

Allergen Audits – Suppliers, Purchasing & Delivery! Pt 2

Suppliers – Use suppliers who are verified, who will provide you with FULL ingredient information and who will work with their manufacturers to provide product specification information – including ‘May Contains’ or ‘Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL)’. There are specific businesses such as Erudus that work with many food manufacturers to run a database system that allows them to supply clear, concise product details covering a uniformed data set that includes allergens and nutrition information. This data is then collated to allow wholesalers and caterers to access.

Purchasing Policy

What format does this take? Check the revision dates!

- Is there a process to ensure deliveries meet the same specification as orders? If substitutions are made the allergen information held should be checked and recorded.
- Is there a process in place to communicate these changes to the correct kitchen staff?
- Be aware of ‘New Recipe’ on product labelling and check and update allergen information if required.
- Restrictions on ordering additional/new or replacement products.
- Checks are made that different brands do not have different ingredients

Deliveries

- Statutory ingredients on products are not obscured by other labels or stickers.
- Check that no spillages have taken place on board the delivery vehicle
- Deliveries are checked to ensure no damage to packaging that may cause a cross contamination issue later.
- Correctly storing the items following delivery will ensure that incorrect items are unlikely to be mixed in together.

Storage

- Ensure allergen labelling is retained for each product, especially if the product is decanted into a different storage container (this is not best practice).
- Goods are suitably sealed to prevent cross-contamination.
- Are there processes in place for how allergen foods are stored in freezers, fridges and the dry stores.
- Allergen ingredients are stored on lower shelves and in a separate area to avoid cross contamination risks

How are you recording ingredient information?

- When alterations are made to your menu who has the responsibility to check the allergen information is up to date and correct for each dish?
- How are you getting the ingredient information, especially for substituted products i.e. low fat mayonnaise may differ to the original variety?
- Are there posters (Inhouse /FSA) Back of House (BOH) for staff to refer to of the 14 allergens?
- Are there allergy tables/matrixes?
 - Manual
 - Online
- Is there a specific staff member(s) that holds the responsibility to regularly review the menu/allergen information and update accordingly on both manual and online versions of your menus?
- Are full ingredient lists accessible to both BOH and FOH staff? How is this information displayed/produced (matrix/ allergy table/ software)?
- Where possible, reducing the instances of adhoc menu changes will reduce the level of administration required to keep updating ingredient/allergen information.

Verification is vital for a good audit!

This sheet is part of a series of what to consider when auditing a Food Business Operations (FBO)