



FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY  
SUPPORTED SCHEME

# Food Hygiene Inspection Rating Guidance

**A GUIDE TO AID CONSISTENCY FOR ENFORCEMENT  
OFFICERS APPLYING THE FOOD SAFETY ACT CODE  
OF PRACTICE FOOD HYGIENE INSPECTION RATING  
SCHEME**



**ALEHM**  
The Association of London Environmental Health Managers



# Introduction

## Purpose

This document is produced by the London Food Co-ordinating Group and is a revised version of an original produced by the Lancashire Chief Environmental Health Officers Food Officer Group with their kind permission. Originally based on the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice No.9, it has been updated to reflect the changes to the inspection rating scheme contained in the consolidated Code of Practice issued in March 2006 and is prepared to address four specific objectives:

1. To assist officers in interpreting the scoring system.
2. To remove subjectivity from the scores applied.
3. To promote both intra and inter authority consistency in the application of the scoring system.
4. To act as a basis for ensuring consistency in support of the introduction of a London wide scheme for publishing food hygiene information (scores on the doors).

## Authors

Originally produced by a sub-group of officers from the Lancashire Chief Environmental Health Officers Food Officer Group

Amendments and updating has been carried out by members of the London Food Co-ordinating Group, comprising:

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## Using the Guide

The flow charts contained in this Guide should be applied to each food business following an inspection to determine the appropriate score for that premises. Because this Guide is based on the Code of Practice, it should not normally be necessary to refer to the Code as well.

This Guide is not to be used for establishments subject to approval under regulation 853/2004, except stand-alone cold stores.

In order to promote objectivity, the following criteria have been agreed:

### DEFINITIONS

#### High-risk foods

High-risk foods may be regarded as foods that support the growth of micro-organisms, and/or are intended for consumption without further treatment that could destroy pathogenic micro-organisms or their toxins.<sup>1</sup>

#### Low acid food

Foods with a pH of higher than 4.2<sup>2</sup>

### FOOD HYGIENE INSPECTION RATING SCHEME<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FSA Code of Practice (England) Annex 5, Paragraph A5.3.1.1: A

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Food Science and Technology (2001)  
LFCG Food Hygiene Inspection Rating Guidance May 07 v3.doc

The rating scheme is a system for ranking the priority of food hygiene inspections and comprises of three distinct parts.

### **Part 1: potential hazard**

Here a score is ascribed to the potential hazard at the establishment. To arrive at a score the inspecting officer will have to determine:

- the type of food handled at the establishment (high or low-risk);
- it's state (wrapped or open);
- what is done with that food at the establishment (manufactured, wholesaled, re-wrapped, prepared by caterers, retailed etc). If undertaken at the establishment, certain hazardous processes listed in the code<sup>4</sup> will attract an additional 20 points; and
- consumers at risk. An additional 22 points is added for certain establishments where food is produced and/or served to vulnerable persons greater than 20 in number.

### **Part 2: level of compliance**

Here the officer is required to ascribe two separate scores based on the conditions found at the establishment. The scoring under this heading requires a separate evaluation of (1) the hygiene and safety procedures and (2) structure of the establishment.

The number and effect of the breach(es) identified under either category will determine the score.

Although not explicitly stated in the Code, the level of HACCP implementation should be scored under the hygiene and safety procedures part.

Some matters may correctly be assessed under both categories; this principle is illustrated in the following example:

*An absence of hand washing provisions will attract a higher score under the structural requirement heading but also under the hygiene category if food handlers are not washing and drying their hands hygienically.*

If a breach is identified, such as a boiler breakdown resulting in no hot water, as long as effective, interim provisions are in place, such as washing equipment in a dish washer and using sanitising wipes for hand cleansing, it is suggested that under these circumstances, the establishment should not be given a high score under Part 2. Obviously, this would not be the case if other non-mitigated breaches were also identified.

The consistency working party considers that if any **un-mitigated, major** non-compliances are identified under Part 2, the establishment should not get a score of less than 15 points. A risk based approach should be used when evaluating whether a breach is being effectively mitigated.

### **Part 3: Confidence in management/control systems**

In Part 3, officers are **NOT** meant to reassess the management's performance as this is scored under Part 2. Instead, an assessment and prediction is required as to the likelihood of the business **maintaining** a satisfactory level of compliance.

It may assist in the determination, to consider whether standards are likely to improve or decline at the establishment over the next period.

