Food hygiene training for stand staff

Exhibitor guide · trade shows, exhibitions and events

Your stand team is often a mix of company staff, sales people and temporary hosts, some of whom have never handled food at work. Organisers usually ask you for evidence that the people serving food have been trained. This guide explains what the law expects, what organisers commonly ask for and how to get your team ready.

What the law expects

As a food business, you must make sure your food handlers are supervised and instructed or trained in food hygiene in line with the work they do, and that whoever develops and runs your food safety plan has adequate training in the HACCP principles (Regulation 852/2004, Annex II, Chapter XII).

The law does not say staff must hold a certificate. The FSA says food handlers do not have to hold a food hygiene certificate, but you must be able to show your staff have the right skills and up-to-date training for their role, and should keep a record of it (FSA, running a food business). Skills can come from courses, on-the-job training, self-study or experience. In practice, a certificate is the easiest way to show it.

Matching training to the job on the stand

Everyone on the stand	Anyone handling open food	Supervisor or plan writer
• Briefing on your plan	• Food hygiene to Level 2 standard	• Food safety to Level 3 standard
• Hand washing and fitness to work	• Allergen awareness	• Knows the HACCP plan and the records
• Where the allergen matrix is kept	• Supervision on the day	• Briefs the team

Our recommendation for matching training to each role on a stand.

What organisers commonly ask for

The AEV eGuide says everyone handling food on your stand must be trained to a level that matches their duties and supervised, and that evidence of training may be asked for on site (paragraph 66). Organisers set their own requirements on top of that. As an illustration, some organisers ask for a Level 2 food safety certificate for everyone handling open food on medium and high-risk stands, often dated within the last three years. Check the exhibitor terms for your event.

Who needs what

Role on the stand	What we recommend
Everyone, including hosts who only hand out wrapped food	A short briefing on your food safety plan, hand washing, fitness to work, and where the allergen matrix is. Record that they have had it.
Anyone preparing, portioning or serving open food	Food hygiene training to Level 2 standard, such as our Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering course, plus allergen awareness.
The person in charge of food on the stand, or who wrote the plan	Level 3 food safety, such as our Level 3 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering course, so they understand HACCP, can supervise and can deal with a problem.

Not sure which level fits? Our article on who needs a Level 3 course and how long Level 2 certificates last go into more detail.

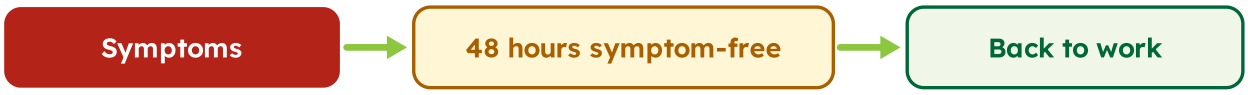
Our online courses

Our Level 2 and Level 3 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering courses are online, so your stand staff can complete them before the show wherever they are.

- Endorsed by the Institute of Hospitality and matched to the CIEH and RSPH syllabus.
- Designed and delivered by a Chartered Environmental Health Officer through short videos, and reviewed by Environmental Health Officers.
- Level 2 takes about 3 hours and Level 3 about 6 to 7 hours, with no time limit.
- Online assessment with an 80% pass mark and unlimited retakes at no extra cost.
- An instant digital certificate to upload to the organiser's portal.
- You can buy places for a whole team and invite them by email.

Fitness to work

Diarrhoea or vomiting: stay away from open food



Staff should tell the stand manager straight away if they have these symptoms.

Source: FSA fitness to work guidance; AEV eGuide paragraph 70.

Anyone with diarrhoea or vomiting stays away from open food until 48 hours after symptoms stop.

The FSA says staff should tell the person in charge straight away if they have diarrhoea or vomiting, stomach pain, nausea, fever or jaundice, infected skin, nose or throat, or if someone they live with has diarrhoea or vomiting. Anyone with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from open food, normally for 48 hours after symptoms stop (FSA fitness to work). Plan cover for this: a show team is small, and the temptation to work through it is strong.

The briefing on the morning

Even with certificates, a ten-minute briefing at the start of each show day makes the biggest difference. We recommend covering:

- What is being served today and any allergens in it, and where the matrix is.
- Hand washing: where the basin is and when to use it.
- Fridge and probe checks: who does them, when, and where they are written down.
- Sampling rules: single portions, no double-dipping, used-stick pot, time labels.
- What to do if a visitor feels unwell or has an allergic reaction.

Keep the evidence together

Put training certificates and a note of who was briefed with your food safety plan, and upload them to the organiser's portal before the show. See documents organisers ask for.

Related guides

- Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering
- Level 3 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering
- Allergen information on your stand
- Hand washing and wash hand basins
- Documents organisers ask for

This guide is general advice for you as an exhibitor at a UK trade show, exhibition or other event. The organiser and venue decide what is accepted at their event, so always read your exhibitor terms. Checked against the AEV eGuide (August 2026) and Food Standards Agency guidance, October 2026. Online version: eventfoodsafety.co.uk/exhibitor-resources/food-hygiene-training-for-stand-staff/