Healthier Choices Award

What’s it all about.....

A Toolkit for businesses
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The guidance in this booklet was compiled from multiple sources including The Department of Health and the Director of Public Health Wales.

## Introduction

Want to make a difference?
Consumers view eating out not just as an occasional treat, but as part of everyday life. One in five consumers eat at a restaurant, fast food outlet or takeaway once a week or more.¹

The National Statistics Family Food Survey 2013, reported that a quarter of all money spent on food and drink (excluding alcohol) in the UK was on that consumed outside the home. Food consumed outside the home tends to be higher in added sugar and fat than food prepared at home.²

A diet high in saturated fats has been associated with an increased risk of obesity and Coronary Heart Disease (CHD). Currently in England, over 60% of the adult population and 30% of children are classed as overweight or obese.

Being overweight or obese increases the risk of a range of diseases – high blood pressure, type II diabetes, some cancers, heart disease and stroke. Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) such as heart disease and stroke are the most common cause of death. In 2011 CVD accounted for 29% of all deaths in England and Wales³.

The Award aims to encourage food businesses to provide healthier options to customers. Through the use of healthier catering practices, increased fruit, vegetables and starchy carbohydrates; using less fat (especially saturated fat), sugar and salt. It also recognises provision of healthy options for children, and rewards staff training and promotion of healthier options. As a caterer, you could really contribute to improving your customer’s diet and health by making small changes to provide healthier food choices.
What do your customers think?

Consumers are confronted almost daily with information about diet, nutrition and health in the media. Surveys have shown that consumers are becoming much more knowledgeable about healthy eating, and 97% think they should have the choice to eat healthily when they eat out.\(^\text{4}\) More than half (52%) believe it is the responsibility of the caterer to provide this choice.

In a recent survey in Scotland, 86% of people thought food outlets should actively promote healthier options.\(^\text{5}\)

The following fact sheets provide advice and guidance on how to achieve this.

The Eat Well Wirral Award is good for:

- You
- Your Business
- Your Customers

You’ll have public recognition for achieving the award and could enhance your image as a responsible business that puts its customers first. There are three levels to the award, \textbf{Bronze, Silver and Gold}; most businesses will be able to achieve Bronze without too much cost or time. The award could give you a competitive edge and increase customer satisfaction as demand for healthier choices continues to grow – some food manufacturers and retailers who have introduced healthier options are seeing growth in sales. Your customers will be able to benefit from the freedom to select a healthy option if they choose and have more control over what they eat.

4. Health Education Authority, 1996
5. Scottish Consumer Council 2008
Who can take part?

The Award scheme is currently open to **takeaways, mobile units and cafes offering takeawayfood**, e.g. fish and chip, Pizza/Kebab houses, Sandwich bars, Chinese and Indian takeaways that are **compliant with Food Hygiene Regulations and have a Food Hygiene Rating of 3 or more**.

![Food Hygiene Rating]

How do I take part?

1. Read through **all sections of this toolkit**; talk it through with your staff, so everyone is aware and on board. This will help you achieve your award.

2. Read through ‘Adapting your menu’ e.g. Fish and Chip shops, Pizza and kebab, Chinese, Indian and sandwich and bakery.

3. Complete the ‘**self-assessment form**’ at the level you know you can achieve; Bronze, Silver or Gold. If you require salt shakers and a menu stand, these will be given to you by the officers. You will also need to meet the criteria (and complete the forms) for the level(s) below the one you are applying for, e.g. if you apply for gold, you must meet the bronze and silver criteria as well. You can return the form(s) to the address/email shown on the form.

4. Complete the ‘**Initial business evaluation questionnaire**’; your application will only be considered once this form is received.

5. Make the £60 application fee by telephoning the Wirral Council Environmental Health Admin Team on 0151-606-2430

6. An officer will contact you within 8 weeks to arrange to visit your premises; they will check you have met the criteria and if so, award you a **Bronze, Silver or Gold Award**. They will be able to offer advice and make suggestions to help you meet the criteria.

7. If you have any queries or concerns, speak to the officer that visits or email environmentalhealth@Wirral.gov.uk ;
How long is the award valid for?

The award is valid until your next food hygiene inspection. It is your responsibility to reapply for the award, using the self-assessment process as discussed on the previous page.