## **FLOW CHARTS**

The items listed in bold type are those which appear in Annex 5 of the Code. Items in italics are additional illustrative examples intended to give further guidance on how to score the breach(es)

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<sup>3</sup> FSA Code of Practice (England) Annex 5, Paragraph A5.2

<sup>4</sup> FSA Code of Practice (England) Annex 5, Paragraph A5.3.1.2:B  
LFCG Food Hygiene Inspection Rating Guidance May 07 v3.doc

found.

For Parts 1A, 1B and 1C, officers should follow the appropriate path to determine the appropriate score. After identifying the score in Part 1A the officer should follow down the dotted arrow to Part 1B to determine what, if any, additional score must be added.

For Parts 2 and 3, officers must determine the most appropriate set of circumstances described to the conditions found at the establishment. As well as the Code of Practice descriptions, further guidance is provided of possible likely circumstances that would arise to the awarding of each score. These are intended to guide officers to select the most appropriate score. Circumstances at an establishment may include the examples given against one or more of the scores. In this case the HIGHEST scoring significant issue should be the one which determines the score.

For example, in Part 2, for Food Hygiene, where a premises is found to have fridges at between 5 and 8 °C, with daily checks and some records (10 points) but has non-compliance at one critical point (or other significant failure) (15 points) then the higher score of 15 points would be awarded.

Officers should use sound judgement in applying the guidance and determine which factors have the greatest bearing on compliance.

**The further descriptive guidance gives EXAMPLES of *likely* circumstances that would be appropriate to attract the score and is not intended to suggest that these exact conditions will be found at the premises.**

For Part 4, officers should follow the appropriate path to determine the appropriate score.

# Part 1A: Type of Food and Method of Handling Part 1B: Method of Processing

*Add scores at both ends of dotted arrows to arrive at total score.*

**Are any high risk foods handled?**

NO

YES

## Type of food and method of handling at the food business establishment

**Manufacture/  
Production**

**Wholesale/  
Distribution**  
Shelf stable foods

**Retail**  
e.g. fruit,  
vegetables, canned  
& ambient shelf  
stable products

**Preparation**  
by voluntary and  
charitable groups

Is filleting, salting or  
cold smoking of fish  
carried out?  
YES NO

<b>1A</b>	5											
	10	10		10	10		5	5				
	30											
<b>1B</b>	0	0		0	0		0	0				

## Type of food and method of handling at the food business establishment

**Manufacture/  
Production**  
e.g. Bakery  
(with or  
without retail)

**Wholesale/  
Distribution**

**Retail**  
e.g. Butchers  
shop whether  
or not cooks  
own meats

**Preparation**  
e.g. Sandwich  
shop, caterer

Does process involve:

- Cook chill
- Thermal processing or aseptic packing of low-acid foods
- Vacuum or sous-vide packing?

