



## Section 2, Mandatory Information

### In this section, you will learn:

- ▶ What are the requirements for the correctness, size, language and placement of labelling?
- ▶ What is meant by prepacked and non-prepacked foods?
- ▶ What mandatory labelling is required for prepacked foods?
- ▶ What information must be provided for non-prepacked foods?

### Correctness of labelling

You must provide truthful and sufficient information for foodstuffs and avoid misleading labelling.

In labelling food, you may not claim that the food has special effects or properties that it does not have or for which it does not differ from other, similar foods.

For example, you may not claim that a fresh cucumber is fat-free, as this is true for all fresh cucumbers.

You may also not claim that a foodstuff has properties related to the prevention, treatment or cure of a human illness.

For example, it is forbidden to market foodstuffs as a “flu treatment” or a “help for urinary tract infection”.

For further information, see section 4.3 of the Food Information Guide for Food Supervisors and Food Operators (in Finnish and Swedish).

### Legible, clear and visible labelling

The labelling should be easily visible, legible and clearly comprehensible.

The aim is that a person with normal vision can read the labelling without effort.

The size of the small x font must be at least 1.2 mm. The labelling must be indelible.

For further information, see section 4.2 of the Food Information Guide for Food Supervisors and Food Operators (in Finnish and Swedish).

### Prepacked or non-prepacked food?

The requirements on mandatory information differ whether the food is prepacked or non-prepacked. For this reason, it is essential that you understand the difference between the two terms.

### Prepacked food

refers to foodstuffs that

- have been completely or partially enclosed in a package before sale, and the contents of the package cannot be changed without opening or breaking the package, and

- are meant for presentation as such to consumers or mass caterers. Prepacked foods are single items, such as a bottle of ketchup or a can of whole meat.

**Non-prepacked food** refers to food that

- is packed by consumers themselves or packed on the sales premises at the consumer's request, such as pastries packed into bags at a bakery counter or bread and pastries packed by a product demonstrator at a presentation
- is prepacked on the sales premises for direct sale, such as takeaway salads and sandwiches packaged at the store
- is served at the place of presentation to final consumers in a ready-to-eat form, such as a soup lunch at a restaurant.

For further information, see section 5.3 of the Food Information Guide for Food Supervisors and Food Operators (in Finnish and Swedish).

### Language of labelling

As a rule, mandatory labelling for **prepacked foods** must be in Finnish and Swedish.

However, if the food is sold only in a monolingual municipality, the mandatory labelling can be made only in the language of that municipality.

There is no law on the language requirements for **non-prepacked food**.

Despite this, Finnish Food Authority recommends that the same policy is followed with non-prepacked food as the one described above for prepacked food.

For further information, see sections 4.4 and 7 of the Food Information Guide for Food Supervisors and Food Operators (in Finnish and Swedish).

### Placement of labelling

For **prepacked food**, mandatory food information must be presented directly on the packaging (or on a label attached to it) in which the product is delivered to consumers or mass caterers, such as restaurants.

For **non-prepacked food**, information must be indicated to final consumers in writing with an easily visible and legible brochure, sign or other type of notice. The notice must be placed in the vicinity of the foodstuff.

Information may also be given verbally, as long it is stated clearly that information is available on request. Exceptions to this are the labelling of a product's high salt content at the retail level and the name of the food and the country of origin of meat in catering establishments. This information must always be provided in writing.

For further information, see sections 5.4 and 7.2 of the Food Information Guide for Food Supervisors and Food Operators (in Finnish and Swedish).

### Mandatory labelling in prepacked food

In **prepacked food**, the following information must be presented on the packaging or on a label attached to it:

- Name of the food
- List of ingredients
- Substances and products that cause allergies or intolerances must be emphasised in the list of ingredients
- The quantities of certain ingredients or ingredient groups, when necessary
- Net quantity (=weight or volume)
- Date of minimum durability ('best before' date) or 'use by' date

- Name, business name or auxiliary name and address of the responsible food business operator
- Country of origin, in other words the country of manufacture or production of the food, or the product's place of provenance, if necessary
- Instructions for storage, if necessary
- Conditions of use (including a warning label if necessary)
- Actual alcoholic strength by volume of beverages containing more than 1.2% by volume of alcohol (Finnish Food Authority recommendation: in solid food containing more than 1.8% by volume of alcohol)
- Food batch number
- Nutrition declaration
- Indication of the use of packaging gases, if necessary
- Indication of the use of sweeteners, if necessary

Any other labelling required by special legislation, such as

- Indication of high salt content, if necessary
- Identification mark on foodstuffs of animal origin produced at a food establishment

For further information, see section 6 of the Food Information Guide for Food Supervisors and Food Operators (in Finnish and Swedish).

### **Mandatory information for non-prepacked food**

**Retail establishments** must provide the following information on non-prepacked foods to consumers:

- Name of the food
- Ingredients
- Substances and products that can cause allergies or intolerances
- Country of origin or place of provenance, if necessary

- Conditions of use and storage, if necessary
- For cheeses, sausages and other meat products served as charcuterie, the amount of fat and salt and, if necessary, a notice of high salt content
- For bread, the amount of salt and, if necessary, a notice of high salt content
- Information required by special legislation

**Catering establishments** must provide the following information for non-prepacked food:

- Name of the food in writing
- Substances and products that can cause allergies or intolerances
- Country of origin of meat used as an ingredient in writing

For further information, see section 7.1 of the Food Information Guide for Food Supervisors and Food Operators (in Finnish and Swedish).

You can test your knowledge with the revision exercises found in Section 11 of this guide.

#### **Summary**

- ▶ You must provide truthful and sufficient information for foodstuffs and avoid misleading labelling.
- ▶ The labelling should be easily visible, legible and clearly comprehensible.
- ▶ As a rule, the labelling must be in Finnish and Swedish.
- ▶ The requirements on labelling differ whether the food is prepacked or non-prepacked.