella infection or salmonellosis can include

- nausea
- abdominal pain
- diarrhoea
- fever and
- headache.

Salmonella infections may also cause permanent damage, such as severe joint pain. In addition, salmonella can cause serious conditions, such as blood poisoning.

Salmonella is most commonly transmitted through raw or poorly cooked poultry or pork, or through raw milk and raw vegetables. Salmonella can also spread through foodstuffs contaminated by an infected worker.

Salmonellosis
Salmonellosis is the name of the disease caused by the salmonella bacteria. Salmonellosis most commonly affects the digestive tract, manifesting as diarrhoea.

Separation in time
Separation in time means that different food groups are processed on the same work surfaces or with the same tools, but at different times. Temporal segregation requires the surfaces and tools to be carefully cleaned between different applications.

For example, handling unwashed root vegetables and gutting fish must be temporally segregated from other processing, if they cannot be processed on dedicated surfaces with dedicated tools. Ingredients that cause allergies and intolerance reactions can also be temporally separated from each other and foods for which they are not intended.

Supervisory authority
See “Food control authority”.

Surface cleanliness samples
Surface cleanliness samples are taken for example from work surfaces. These samples are used for monitoring the microbiological purity of surfaces.

Total bacteria (i.e., aerobic microorganisms)
Total bacteria refers to the amount of bacteria found in foodstuffs or on surfaces or equipment coming into contact with foodstuffs. The total bacteria count only contains bacteria that reproduce in an oxygenated environment.

As a rule, the total bacteria count increases if food is stored for a long time, or if the food is stored at the wrong temperature. The total bacteria count can include both bacteria that spoil food and bacteria that that cause food poisoning in humans.

Traceability
Traceability means that you will need to be able to demonstrate the place of purchase of ingredients and other products. Similarly, you must know where the finished products have been delivered.

Trichinella
Trichinella worms are small nematodes that live in the muscles of the host animal, such as a pig. Humans can also be infected with trichinosis if they eat the meat of an infected animal. Slaughterhouses examine all pig and horse carcasses for trichinella worms. Some game species are also inspected, for example, bear, lynx, wild boar and seal.

Use-by date or expiration date
Instead of the date of minimum durability, the packaging of microbiologically perishable food products must indicate an expiration date. This refers to the date until which the foodstuff is safe to use, provided that it has been stored appropriately.

A foodstuff may not be sold after its expiration date or used in the manufacture of foodstuffs for sale or service.

Viruses
Viruses are small particles which cause infections in, for example, the respiratory or digestive tract. Viruses can cause colds, cough, diarrhoea or vomiting.

Viruses can infect humans through food, for example, or via surfaces touched by humans.

Wholesaler
Wholesalers sell goods in large quantities. They sell their products and services to shops, restaurants and other companies.

Wine glass and fork symbol
Packaging or utensils bearing the wine glass and fork symbol are made of material suitable for use with foodstuffs. The wine glass and fork symbol indicates that the product fulfils the requirements set for items and materials that come into contact with foodstuffs.

Withdrawal
If it is discovered that a food product does not comply with the requirements for the safety of foodstuffs, the product shall be withdrawn from the market. This is called withdrawal.

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