NO YES

Is there any repacking/  
rewrapping of  
high risk foods?  
YES NO

Are all foods pre-packed?  
YES NO

Is there small-scale  
production of cooked meat?  
YES NO

Is there any vacuum or sous-  
vide packing of high-risk foods?  
NO YES

Is cooked meat  
sold other than to  
final consumer?  
YES NO

Are there less than 20 meals  
consumed/day?  
YES NO

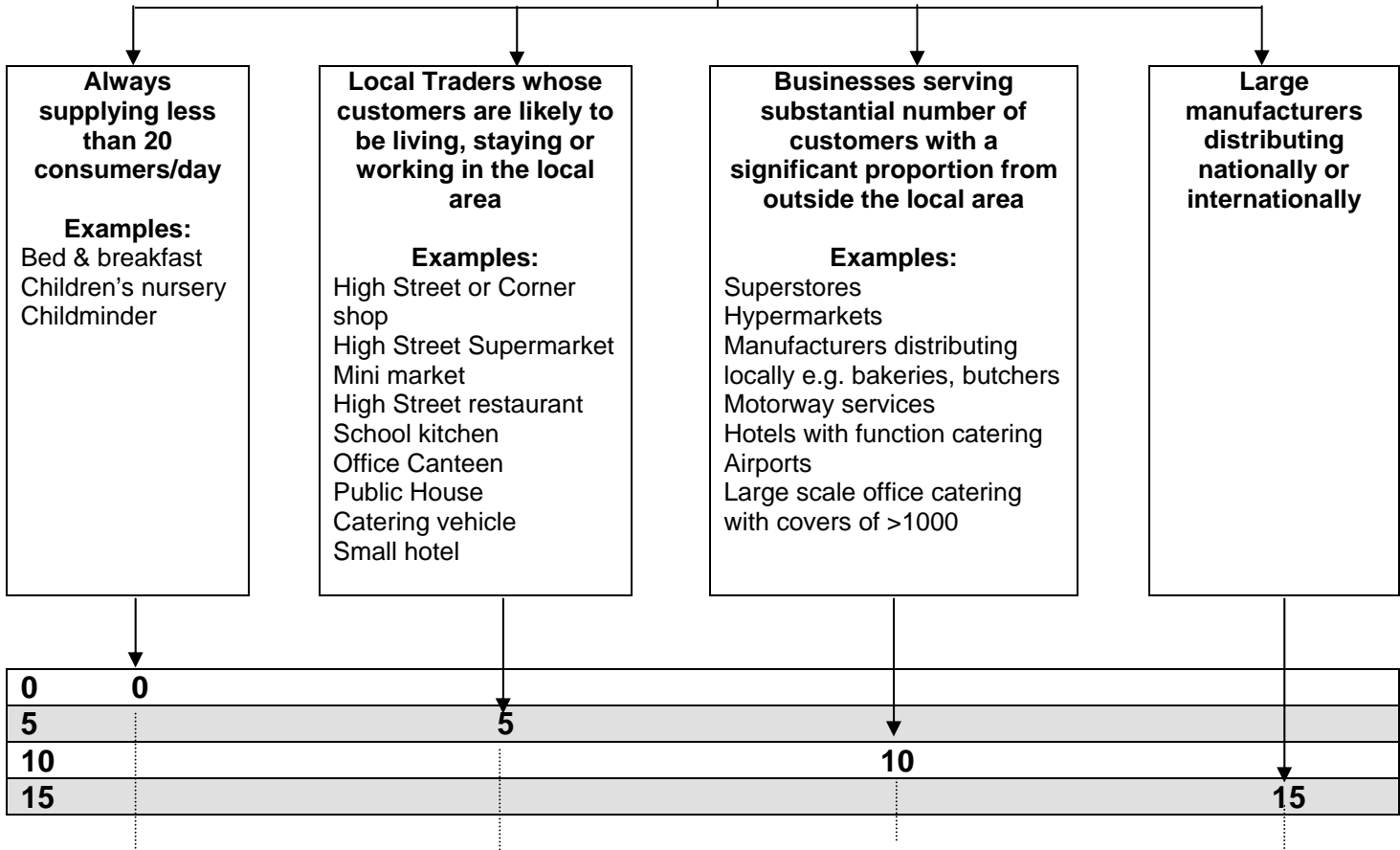
Does caterer  
produce cook  
chill foods?  
YES NO

Does caterer  
produce cook  
chill foods?  
YES NO

<b>1A</b>	5																							
	10			10	10																			
	30																							
	40	40	40		40	40		40	40	40	40		40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
<b>1B</b>	0	0		0	0		0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	20	20					20	20	20	20		20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

# Part 1C Consumers at Risk

## Consumers at Risk



**In some cases an additional score of 22 is to be added**

**Is high risk food produced or served?**

YES

NO

Are the consumers under 5 or over 65 years of age or sick or immuno-compromised?  
 Examples: hospitals, nursing homes, day-care centres and child nurseries

YES

NO

Are there more than 20 persons at risk in this group?

