



The Gatehouse

Charity Registration No. 1216065

Food Groups Food Safety Handbook 2026



Welcome

Thank you for supporting the Gatehouse, whether that be as a volunteer or paid member of staff. The Gatehouse is an award-winning community drop in centre with 34 years' experience of working with adults who are homeless, vulnerably housed, on low income and/or looking for company & community. The project is mostly volunteer led and relies on the good faith of the local and wider community.

The majority of food for the café is made by volunteers and delivered to the project each day. This handbook focuses on how we should operate as an external food group volunteer, when dealing with food.

Handling food is a risky business at the best of times, and we need to satisfy ourselves, the people we serve and the authorities that we are doing everything safely and in the best possible taste!

This pack should provide you with all the do's and don'ts you need, but if you are in any doubt, please don't be afraid to ask.

You can contact the Services Manager on:

zoe@oxfordgatehouse.org

The office number is still 01865 792999

10 Woodstock Road,

Oxford

OX2 6HT

<http://oxfordgatehouse.org>

Food allergen hazards

Food that is perfectly safe for one person to eat may be extremely hazardous for another. Some people experience allergic reactions to certain foods – reactions that can range from mild to life threatening. It is important that everyone who prepares or handles food, in any context:

Is fully aware of the foods that may trigger an allergic reaction and knows what precautions need to be taken to ensure that customers do not eat a food that they are trying to avoid.

Regulations state that people should be able to be told; what has been used in their food if they ask.

Please see the example allergens list that will need to be used by anybody preparing food that will be used by the Gatehouse Guests:

An allergen label template with a purple header and a white body. The header contains the word 'ALLERGEN' in large, bold, white capital letters. Below the header, the text 'This item contains the following Allergens:' is written in bold. The body of the label contains a list of 14 allergens, each preceded by a small square checkbox. The allergens are arranged in three columns. The first column contains: Cereals containing Gluten, Crustaceans (eg, scampi, prawns, crabs, lobster & crayfish), Eggs, Fish, Peanuts, Soybeans, and Celery (and Celeriac). The second column contains: Milk, Mustard, Sesame, and Lupin. The third column contains: Nuts, such as: almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio, cashew and macadamia (Queensland) nuts., Sulphur Dioxide (preservative found in some dried fruit), and Molluscs, for example, clams, mussels, whelks, oysters, snails and squid.

ALLERGEN		
This item contains the following Allergens:		
☐ Cereals containing Gluten	☐ Nuts, such as: almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, Brazil nuts, pistachio, cashew and macadamia (Queensland) nuts.	
☐ Crustaceans (eg, scampi, prawns, crabs, lobster & crayfish)	☐ Sulphur Dioxide (preservative found in some dried fruit).	
☐ Eggs	☐ Milk	
☐ Fish	☐ Mustard	
☐ Peanuts	☐ Sesame	
☐ Soybeans	☐ Lupin	
☐ Celery (and Celeriac)	☐ Molluscs, for example, clams, mussels, whelks, oysters, snails and squid.	

Allergen stickers are either pre-prepared for each different food type or they are kept in the lean to at the project. Please ask the Operations Manager if you have any questions! We cannot accept any pre-made food donation without one of these being attached. If you are not sure of the contents of the ingredients, tick every box on the label instead.

A large allergen information sign is visible in the project for Guests at all times.

The hazards of a sandwich

According to food scientists, a sandwich is a “high-risk” item. Avoid risks in the following ways:

Ingredients

- Check that your supply is of good quality, within the “use by” date, and the packaging intact.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate.
- Don’t accept chilled food that is too warm (above 8°C).
- **If in doubt, don’t take the risk!**

Storage

- Keep ingredients away from pests, pets and bacteria.
- Where possible keep Gatehouse food separate from your own.
- Store in the fridge at 8°C or below.
- Store cooked items at the top of the fridge, raw below.
- **Don’t use food that may be contaminated!**

Preparing sandwiches

- **Wash your hands...again and again.**
- Keep everything spotlessly clean.
- If you have long hair, tie it up.
- If you’ve been unwell, pass the job on to someone else.

Don’t worry about letting the Gatehouse down.

- Cover & chill sandwiches in the fridge or a cool-box as soon as you can.
- Keep salads separate from other ingredients - don’t put them inside the sandwiches.

Transporting sandwiches

- Label all sandwiches with the preparation date, time, contents and your own details.

(Without these details we will have to throw them out!).

- Use a cool-box or bag & refrigerated panels. Hold temperature at 8°C or below. (Ask us for a thermometer if you need one.)
- Keep all food away from dust and dirt.
- Attach a completed allergens list to each different sandwich type before delivery.

(Without these details we will have to throw them out!)

The hazards of cake

Other than the obvious hazard of wanting to eat cake when you see it, see some of the other hazards below:

Ingredients

- Check that your supply is of good quality, within the “use by” date, and the packaging is intact.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate.
- Don’t accept chilled food that is too warm (above at 8°C or below).
- **If in doubt, don’t take the risk!**

Storage

- Keep ingredients away from pests, pets and bacteria.
- Where possible keep Gatehouse food separate from your own.
- Store at 8°C or below, in the fridge.
- Store cooked items at the top of the fridge, raw below.
- Don’t use food that may be contaminated.

