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# The home as a food establishment

It is possible to prepare, process and store food at home, except for plant operations.

Plant operations mean the preparation of animal-based food and sale of the products to other food establishments, such as a sausage factory or a fish smokehouse. More information on plants, meaning approved food establishments, is available on the website of the Finnish Food Authority.

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/companies/food-sector/setting-up-a-food-business/food-establishments/>

## Registering the home as a food establishment

If food to be sold is professionally and regularly prepared at home, you must register the home as a food establishment. Operations at home must not cause noise, smell or other hazards to neighbours. Before registering the home as a food establishment, you need to confirm that the building's owner or its representative (building manager, chair of the board, lessor) does not object to the operations. In addition, you should contact Helsinki Building Control Services to ensure among other things, that the ventilation and drainage systems are adequate for the planned operation.

A food establishment notification regarding professional preparation of food must be submitted to the Food Safety Unit four (4) weeks before starting the operations, at the latest. You can find the form for registering the food establishment on the website of the City of Helsinki. You can submit the notification electronically at <https://ilppa.fi/etusivu> or fill in the form on the City's website. You will receive a certificate of registration regarding the notification. The food establishment's information will be saved in the control data system. Processing the notification is subject to a charge (€180). If there are any changes to the operations or the operations cease, these should be also reported to the Food Safety Unit. In addition, a basic annual control fee of €150 is charged. This fee applies to almost all food premises under the control of municipalities.

<https://www.hel.fi/en/business-and-work/businesses-and-entrepreneurs/permits-and-facilities-for-businesses/notifications-and-registrations-of-business>

The Finnish Food Authority's instructions on the basic monitoring fee are available (in Finnish) at: <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/elintarvikkeet/elintarvikeala/valvonta/valvonnan-perusmaksu/>

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### When is a notification not needed?

You do not need to register minor operations, such as baking for bake sales a few times a month. According to the Finnish Food Authority, a pop-up restaurant can operate on 12 days during a calendar year before it needs to be registered as a food establishment.

More information on low-risk and minor operations and pop-up operations (in Finnish):

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/yritykset/oppaat/rekisteroitavaa-elintarviketoimintaa-vai-ei/rekisteroitavaa-elintarviketoimintaa-vai-ei/>

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/foodstuffs/instructions-for-consumers/-operating-in-the-food-sector-as-a-private-person/pop-up-restaurant-activities/>

## Operating conditions at home

Home kitchens usually have little room and restricted refrigerated storage space, which means that commercial operations at home can only be small-scale. You must plan the operations in such a fashion that living at home does not pose a danger to the food. The operator itself is always responsible for assessing and controlling hazards, as well as being aware of applicable legislation.

The food establishment in the home must be adequately separated from other premises or activities in the home that may affect or compromise the hygienic quality of the food handled in the food establishment. For example, open kitchens as such are not sufficiently separated from the rest of domestic life and it is not recommended that a registered food business be carried out in an open kitchen. Access to the kitchen by unauthorised persons and pets should be prevented during operations.

If you prepare or process food at home for business, the kitchen or another space used must be reserved for these operations during the preparation or processing. You need to observe good hygiene and the requirements of food legislation. As the premises are usually quite small, the different stages of food preparation must be separated in time (e.g., handling raw and cooked meat, or handling of mouldy root vegetables) and the premises must be cleaned between the different stages. You must have separate cleaning supplies for the kitchen, and the home kitchen must be cleaned carefully before preparing/processing food. Liquid hand soap and paper towels must be easily available in the kitchen for washing hands. You must wear appropriate protective clothing during the work. People who process unpacked and easily perishable foods must have a Hygiene Passport. Food for your own consumption must be stored separately from the food to be sold. If the product selection includes products that require cold storage, you must reserve sufficient refrigerated space for storing them. Non-essential people and pets must not access the kitchen during the operations. Potential illness must not pose a danger to the food. If the family has an infectious disease (such as a stomach flu), the operations must stop. The infectious period after an illness can be estimated by a healthcare professional, when necessary. For example, after a norovirus infection, you should refrain from operations for 2 full days after the symptoms have stopped. After an infectious disease, the home must be cleaned thoroughly. More detailed instructions for cleaning up after a norovirus infection (in Finnish):