YES

NO

**Add 22 to score**

**No score to add**

## Part 2

### Level of (Current) Compliance

#### FOOD HYGIENE AND SAFETY PROCEDURES INCLUDING HANDLING PRACTICES AND TEMPERATURE CONTROL

**Bold type refers to Code of Practice description**

Standard type provides additional interpretation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Almost total non-compliance with statutory obligations</b></li> <li>• Non-compliance at several critical points</li> <li>• Can't do much worse</li> </ul> <p>Contamination existing or probable in the near future, raw egg recipes used, uncontrolled rodent/cockroach infestation, high risk foods and/or fridge &gt;15 °C, fridge broken down, high risk food at ambient for many hours, undercooking likely, no checking or awareness, defective cooking equipment, mistakes probable</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">25</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>General failure to satisfy statutory obligations</b></li> <li>• <b>Standards generally low</b></li> </ul> <p>Non-compliance at two critical points (or other significant failures)</p> <p>Must do better</p> <p>No covering of food, no separation, dirty contact surfaces, evidence of pests, high risk foods and/or fridge 10-15 °C, no chill checks, high risk foods at ambient too long, no or broken thermometer, no cooling controls, very few cooking checks, no thermometer, no safe cooking method, little awareness, mistakes possible</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">20</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some major non-compliance with statutory obligations</b></li> <li>• <b>More effort required to prevent fall in standards</b></li> </ul> <p>Non-compliance at one critical point (or other significant failure) or several minor matters</p> <p>Should do better</p> <p>Inadequate cleaning of contact surfaces, no disinfectant, some poor separation, no date coding, poor covering of food, high risk foods/fridge 8-10 °C, no/few chill checks, no reliable records, some high risk foods not refrigerated on time, poor cooling, inadequate cooking checks, uncertain methods but some awareness, no or broken thermometer</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">15</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standards being maintained or improved</b></li> <li>• <b>Some non-compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes</b></li> </ul> <p>Matters of non-compliance not critical to food safety, but have potential to become critical if standards fall further</p> <p>Could do better</p> <p>Some food covered, food in date where applied, separate surfaces/equipment, questionable disinfectant use, foreign bodies not well controlled, high risk foods/fridge 5-8 °C, daily checks, some records, high risk foods chilled, cooking safe methods implemented, thermometer available, cooking records unlikely</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">10</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High standard of compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes</b></li> <li>• <b>Some minor non-compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes</b></li> </ul> <p>Improvements still possible</p> <p>Attempting to deal effectively with problems</p> <p>Almost there</p> <p>Most food covered and dated, good separation, most procedures in place, food surfaces clean, disinfectant in use, high risk foods/fridges 0-5 °C, chill temperatures monitored and recorded, calibrated thermometer, cooking checked and recorded, cook time/temperature targets in place</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">5</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High standard of compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes</b></li> <li>• <b>Conforms to accepted good practices in the trade</b></li> </ul> <p>Securely and consistently achieving full compliance</p> <p>A model for others</p> <p>Contamination most unlikely, all food covered and dated, best hygiene practices, all procedures implemented, where raw eggs used they are Lion eggs or equivalent, foreign body policy, high risk foods/fridges 0-3 °C monitored, recorded, alarmed, Failsafe cook, alarms, cook records</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">0</div>

## Part 2

### Level of (Current) Compliance

#### STRUCTURE, CLEANLINESS, LAYOUT AND CONDITION, LIGHTING, VENTILATION, FACILITIES ETC.

**Bold type refers to Code of Practice description**  
Standard type provides additional interpretation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Almost total non-compliance with statutory obligations</b></li> <li>• Substantial and general non-compliance</li> <li>• Establishment not physically suited to the business</li> <li>• Can't do much worse</li> <li>• No hot water, no key wash basin/sink, blocked soil drain, filthy, immediate risk likely, accumulated long term dirt/food debris, complete failure to pest proof or treat/control infestation</li> </ul>	25
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>General failure to satisfy statutory obligations</b></li> <li>• <b>Standards generally low</b></li> <li>• General non-compliance, including two significant issues</li> <li>• Must do better</li> <li>• Extra sink/wash basin essential, temporarily no hot water with few measures to resolve, open gullies, immediate cleaning required, missing cleaning equipment, long term dirt, major flaking paint in food rooms, repairs needed to enable cleaning, significant pest harbourage, significant pest proofing/control measures required</li> </ul>	20
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some major non-compliance with statutory obligations</b></li> <li>• <b>More effort required to prevent fall in standards</b></li> <li>• General non compliance including one significant issue or several minor matters</li> <li>• Should do better</li> <li>• Extra sink/wash basin required, temporary no/inadequate hot water with some measures to resolve, needs better ventilation and/or lighting, open drain gully, some significant dirt, no cleaning schedule, poor cleaning equipment, deep clean needed, significant cracked tiles or other damaged surfaces, some structural damage, key areas hard to clean, poor refuse storage (e.g. inadequate/unlidded bins), inadequate refuse collection frequency, minor pest proofing required</li> </ul>	15
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standards being maintained or improved</b></li> <li>• <b>Some non-compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes</b></li> <li>• Matters of non-compliance not of immediate significance, but have potential to become significant if standards fall any further</li> <li>• Could do better</li> <li>• Most facilities provided, more wash basins/sinks preferable, average ventilation and/or lighting, structural cleaning could improve (floors/corners etc), unlikely to have cleaning schedule, minimal cleaning equipment, aging/poor repairs, clean and cleanable tiles or other surfaces, pest proofing could become an issue e.g. lack of fly screens, refuse control satisfactory (tidy, lidded bins, adequate collection contract)</li> </ul>	10
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High standard of compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes</b></li> <li>• <b>Some minor non-compliance of food hygiene regulations</b></li> <li>• <b>Some minor non-compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes</b></li> <li>• Some transitory lapses/design difficulties. Improvements still possible</li> <li>• Attempting to deal effectively with problems</li> <li>• Almost there</li> <li>• All necessary facilities, hand operated taps, dishwasher, clean, cleaning schedule and equipment, no significant repair needed, stainless steel or other suitable cladding, good ventilation and lighting, 100% pest proof, fly screens/controls where needed, good refuse control, generally meets Industry Guidance</li> </ul>	5
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High standard of compliance with statutory obligations and industry codes</b></li> <li>• <b>Conforms to accepted "good practices" in the trade</b></li> <li>• Securely and consistently achieving full compliance</li> <li>• A model for others</li> <li>• All essential facilities provided, not improvable, meets or exceeds Industry Guidance</li> </ul>	0
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## Part 3

