

# Guidance for Providing Doggy Bags to Customers

## Overview

Customers may make a request to take leftover food home with them at the end of a meal or a function. This guidance is provided to support a position that allows for food to be taken off site and to ensure the necessary steps are taken to make sure food safety and food standards requirements are met, enabling the customer to take home the food items they have selected prior to them being packaged to support transport home.

## Which foods can be taken home by customers?

While the customer is on the premises, they have access to the relevant allergen logs for all food items on offer, and they will have already made the decision whether the food is suitable for them based on their personal preferences and on the basis of any food intolerances or allergies they may have, accounting for these when making their food and menu selections.

Items that have been served to the customer's table or to the customer directly will have been held in a temperature-controlled environment. These foods are safe for customers to take away with them on the understanding that only the items the customer has personally selected can be taken away and that they must be refrigerated within 2 hours.

Food items that have been under temperature control until the point of the request being made to take them off site, should, prior to packaging, be temperature checked to verify that they are at 8°C or below for chilled, or at 63°C or above for hot food items. All product temperatures must be recorded in the logbook or on the relevant temperature records check form.

## Which foods cannot be taken home by customers?

High-risk food that has been displayed on a buffet for service at ambient temperatures, should not be taken away by customers, as it may have been outside of temperature control close to the maximum duration permitted for chilled and / or hot foods, for example 4 hours for chilled food and 2 hours for hot food, respectively. Allowing these types of foods to be taken off-site by customers may result in the potential for temperature abuse.

Food that the customer has not personally selected cannot be taken home, as it is important that the customer reviews the product ingredients list and product allergen details at the point of selection, to ensure any food ingredients and / or allergens are accounted for when making their food selections, prior to the food being packaged and handed over to them.

## What information must be provided with the food?

Customers must be advised that if the food is not consumed within 2 hours it must be refrigerated, and once refrigerated, if not consumed within 24 hours, food should be discarded. Customers should be advised that food to be consumed hot must be thoroughly re-heated to ensure it is piping hot all the way through and that it is only reheated once. Customers should also be reminded to review the product ingredients and allergen information, to ensure that the food is suitable for them and for any individuals they might intend to share the food with.

## How must food be presented to the customer and what information must be provided with the food before it is taken away?

Food must be packaged in new, unused and clean food containers; it must be well wrapped to prevent spillages. The Customer Information Slip below must be provided with the food prior to it being taken off the premises, with the date and time the food is handed to the customer recorded on the slip. If Sectors or Units are designing a bespoke Customer Information Slip, the wording in the example Customer Information Slip below must be used.

### **Customer Information Slip**

We are pleased that you enjoyed your meal. If the food you are taking away with you is not consumed within 2 hours, it should be refrigerated straightway and once refrigerated, if not consumed within 24 hours, it should be discarded. Do not freeze this leftover food. If you wish to consume the food hot, you must reheat it until it is piping hot all the way through. Food items can only be reheated once and, if not consumed once reheated, they should be disposed of.

Please review the relevant ingredients and allergen information for the food products you have selected, to ensure that they are suitable for you, and review this information with anyone else you might intend to share the food with.

**Date:**

**Time:**

### **Recap Summary**

1. Ensure the customer is given access to the relevant allergen logs for food items they have selected.
2. Ensure food items given to the customer to take away have been held in a temperature-controlled environment.
3. Prior to packaging, food items other than those served to the table, should be temperature checked to verify that they are at 8°C or below for chilled, or at 63°C or above for hot.
4. All product temperatures must be recorded in the logbook or on the relevant temperature records check form.
5. Food given to the customer to take away must be packaged in new, unused and clean food containers; it must be well wrapped to prevent spillages.
6. Complete the Customer Information Slip and ensure it is handed to the customer with the food prior to it being taken off the premises.