[https://www.hel.fi/static/ymk/lomakkeet/el\\_lomakkeet/Toimenpideohje\\_norovirus\\_020223\\_EN.pdf](https://www.hel.fi/static/ymk/lomakkeet/el_lomakkeet/Toimenpideohje_norovirus_020223_EN.pdf)

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When storing food, food needs to be stored separately from other foodstuffs in the home and in such a manner that cross-contamination with chemicals, for example, is not possible. For temperature-regulated products, you must adhere to the temperature limits set in legislation: <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/foodstuffs/food-sector/hygienic-actions/production-and-handling/temperature-management/examples-of-food-storage-temperatures/>

Chilling of foods intended to be kept cold must begin immediately after preparation and foods must be cooled to the storage temperature of the food in question within a maximum of four hours.

For more information on the requirements for home food premises, see Chapter 6 of the Finnish Food Authority guide on food hygiene in registered food businesses (in Finnish): <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/yritykset/oppaat/huoneisto-ohje/ohje-rekisteroidyn-elintarviketoiminnan-elintarvikehygieniasta/#id-6-elintarvikehuoneisto-kotona>

## In-house control plan

Before starting the operations, you must prepare an in-house control plan. 'In-house control' refers to the operator's system with which it aims to ensure that food is safe and in accordance with the food-related legislation. The operator must identify the factors, related to its operations and the food processed, that endanger food safety, and control these factors.

The in-house control plan describes the hazards and risks related to the operations and how to control them. In-house control involves a bookkeeping obligation, meaning the operator must record matters such as temperatures and take care of tracking the products. The records must be available for inspection, and they must be presented to the inspector on request.

The in-house control plan must include descriptions of the following matters, when applicable:

- Description of activities; procurement of ingredients
- Description of in-house control and related records
- Food storage and monitoring the temperature of refrigeration equipment
- Food preparation, serving, description and monitoring of cooling, re-heating
- Packaging, labels and packaging materials
- Cleaning, pest prevention and waste management
- Food transport
- Personal hygiene and health monitoring
- Hygiene competence (Hygiene Passport)
- Sampling plan
- Customer complaints and actions in suspected cases of food poisoning
- Traceability and retraction

More information about the in-house control plan, as well as plan templates, are available on the website of the City of Helsinki.

<https://www.hel.fi/en/business-and-work/businesses-and-entrepreneurs/permits-and-facilities-for-businesses/notifications-and-registrations-of-business/registering-a-food-business>

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## Selling packaged food

Packaged food delivered for retail sales must have labels in Finnish and Swedish as required by the law. More information on labels is available on the website of the Finnish Food Safety Authority.

Food can also be sold remotely via the internet, for example. Information on packaged food sold remotely must be provided before the purchase and the information must be the same as in an ordinary shop, except for the minimum durability or the use-by date, freezing date or batch number of the food. However, the information mentioned above must be provided to the buyer when delivering or transferring the products, at the latest. The administrator of the website is responsible for the information provided in remote sales, and it must ensure that the food information is correct and available for consumers.

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/foodstuffs/food-sector/food-information/labelling/labelling/>

Food information guide (in Finnish):

[https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/globalassets/tietoa-meista/asiointi/oppaat-ja-lomakkeet/yritykset/elintarvikeala/elintarvikealan-oppaat/elintarviketieto\\_opas\\_fi.pdf](https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/globalassets/tietoa-meista/asiointi/oppaat-ja-lomakkeet/yritykset/elintarvikeala/elintarvikealan-oppaat/elintarviketieto_opas_fi.pdf)

As for packaging materials, the operator must verify the materials' suitability for the intended use.

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/foodstuffs/food-sector/packages-and-other-food-contact-materials/safety-and-other-compliance-of-food-contact-materials/>

## Monitoring

A registered food establishment is subject to monitoring in accordance with the Food Act. Food inspectors monitor food establishments at home with regular inspections. Monitoring is performed based on the risks and scope of the operations. During the inspection, the inspectors study the suitability of the facilities, the operations, and the in-house control plan and its implementation. The inspection is conducted either on site or via documents. The fee based on the current price list is charged for the inspections. If deficiencies are observed during the inspections, the operations may be restricted or suspended.