# Confidence in Management / Control Systems

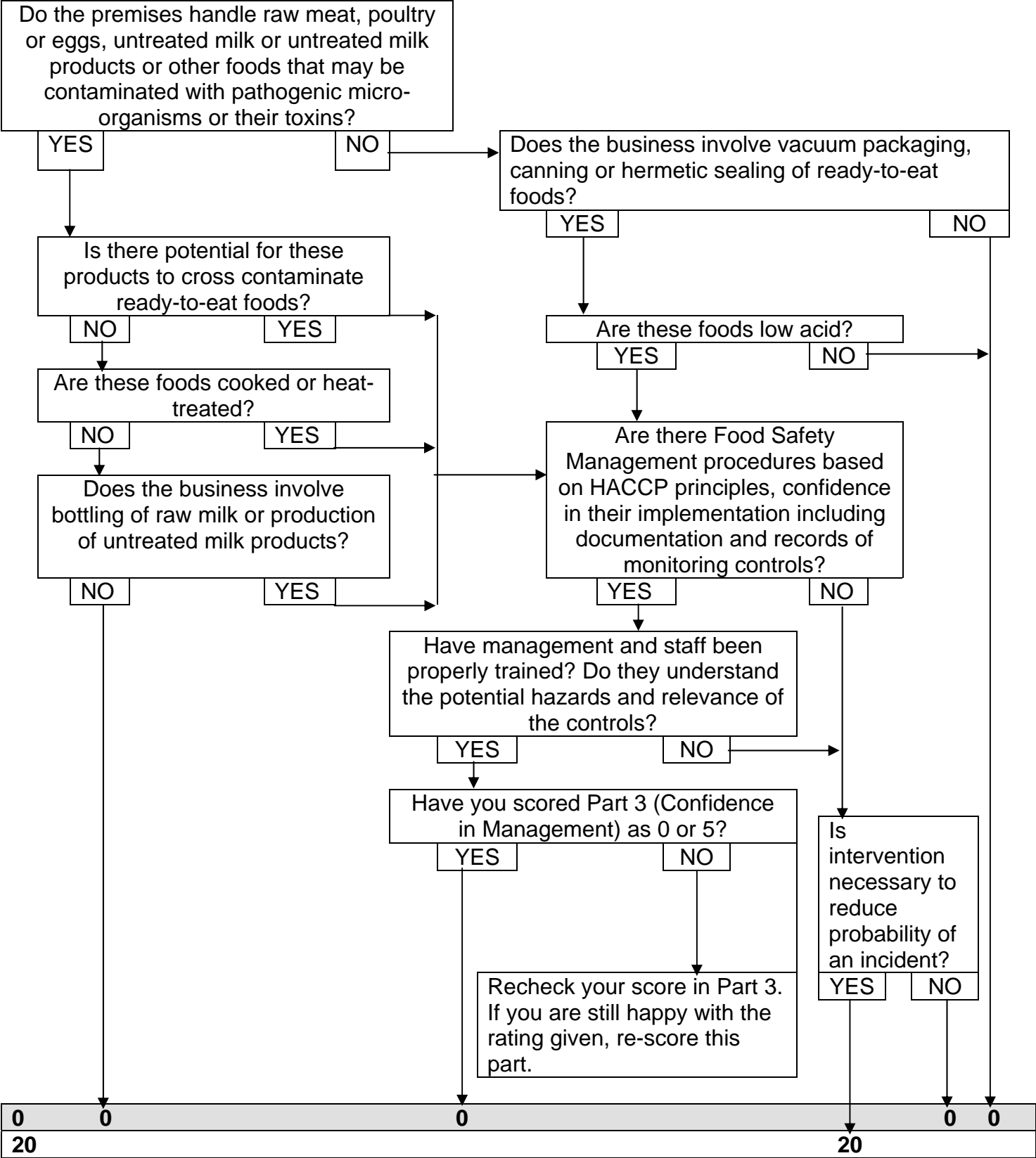
**Factors to consider: the track record of the company – its willingness to act on advice and enforcement and the complaint history; the attitude of management towards hygiene and food safety; technical knowledge available, including HACCP; satisfactory documented procedures and HACCP based food safety management systems.**