However, the award may be reviewed or revoked during this time if, for instance:

- There are significant changes to the menu
- Premises change hands. There is no automatic right of transfer and a new award application must be made.
- The premises fail to maintain a Food Hygiene Rating of 3 or more.
- An officer visits the premises to carry out a revisit or complaint visit and standards are not at the required assessment level.

Unannounced visits and/or mystery shopper style sampling may also be carried out during this period in order to make sure the award conditions are being adhered to.

Successful premises will:

- Receive an award certificate to display on your premises
- Receive a window sticker to display your award to passers-by
- Receive a menu stand and printed menu to display your healthier options
- Reduced hole salt shakers and potato chipper blades if appropriate
- Your business will be highlighted on our website for Eat Well Wirral
- You have the right to advertise your award on stationery, menus, websites etc.
- Obtaining the award will give you the opportunity to extend your customer base, as increasing numbers of people are choosing a healthier life-style
The following sections of this pack provide advice and guidance on how you can generally produce healthier food; applying this information to your business will assist you in achieving the award. Where you see the pound sign ££ you will also save money.

**General principles**

Many foods are naturally rich in vitamins and minerals, such as fruits and vegetables; lean meats and fish offer us essential proteins and healthy fats.

To be healthier we should eat less high fat, sugar and salt foods; by changing the way you cook foods and adding less fat, salt and MSG you can help customers work towards the following principles:

- Reduce Fat, in particular saturated fat
- Reduce Sugar
- Reduce Salt
- Give customers a choice, allowing them to eat healthier takeaway foods

**Remember......**

Being overweight or obese increases the risk of a range of diseases – high blood pressure, type II diabetes, some cancers, heart disease and stroke. Circulatory diseases such as heart disease and stroke are the most common cause of death in the UK.

The way in which you prepare and cook your food and the choices that you offer your customers can have a significant effect on their health.

**KEYPOINTS FOR ALL BUSINESSES**

**Vegetables**

Offer large portions of vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned). Baked beans / pulses count towards a maximum of one of your 5-a-day (canned spaghetti does not).

Offer a range of different hot cooked vegetables.

Increase the use of raw vegetables in salads.

Add lentils and other pulses to soups to make them more filling. ££

Keep added fat to a minimum when stir-frying (consider using spray oil) and use unsaturated oil like sunflower oil, rapeseed oil etc, rather than ghee or butter.

Add more vegetables to main course dishes, e.g. peppers, carrots, mushrooms and peas in casseroles, stews, curries, stir fry’s or pizzas. Add canned, soaked or boiled beans to casseroles or bakes. ££
The following practices will help maintain vitamins when preparing and cooking vegetables:

Don’t leave any cut vegetables exposed to air, light, heat or to soak in water before cooking (this does not apply to dried pulses and beans, which need to be soaked overnight). Cover and chill them instead.

Try to cook vegetables as quickly as possible after cutting.

Use a small amount of boiling water, cover with lid to keep in the steam, because this speeds up the cooking, or steam vegetables. A shorter cooking time will help retain vitamins.

Use cooking water for sauces, gravy and soup to recapture lost vitamins and minerals.

Serve as soon as possible after cooking. Keeping food warm destroys most of the vitamin C.

Frozen vegetables should be cooked immediately after removing from the freezer and served as soon as possible.

Leave skins on vegetables and fruit whenever possible.

Store fresh fruit and vegetables in a cool, dark place and use as soon as possible rather than storing for a long time, or use frozen instead.

Salads

Wash salad vegetables carefully to avoid bruising, and try to serve them whole rather than shredded. It is not good practice to use salt to remove water from salads such as lettuce.

Offer lower fat dressings and those based on healthier fats e.g. olive oil based dressings. Provide dressing separately so people have the choice and can use as much or as little as they like.

Use reduced fat mayonnaise or watered down mayonnaise for coleslaw and prepared salads, such as potato salad, and in sandwich fillings. ££

Add a side salad to meals and offer a range of undressed main course salads.

Include a range of salads in sandwiches.
Fat
The daily guideline amounts for total fat are 95g for men and 70g for women, approximately of which saturated fats are 30g and 20g respectively. The main message about fats is to reduce the total consumption of all types, but particularly saturated fat as most people in the UK eat about 20% more saturated fat than the recommended maximum amount. Eating a diet that is high in saturated fat can raise blood cholesterol and increase the risk of heart disease.

Did you know?
A 400g portion of chips fried in a palm oil based fat such as BEST FRY contained an average of 23g of saturated fat (total fat was 47g) whereas a 400g portion fried in rapeseed oil contained only 3.6g of saturated fat (total fat 39.2).
That means there was six and a half times more saturated fat in the Palm oil fried chips which is more than total daily guideline in a single portion.

