

### How long do I keep records?

There is currently no prescribed period for which your traceability records must be maintained. However, it is advisable to keep records for as long as the food is in circulation and for a further three months.

### Notification of Unsafe Foods

If you have reason to believe that any food you have dealt with might be unsafe and the food has left your control, that food must be withdrawn from the market. You must also notify the District Council and the Food Standards Agency. The withdrawal and notification must be done as soon as possible to minimise the potential public health risk. Where unsafe products have reached the consumer they must be informed of the reason for the withdrawal - any products already supplied must be recalled.

In order to satisfy the requirement to recall unsafe foods you should draw up an action plan or recall procedure.



**Traceability of food**  
...the legal requirements for traceability and unsafe food for food businesses

**For further information contact:**  
**Food Standards Agency**  
028 904 17700



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## Under The General Food Regulations 2004 all food businesses are required to

### implement basic traceability systems.

Traceability is a joined-up record keeping system which brings together information collected at key stages in the production and supply process.

All food businesses are required to:

- identify the suppliers of all ingredients which are incorporated into their food
- identify the businesses to which products have been supplied
- identify the nature of the products, the date of transaction and the volume or quantity
- maintain appropriate records and ensure that this information is made available to the District Council

This is known as one step forward one step back.

### Why have a traceability system?

- to provide information within your business to assist in process control and management - stock control, material usage and quality control
- to help when problems arise - traceability systems are important to support effective withdrawal of products
- to help support labelling claims about your product and provide information to consumers
- legislation requires you have a system

## What records do I need to keep?

You need a system that enables food to be traced one step forward and one step back until the point of being sold to the final consumer. If you are only supplying direct to the final consumer, you are not required to keep records going forward - but do need to keep them for products or ingredients which come into your premises.

It is for food business operators to decide how they keep and pass on their traceability information.

Traceability can be demonstrated via receipts or commercial documents providing the information contained in the table below is included.

One step back - details of food you receive into the business			
<b>Products of plant origin/composite products</b> (products which combine products of animal origin with products of plant origin)	Keep accurate records of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ what the food is</li> <li>■ the quantity</li> <li>■ who supplied it</li> <li>■ the date it came in</li> </ul>	Keep the name and address of the food business operator which it has come from - including details of consignors, such as agents, when the food has not come directly from the food business operator	
<b>Products of animal origin</b>	Keep accurate records of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ what the food is</li> <li>■ the quantity</li> <li>■ the date it came in</li> </ul>	Keep the name and address of the food business operator which it has come from - including details of consignors, such as agents, when the food has not come directly from the food business operator	Keep a lot, batch or consignment reference

\*It is up to the FBO to decide what is classed as a lot, batch or consignment, but you need to be aware that in the event of a withdrawal or recall if the whole production of the business is considered a lot or batch then the whole stock would need to be withdrawn/recalled

One step forward - details of food you supply to another business	
Keep accurate records of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ what food you supplied</li> <li>■ who you supplied the food to up until the point of retail, including the name and address of the food business operator which it is being supplied to - including details of consignors, such as agents, when the food is not going directly to the food business operator that they represent and the lot, batch or consignment reference</li> </ul>	Keep a note of the date of dispatch