**Bold type refers to Code of Practice description**  
Standard type provides additional interpretation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Poor track record of compliance</b></li> <li>• <b>Little or no technical knowledge</b></li> <li>• <b>Little or no appreciation of hazards or quality control</b></li> <li>• <b>No Food Safety Management System</b></li> <li>• No appropriate training/instruction/supervision of managers or food handlers</li> <li>• No appropriate technical knowledge or access to advice for the type of food processing carried out</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Varying record of compliance</b></li> <li>• <b>Poor appreciation of hazards and control measures</b></li> <li>• <b>No Food Safety Management System</b></li> <li>• Less than 50% of food handlers effectively trained (i.e. understand) including supervisors &amp; managers and untrained food handlers unsupervised or uninstructed</li> <li>• Inadequate technical knowledge or access to advice for the type of food processing carried out</li> </ul>	<b>20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Satisfactory record of compliance</b> (i.e. only minor instances of non-compliance in history of business)</li> <li>• <b>Adequate technical knowledge or access to and use of technical advice, either in-house, from trade associations or Guides to Good Practice</b></li> <li>• <b>Understanding of significant hazards and control measures in place</b></li> <li>• <b>Making satisfactory progress towards documented Food Safety Management System / procedures commensurate with type of business</b></li> <li>• Essential procedures / systems in place, implemented and documented and others may be part documented</li> <li>• Small business, no more than 2 food handlers - good, established practices but incomplete documentation</li> <li>• Over 50% of food handling staff effectively trained (i.e. understand) to appropriate level including supervisors and managers</li> <li>• Untrained food handlers generally instructed and/or supervised at all times</li> </ul>	<b>10</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reasonable record of compliance</b> (i.e. no significant non-compliance issues in history of business)</li> <li>• <b>Technical advice available either in-house, from trade associations or Guides to Good Practice</b></li> <li>• <b>Satisfactory documented procedures and systems</b></li> <li>• <b>Can demonstrate effective control of hazards</b></li> <li>• <b>Satisfactory Food Safety Management System</b></li> <li>• <b>Audit by Food Authority confirms general compliance with documented system</b></li> <li>• Good appreciation of hazards</li> <li>• Over 75% food handling staff effectively trained (i.e. understand) to appropriate level including supervisors &amp; managers</li> <li>• Untrained food handlers appropriately instructed and/or supervised at all times</li> </ul>	<b>5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Good record of compliance</b></li> <li>• <b>Access to technical advice within the organisation</b></li> <li>• <b>Satisfactory documented HACCP based Food Safety Management System which may be subject to external audit</b></li> <li>• <b>Audit by Food Authority confirms compliance with system with few/minor non-conformities</b></li> <li>• Demonstrate full compliance</li> <li>• Internal and external audit</li> <li>• Documented system implemented e.g. ISO 9000, HACCP</li> <li>• 100% staff effectively trained (i.e. understand) to appropriate level or appropriately instructed and/or supervised where appropriate</li> </ul>	<b>0</b>

# Part 4 Significance of Risk

In this part you are considering whether there is a significance of risk of food being contaminated with *Clostridium botulinum* and the micro-organism surviving any processing and multiplying, or; of ready-to-eat food being contaminated with micro-organisms or their toxins that are pathogenic to humans, e.g. *E. coli* O157 or other VTEC, *Salmonella sp.*; *Bacillus cereus*. *E. coli* O157 and other VTEC can be found in both raw meat and unpasteurised dairy products.



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