Reducing fat
Use less fat or oil in food preparation and cooking ££

Remove visible fat on meats; removing skin from chicken

Avoid deep frying wherever possible, quick fry using a minimum of unsaturated oil (e.g. olive oil, sunflower or rapeseed oil sprays). ££

Avoid part frying foods and then refrying again as this will increase the fat content.

Try dry-grilling, baking, microwaving, steaming or steam-roasting using cooking foil.

Replace saturated fats by using monounsaturated fat (rapeseed, groundnut or olive) or poly-unsaturated oils (sunflower, soya, corn) instead of butter, lard, ghee or palm oil and by using unsalted low fat spreads or polyunsaturated margarines e.g. olive oil or sunflower oil based margarines.

If buying pre-prepared dishes, encourage your supplier to provide lower fat options.

Read the labels and look for products with a smaller proportion of saturated fat.

Remember to change oil frequently, as it quickly becomes more saturated with use.

List deep fried food at the bottom of menu sections so customers see healthier options first

When preparing chips, use thick, straight cut chips and fry in unsaturated oil or use oven chips.
What about trans fats?

If an oil has been hydrogenated it has been made more saturated and may contain 'trans' fats. Eating too much trans fats can be bad for your health as they raise the type of cholesterol in the blood that increases the risk of heart disease.

Artificial trans fats can be formed when oil goes through a process called hydrogenation to turn it solid. This type of hydrogenated fat can be used for frying or as an ingredient in processed foods.

The Department of Health is urging all food businesses to remove artificial trans fats by ensuring all the foods and ingredients they use or sell are free from hydrogenated vegetable oil.

Consumers are becoming more and more interested in eating a healthier diet and by removing hydrogenated vegetable oil you are responding to consumer demand. Many businesses have already removed hydrogenated oils without any negative customer feedback.

The following are approximations and may differ slightly from brand to brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fat type – e.g. for sandwiches or as an ingredient</th>
<th>% Total fat</th>
<th>% Trans fat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average low fat spread (polyunsaturated)</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft margarine (polyunsaturated)</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard animal and vegetable fats</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table ranks different types of fat starting with the lowest in saturated fat

Whilst Rapeseed oil is the healthiest to cook and deep fry with, any liquid oil with saturated fat levels of 15% or less will be accepted for use to achieve the award. Ask your supplier which oils they supply that are the lowest in saturated fat; purchase the most cost effective for your business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fat type</th>
<th>% Total Fat</th>
<th>% Saturated Fat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapeseed oil</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable oil</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower oil</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn oil</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnut oil</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lard</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm oil*</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconut oil*</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Beware of coconut oil and palm oil; they are vegetable oil exceptions as they are rich in saturated fat. Coconut oil is reported to have health benefits, but for the purpose of this information it is high in saturated fat and should be avoided.
Butter and spreads

Use less fat in pastries or dough, with a low fat alternative where possible.

Where possible, offer sandwiches, rolls and baguettes without any butter/spread. Those with moist fillings may not require spread at all, and others can be spread on one of the pieces of bread only. ££

Use lower fat, monounsaturated or polyunsaturated spreads instead of butter, for example Soya, rapeseed and olive oil spreads.

Use spread that is soft straight from the fridge, so it is easier to spread thinly. ££

Don’t garnishing vegetables, potatoes or salads with fat and oils or adding to mashed potato. If a dish must be finished with butter, try lightly brushing with melted butter before serving.

Serve butter/spread separately or on the side for foods such as jacket potatoes, bread rolls, or toast. ££

Dressings and condiments

Salad dressings should be offered separately, not added automatically.

Where dressings are offered, use reduced fat or low fat (less than 3% fat) varieties.

Use mono- and poly-unsaturated oils such as soya, rapeseed and olive oils in salad dressings.

Where mayonnaise is used, use sparingly and use a reduced fat variety or dilute standard type with lower fat yoghurt or water. ££

Sauces

Some cooking sauces, particularly those containing cream, have a high fat content. Examples could be carbonara, cheese sauces and curries such as korma. Always have lower fat versions available, such as tomato based curry or pasta sauce.