Preparing cake

- **Wash your hands...again and again.**
- Keep everything spotlessly clean.
- If you have long hair, tie it up.
- If you’ve been unwell, pass the job on to someone else.

Don’t worry about letting the Gatehouse down.

Cooking cake

- Where appropriate follow the manufacturers cooking instructions for food products.
- Use a probe to test the temperature; your cake must get to above 75°C or above.
- To cool the cake down, cover it with a lid or move it to a colder area.
- Once the cake has cooled store it at 8°C or below in the fridge.

Transporting cake

- Label all cake with the preparation date, time, contents and your own details.

(Without these details we will have to throw it out!)

- Make sure that the cake is thoroughly covered and sealed.
- Keep all food away from dust and dirt.
- Attach a completed allergens list to each cake before delivery.

(Without these details we will have to throw it out!)

The hazards of a soup

Again the hazards of soup making are somewhat similar:

Ingredients

- Check that your supply is of good quality, within the 'use by' date and the packaging is intact.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate.
- Don't accept chilled food that is too warm (above 8°C).

If in doubt, don't take the risk!

Storage

- Keep ingredients away from pests, pets and bacteria.
- Where possible keep Gatehouse food separate from your own.
- Store in the fridge at 8°C or below.
- Store cooked items at the top of the fridge, raw below.
- **Don't use food that may be contaminated.**

Preparing soup

- **Wash your hands...again and again.**
- Keep everything spotlessly clean.
- If you have long hair, tie it up.
- If you've been unwell, pass the job on to someone else.

Don't worry about letting the Gatehouse down.

Cooking soup

- Where appropriate follow the manufacturers cooking instructions for food products.
- Make sure soups are simmering and stir them frequently; to ensure any bacteria is killed.
- Use a probe to test the temperature; your soup must get to above at 75°C or above.
- To cool the soup down, cover it with a lid or move it to a colder area.
- Once the soup has cooled store it at 8°C or below.
-

Transporting soup

- Label all soup with the preparation date, time, contents and your own details.

(Without these details we will have to throw it out!)

- Make sure that the soup is thoroughly covered and sealed.
- Keep all food away from dust and dirt.
- Attach a completed allergens list to each delivery.

(Without these details we are advised to throw it out!)

The hazards of hot cooked food

External hot food donors should be from a registered food provider, have signed the Gatehouse external donor food safety agreement and have been agreed by the Operations Manager **ONLY**:

Ingredients

- Check that your supply is of good quality, within the “use by” date, and the packaging is intact.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate.
- Don’t accept chilled food that is too warm (above 8°C).

If in doubt, don’t take the risk!

Storage

- Keep ingredients away from pests, pets and bacteria.
- Where possible keep Gatehouse food separate from your own.
- Store at in the fridge at 8°C or below.
- Store cooked items at the top of the fridge, raw below.

Don’t use food that may be contaminated.

Preparing cooked food

- **Wash your hands...again and again.**
- Keep everything spotlessly clean.
- If you have long hair, tie it up.
- If you’ve been unwell, pass the job on to someone else.

Don’t worry about letting the Gatehouse down.

Cooking food

- Where appropriate follow the manufacturers cooking instructions for food products.
- Make sure the food is cooked thoroughly; to ensure any bacteria is killed.
- Use a probe to test the temperature; it must get to above 75°C or above

Transporting cooked food

- Label all food with the preparation date, time, contents and your own details.

(Without these details we will have to throw it out!).

- Make sure that the food is thoroughly covered or sealed.
- Keep all food away from dust and dirt.
- Attach a completed allergens list to each different food type before delivery.

(Without these details we are advised to throw it out!).

Arriving at the Gatehouse

Ensure the food arrives at 63°C or above on arrival **OR** the donor needs to sign to agree that the food gave a temperature reading of 75°C two hours before delivery/distribution.

We cannot reheat any food at the project so please ensure that all the instructions are followed correctly. Without this, the Gatehouse cannot accept or distribute the hot food donation.

Food Provider Agreement

Each food group lead or individual donor will need to complete the food provider agreement and submit this to the Operations Manager. The food group lead will need to ensure that each donor has a copy of this handbook before preparation takes place.

This group/person, known as.....

is signing up to the Gatehouse food safety code.

We are happy to agree to the following:

- ☐ An excellent standard of cleanliness
- ☐ Use of labels for sandwiches, cakes etc.
- ☐ Control of temperature
- ☐ Separation of raw and cooked food
- ☐ Not preparing food if we are unwell
- ☐ Completion of allergens label with every delivery
- ☐ Comply with any guidance in this handbook when operating under a national pandemic

We will keep the Gatehouse informed of any changes or difficulties.

Signed on behalf of the group:

Name

(Date).....

Please return one copy to zoe@oxfordgatehouse.org and keep a copy in your pack.



Thank you
FOR YOUR SUPPORT