



Image: Tussitaikurit Oy

SETTING UP A RESTAURANT OR A CAFÉ

Are you setting up a restaurant or a café?

Here is a checklist on what to do from the perspective of food legislation.

Find suitable premises

Once you find premises you like, check with the municipal building supervision authority if it can be used as a restaurant or café. Alternatively you can find out if it is possible to change the premises to fit your plans. If changing the premises is possible, check with the housing company whether you are allowed to have a restaurant or café at the property, and apply for a building permit for the renovation. Remember to consider accessibility requirements when planning the modifications.

Restaurants and cafés are required to have a sufficient number of toilet facilities for customers if the establishment can cater for more than 6 customers. You can get more information about the right number of toilet facilities from Valvira or the municipal building supervision authority. In addition, it is recommended to have separate toilet facilities for staff and customers.

The kitchen must have enough water fixtures and room for washing hands and cleaning foodstuffs and equipment. Reserve enough refrigerating space and a separate cooling cabinet if you will be cooling foodstuffs.

Plan your operations to match your premises

Make a sensible plan for receiving and storing the raw materials for preparing food. Similarly, you should carefully plan the cooking process in order to avoid cross-contamination between raw materials and finished foods. Because products have different temperature requirements, your cold store needs to have areas with different temperatures, or you have to have several cold rooms with different temperatures.



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Requirements for personnel

Personnel who handle unpacked, readily perishable foods are required to have hygiene passports, work clothing and a health status statement.

Submit a food premises notification

Submit a food premises notification to the food control authority of the municipality where your restaurant or café is located no later than 4 weeks before you start operations. You can get a notification form from your municipality's website or the food control authority, which will provide you with advice and guidance. You can also submit a notification in the electronic notification service of environmental health (**ilppa**). The food control authority registers your restaurant or café, and in the future, your facility will be subject to regular food control. Both the registration and the food control are chargeable official activities.

Plan your own-check activities

Own-check system is a method of risk management for your business. Use it to plan in advance how to manage operational risks and how to fix potential mistakes. The Finnish Hospitality Association, MaRa ry, has drawn up best practice and own-check guidelines for restaurants, titled "Omavalvonta ravintoloissa - elintarvikkeet" (only available in Finnish). You can manage your own-check activities by following the instructions. Own-check activities involve some accounting requirements.

Other permits

If necessary, apply for a liquor licence from the Regional State Administrative Agency and a permit for selling tobacco products from your municipality's food control authority. You can find more information on these permits on Valvira's website. Also remember to have your facilities inspected by the fire and rescue authorities before opening your restaurant or café. If necessary, apply for a music licence.

More information:

- www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/companies/food-sector/
- Finnish Food Authority guide: **Setting Up a Restaurant – Guide for Small and Medium-sized Businesses**

You can ask for more advice from the food control authority of the municipality where your business is located.

Important everyday considerations

- Handle, store and transport foods hygienically. Make every effort to ensure that the food is not contaminated with microbes or ingredients that are not supposed to be in the product. It must be possible to store allergenic ingredients separately from each other and from foodstuffs that do not include them.
- Store each product at the appropriate temperature while observing other relevant conditions.
- Make sure that you provide sufficient and correct information on the food you are selling. You must not mislead consumers.
- Make sure that the raw materials you use are permitted in foodstuffs. Less known raw materials, such as ones imported from outside the EU or ones that are natural plants and mushrooms, may be novel foods. You need a permit to use novel foods.
- Ensure that all materials coming into contact with food are food safe and suitable for the intended use. This way, you can make sure that no harmful chemicals are introduced to the food.
- Make sure that your products are traceable. It must be possible to trace foodstuffs and their raw materials at each stage of production, manufacturing, and distribution. Also make sure you know what to do if you know or suspect that a foodstuff you are selling is not safe.



Remember that as an operator in the food sector, you are responsible for ensuring that the food is safe, traceable and accompanied with correct and adequate information.