Salt

Most people are eating too much salt. On average we are having about 8.6g salt per day but we should be having no more than 6g, that’s about 1 teaspoon a day and children under the age of 12 should be having much less. Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. People with high blood pressure are three times more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke than people with normal blood pressure. Salt is also called sodium chloride; sometimes food labels only give the figure for sodium. A simple way to work out salt content from the sodium figure is:– salt = sodium x 2.5 this means adults should eat no more than 2.4g of sodium per day, this is equal to 6g salt = just 1 teaspoon.
Reducing salt

Processed foods (such as ready-made soups and sauces, tinned and cured meats) can contain high levels of salt. Therefore, in order to reduce the amount of salt in your dishes, the use of processed foods needs to be considered along with the amount of salt added to recipes.

Gradually reduce the quantity of salt used in recipes. Control the amount of salt in cooking. In many instances, salt can be gradually cut down or left out altogether. ££

Use unsalted water when boiling vegetables, potatoes, rice or pasta. Try using herbs, spices, lemon juice or vinegar more often to enhance the flavour of food.

Monosodium glutamate (MSG) and soy sauce contain high levels of sodium/salt so should be avoided or reduced where possible.

Use salt shakers with fewer holes. We can provide the chip shop type free of charge ££

Use low salt versions of low fat spreads and unsaturated margarines. Do not salt chips or other foods before serving, leave the choice of salt to the customer.

Avoid excessive use of stock cubes, gravy granules or bouillon cubes, as they contain a high percentage of salt. Instead where possible prepare the stock and use vegetable water for gravy; if stock cubes are used, opt for lower salt versions.

Choose tinned vegetables and pulses without added salt or sugar, or preferably, use fresh or frozen vegetables. Look at the labels. Reduce the use of tinned meats, which contain added salt. Use fresh or frozen meats.

Try to use fresh or frozen rather than processed food in general because many of them contain salt or other salt-like substances. Try making home-made soup rather than using tinned or powdered versions.

Sugar

Most adults and children in the UK eat too much sugar. Sugar occurs naturally in some foods (such as fruit and milk), or it can be added to foods. It is the food and drink containing added sugars, processed foods such as sweets, chocolate, cakes and biscuits and soft fizzy drinks that need to be reduced in the diet. This is because they can be high in calories but often have few other nutrients, and can cause tooth decay.
Reducing sugar

Offer bottled water, diet pop, unsweetened fruit juices, milk, low calorie drinks, squash with no added sugar, in addition to soft drinks.
Offer artificial sweeteners to customers as an alternative to sugar where hot drinks are available.

Did you know?

A standard 330ml can of pop has about 7 teaspoons of sugar! Most diet versions have none!

What about the children......?

It is likely that many of your customers are children, either older children purchasing their own food or for the family meal. You may already cater especially for children?

When planning menus, bear in mind that children are often more receptive to messages about healthier food choices than adults and it is now that their lifetime habits are being established. A children's menu of sausages and chips with a sugary drink is inadequate.

You are in a very good position to be able to influence their choices, and the following suggestions might be helpful:

Offer small portions of all adult meals for children, not just a range of fried options, and price children's portions appropriately.

If you have a children's menu, make sure it contains several healthier options, not just meals served with chips or deep fried potato shapes.

Promote milk, unsweetened fruit juices and water in place of carbonated sugary drinks or squashes.

Offer fruit and yoghurts or reduced fat varieties of ice cream if you offer desserts.

Keep confectionery to the rear of a display or only available on request.

Try preparing vegetables, salads and fruit by cutting into attractive shapes.

Try presenting the meal in a fun way e.g. in a colourful box.

Try options such as:-

- rice
- noodles
- mini grilled chicken burger
- mini chicken kebab
- mild tomato based curries
- chicken and noodles or rice
Tips on Frying
Use best practice and increase your profits

Following these tips when you’re frying can help you:

- save money
- make your chips crispier and tastier
- lower the amount of saturated fat and salt in a portion

1. Use thick, straight-cut chips
   These absorb less fat, so you use less oil and it’s healthier for your customers. (£) Make your chips using a cutter with at least a 14mm (just over ½ an inch) cross section. Replace your blades when they become blunt; about once a year, this will reduce potato waste and the chips will absorb less fat (£)

2. Fry at 175°C
   Getting oil to 175°C (350°F) before you start frying gives you crispier, more appealing food that absorbs less fat. That means you use less oil. (£)
   
   Each time you fry a new batch, let the oil come back up to 175°C before you start.

