



Understanding Restaurant Inspections in Belgium: Key points in Inspections

The Royal Decree of 22 October 1996 in Belgium outlines critical food safety regulations that restaurant owners must adhere to ensure compliance and prepare for inspections. Here's an overview tailored for restaurant owners along with a checklist grouped into key areas for inspection preparation.

Overview of the Royal Decree

The Royal Decree emphasizes food safety, hygiene, and the prevention of foodborne illnesses. It covers areas such as:

- General hygiene
- Food handling and storage
- Equipment sanitation
- Staff training

Key Points for Restaurant Inspections

1. General Hygiene

- **Cleanliness of Facilities**
 - Ensure all areas, including dining, kitchen, and restrooms, are clean and free of pests.
 - Regularly sanitize surfaces and utensils.
- **Waste Management**
 - Proper disposal of waste; maintain a clean waste area.
 - Use appropriate waste containers with lids.
- **Pest Control**
 - Implement a pest control plan and keep records of inspections and treatments.

2. Food Handling and Storage

- **Temperature Control**
 - Check that refrigerators are at or below 4°C (39°F) and freezers at -18°C (0°F).
 - Maintain temperature logs for food storage areas.
- **Food Preparation Practices**
 - Ensure separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meat, poultry, and vegetables.
 - Verify that employees are trained on safe food handling practices.
- **Food Labelling**
 - Ensure all food items are labelled correctly with expiration dates.
 - Implement a first-in, first-out (FIFO) system for inventory.





3. Equipment Sanitation

- **Cleaning Protocols**
 - Establish a routine cleaning schedule for all kitchen equipment.
 - Use approved cleaning agents and maintain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for chemicals.
- **Dishwashing**
 - Ensure the dishwashing machine reaches the required temperatures for sanitization.
 - Hand wash if necessary, following proper sanitization steps.

4. Staff Training

- **Hygiene Training**
 - Ensure all staff receive training on food safety protocols and personal hygiene.
 - Keep records of training sessions and attendance.
- **Health Checks**
 - Implement a health check policy for employees handling food.
 - Ensure staff are aware of reporting illnesses or symptoms.

5. Documentation and Records

- **Compliance Records**
 - Maintain logs for food safety checks and training records.
 - Keep copies of health department inspections and corrective actions taken.
- **Emergency Procedures**
 - Display emergency contact numbers and procedures clearly in staff areas.
 - Train staff on emergency protocols and evacuation procedures.

Final Steps

- **Regular Self-Inspections**
 - Conduct regular evaluations against this checklist to ensure continuous compliance.
- **Stay Updated**
 - Keep abreast of any changes to food safety regulations and update practices accordingly.

Following this checklist will not only help ensure that your restaurant is ready for inspections but will also promote a culture of food safety and hygiene within your establishment.