   Overloading your fryer, or adding too much food when you’re frying, makes the temperature of the oil drop. That makes the food greasier and uses more oil. If you use baskets, they shouldn’t look more than half full.

3. Check the temperature
   Make sure the temperature on your range is accurate. You can do this by heating the oil and testing the temperature in the middle of the oil with a catering thermometer. If you have a range with a thermostat, make sure the probe is clean when you drain the fryer. You should have the thermostat checked as part of a regular service of your equipment.

4. Cook for 5-6 minutes
   The cooking time for chips will depend on the type of potato you use, but for thick-cut fresh potatoes cooked at 175°C it’s about 5-6 minutes, until the chips are a pale, golden colour. If you cook them straight through and take them out of the oil as soon as they are cooked, they will absorb less fat. And you will use less oil. (£)
   
   If you decide to blanch some chips to help with a busy service, then you should still use best practice when you blanch and fry at 175°C, allowing the oil to come back up to temperature between batches. This will reduce the fat absorption and help prevent greasy chips.

5. Use unsaturated liquid oil
   The more saturated fat in your oil, the more saturated fat there will be in your chips.

   Liquid oils such as sunflower and rapeseed have about 10% saturated fat. Solid oils such as palm oil or beef fat have about 50%. Some suppliers provide palm oil blends (a mix of palm and other oils) that have about 30% saturated fat. If you choose sunflower or rapeseed oil, you need to use a ‘high oleic’ version, as these are more stable (provided you look after your oil well).

   Whichever oil you choose, always make sure it is not hydrogenated.
6. Bang, shake and drain food
By shaking the food and banging the wire scoop several times, you can reduce fat absorption by 20% and make your food crisper. This is because food carries on absorbing fat after it comes out of the fryer. If you bang and shake you’ll use less oil, need to top up less often, and need to empty the drain in the chip box less often. (£)

7. Look after your oil
Try to change your oil before it foams, froths or smokes. It will also change colour, smell rancid or fishy when you heat it and will affect the flavour of the food.
Follow these tips to keep your oil fresh for longer. Then you will use less oil. (£)
• Don’t heat your oil above 175°C.
• Dry fresh chips for as long as possible after soaking. If you use a potato preparation you will be able to dry your chips for longer.
• Keep fryer topped up with oil.
• Don’t ‘idle’ a fryer at high temperatures, let it cool to 100°C and cover it.
• Sieve the oil every time you fry a batch and throw the scraps away.
• Filter your oil often, ideally once a day.
For information on changing oil safely, see www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cais17.pdf

8. Fry chips on their own
If you fry foods like sausages, chicken and anything in breadcrumbs, don’t fry these in the same oil you use for chips as they will affect your oil quality. Gently shake any food in breadcrumbs before you fry it to knock off any loose bits – this will help keep your oil fresh.

But what about the taste?
Worried that your customers won’t like the taste? Did you know that previous winners of the Perfect Portion Awards, voted for by customers, fry with rapeseed oil?

See the separate information leaflet on cooking oils

9. Cut down on salt
Lots of people are trying to cut down on the amount of salt they eat. You can help your customers to do this by doing these things.
• Use a salt shaker with fewer holes – just ask your supplier if they provide five-hole tops.
• Ask your customers if they want salt before adding it.
• Don’t add salt to batter mix. If you buy batter mix, check the ingredients and try to choose one that doesn’t contain added salt or sodium.
• Read the label on foods like sauces, sausages and pies and choose the one with less salt (or it might say ‘sodium’). If there’s no information on salt, ask your supplier.

10. Size matters
Offering different portion sizes makes good business sense. Maybe you could offer small cones, for people with smaller appetites, as well as regular and large trays. This will allow you to charge more for the bigger portions. It might also help your lunchtime trade when some people only want a small amount to eat. Make sure your staff are certain about portion sizes or they could be giving away extra chips – and your profit. (£)

11. Acrylamides
Acrylamide is a chemical produced naturally in food as a result of cooking starch rich food e.g. potatoes at high temperatures, such as when frying. This chemical builds up in the frying oil if it isn’t kept at the right temperature, filtered and changed. Some studies have shown that acrylamide has the potential to cause cancer in humans; however, there is currently not enough information on this and the risks are not clear. Following the tips above will ensure acrylamide levels are as low as possible in your oil. More information can be found at: https://www.food.gov.uk/science/acrylamide
Further information

ThePublicHealthResponsibilityDeal

Public health is everyone’s responsibility and there is a role for all of us, working in partnership, to tackle these challenges.

Too many of us are eating too much, drinking too much and not doing enough physical activity. Creating the right environment can empower and support people to make informed, balanced choices that will help them lead healthier lives.

The Public Health Responsibility Deal aims to tap into the potential for businesses and other influential organisations to make a significant contribution to improving public health by helping us to create this environment.

Further information on how to get involved or to just get access to lots more advice can log onto https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/ or search on online for ‘responsibility deal.’

Change 4 Life
What is Change4Life?
These days, ‘modern life’ can mean that we’re a lot less active. With so many opportunities to watch TV or play computer games, and with so much convenience and fast food available, we don’t move about as much, or eat as well as we used to.

The change for life website contains a wealth of information aimed initially at individuals and families however the principles and guidance contained within the site can be very useful and include topic such as:

- Meal mixer
- Try our tips to make your weekly shop healthier.
- What's on the label?
- Be calorie smart
- More about calories
- Lunch boxes
- Packed lunch ideas
- Cooking terms

Log onto http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx or simply search online for Change4life

If you would like further specific information regarding the Eat Well Wirral Award please contact Environmental Health online at environmentalhealth@wirral.gov.uk or visit our webpage at www.wirral.gov.uk
Safety during emptying and cleaning of fryers

HSE information sheet
Based on Catering Information Sheet No 1

Introduction

This information sheet was produced by the Hospitality and Catering Industry Liaison Forum, which has members from trade and professional associations, unions and enforcement authorities. Members’ associations are free to reproduce and distribute this guidance to catering establishments. The guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

This sheet provides advice to employers in the catering industry on safe emptying and cleaning of fryers. It gives guidance on manual emptying and cleaning and guidance on fryers with automated or semi-automated filtering (using enclosed portable filtering units).

Automated and semi-automated filtering processes avoid operators coming into contact with hot oil, significantly reducing the risks. This enables filtering to take place safely even while the oil is at normal cooking temperature. Most automated or semi-automated systems require an oil temperature of at least 100 °C for the filtering process to work effectively.

You should only carry out manual emptying and filtering of fryers when the oil has been cooled to 40 °C or below.

Key messages

Burns from hot oil can be very serious.

Oil takes only 6-7 minutes to heat up but can take 6-7 hours to cool down again.

What the law says

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 places a duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees. This duty extends, amongst other things, to providing and maintaining systems of work which are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health. The Act also places a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own and others’ health and safety.

Whichever type of fryer is used, it is essential that:

You make sure the fryer is well maintained and any attachments used are suitable for their purpose, as recommended by the manufacturer;

You have a procedure for reporting faults;

You clean up oil spillages immediately, and ensure floor areas around equipment are completely clean and dry to avoid slip risks;

You train staff in safe procedures for emptying and cleaning;

You provide staff with suitable protective equipment, where required by the risk assessment, e.g. eye protection, heat-resistant gloves, and aprons.

When to empty and clean

Many catering establishments are closed overnight. For fire safety and economy, switch off fat fryers when unattended. Carry out oil filtering and cleaning as a first task of the day rather than as part of the closing-down procedure.

Hazards

The hazards in emptying and cleaning fryers include:

Fire;
Burns from hot oil;
Contact with hot surfaces;
Fumes from boiling cleaning chemicals;
Boiling chemicals overflowing;
Eye injuries from splashes;
Slips from oil spillage;
Strains and sprains from lifting and moving containers of oil.

If the catering service runs for 24 hours and the appliance is required continuously, there are two safe options:

Use more than one fryer and clean them in rotation;
Use an automated filtering system or a semi-automated portable filtering unit that removes the hot oil directly from the fryer, filters the oil and holds it safely.
Automated and semi-automated filtering

Automated filtering systems

An automated system consists of an inbuilt oil filtration system. The oil is drained into an enclosed reservoir and an electric pump circulates it through a filter system and internal pipe-work back into the fryer. Since this process is enclosed within the equipment, the operator does not come into contact with hot oil, greatly reducing any risk.

Portable oil filtering units (semi-automated)

These units are not part of the fryer, but sit alongside it. The operator attaches an extension pipe to the fryer and the hot oil is drained into an enclosed container within the portable unit. The oil is then filtered and returned to the fryer.

If you have a fryer with automated oil draining system or a portable oil filtering unit, refer to the manufacturer’s guidelines for draining/filtering temperatures and safe operational requirements. These, together with your own risk assessment, will determine the need for suitable protective equipment. If there is still a risk from contact with hot surfaces or oil splashing, you may need to provide staff with eye protection, a protective apron and/or heat-resistant gloves/gauntlets.

Manual oil filtering

This involves the operator draining the oil from the fryer, through a filter, into a suitable metal holding or heat-resistant, hard, plastic container and manually lifting it back into the fryer (fryer oil is often supplied in hard, plastic, rigid containers). Serious accidents have occurred where oil that has not sufficiently cooled has been drained back into an empty plastic container and the base of the container has given way.

To drain oil safely and in the correct sequence, follow these guidelines:

1. Turn off the appliance and the power supply at the wall socket for electric appliances, and the on/off control for gas appliances.

2. Allow the oil to cool, ideally for at least six hours, and check the temperature, using a suitable probe thermometer before draining. Do not drain if the temperature is above 40 °C.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions and use the correct equipment (e.g. a detachable spout for the type of fryer you are emptying), making sure to bring any equipment you need to the fryer before you start.

Depending on the type of fryer, drain the oil by drain valve, removable spout, lifting container or by tilting.

If the oil is too cold to drain easily, reheat it briefly and agitate with the fryer basket (for no more than one minute). Switch the appliance off and check the temperature again before emptying.

Using a filter, run the oil into a suitable metal holding or heat-resistant, hard, plastic container. These containers will generally need carrying handles and a cover or lid. Before moving, make sure that the lid or cover is secure.

Make sure the container is empty and big enough to take the volume of oil being drained at any time.

When you are draining large volumes of oil, it is safer to drain off in smaller amounts. This avoids overfilling the container and will reduce the chance of spillages when you move it. Smaller amounts will also be easier to carry.

Place the container in a safe place where it cannot be contaminated with chemicals, water or foreign bodies. Place the container on top of a drip tray to avoid any floor contamination.

Do not dispose of waste oil down the drain – disposal must comply with environmental legislation.

Clean up any spillages immediately. Make sure floor areas around equipment are completely clean and dry to avoid slip risks (see also Preventing slips and trips in kitchens and food service).

Other precautions

Make sure the design of the drain-off tap prevents it being turned on accidentally:

Mark clearly on it that the tap should not be touched in place warning signs near the tap;
If possible, remove the tap handle when the fryer is switched on.

Cleaning procedure

This section applies to all types of fryers:

Turn off the appliance, and the power supply at the wall socket for electric appliances and the on/off control for gas appliances.
Wear suitable protective equipment, including eye protection (if appropriate). Check that other activities will not be put at risk by the cleaning activity. Check that the oil has been thoroughly drained and that there are no spillages that may cause slipping. Remove loose debris from the internal surfaces. Thoroughly wash all internal and external surfaces with suitable cleaning chemicals and check for any leaks. For stubborn residues, fill the fryer with your recommended cleaning agents and leave or simmer according to instructions. Do not leave the fryer unattended or allow it to boil as this may cause it to cascade liquid onto the floor, causing additional scalding and slipping hazards. Drain the appliance and rinse thoroughly with plenty of water. Dry all internal surfaces and make sure there is no water left in the fryer. Check the drain valve is closed and working properly, then refill and switch on as required. When refilling the fryer with oil, the oil container may be too large or heavy for one member of staff. Where possible, use smaller containers. Do not overfill the fryer. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines. Clean up any spillages immediately. Make sure floor areas around the equipment are completely clean and dry to avoid slip risks.

Training
This section applies to all types of fryers:

Make sure only staff trained in the safe use of the cleaning chemicals and cleaning procedures for the fryer do this task.

Train staff in reporting procedures, if they find the equipment is faulty, or if they have experienced any practical difficulties with cleaning the fryer in their specific work environment.

Make staff aware of the reasons for using suitable protective equipment, i.e. gloves, eye protection.

Complete risk assessments for hazardous chemicals and make staff aware of the correct procedures for using cleaning chemicals.

Make safety data sheets available to staff.

A short, written procedure can act as a reminder to staff for both draining and cleaning operations.

Further information
Preventing slips and trips in kitchens and food service Catering Information Sheet CASI6(rev2)
HSE has produced a suite of Catering Information Sheets and other guidance for the catering and hospitality industry. These are available on the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk/catering/index.htm. There is also helpful advice in Health and safety made simple: The basics for your business www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm. For more information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This document contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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