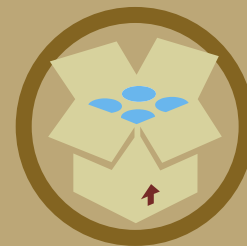


Labelling for Packaged Goods

This leaflet aims to summarise trading standards legislation applicable to food which is packed and supplied to other businesses to sell. It is designed to assist you in deciding what further advice you need and is not a comprehensive guide to these controls.



What labelling is required?

The labelling requirements are very complex and vary from product to product. There are certain basic requirements for all food labels. They are as follows:

- A food name: this should be the one that is required by law, or a customary name. If neither of these apply, the name must be sufficiently precise to inform a purchaser of the food's true nature, and distinguish it from products with which it could be confused. (Note: a brand name or fancy name can still be used provided it is not substituted for the proper name.)
- A list of ingredients, in descending order by weight with allergenic ingredients clearly labelled and a percentage by weight indication for certain ingredients or categories of ingredients appearing in the name, or given emphasis on the label.
- A 'use by', 'best before' or 'best before end' date, and possibly a lot or batch number.
- Any special storage or use conditions.
- The name and address of manufacturer, packer or seller.
- Place of origin, if its omission could mislead.
- Any instructions that are necessary to use the food.
- All information must be in English. Foreign language labelled foods cannot be sold.
- The name of the food, the durability mark (or sign post to it) and weight marking must be in the same field of vision

The above is a brief summary of the requirements. There are specific rules about the details of each of these indications, and the manner in which they are presented. Our advice is to use the above information to devise a draft label and then discuss it with us so we can help you get it right.

We have specific leaflets on the sale of:

Certain foods have specific labelling and compositional requirements. These are too complex to summarise here so, if applicable, please contact us for one of our leaflets dealing specifically with:

- Eggs
- Beef labelling
- Honey
- Jam and similar products
- Meat products
- Wine
- Fish
- Chocolate products

Weight Marking

The food will probably have to be labelled with a quantity marking and may have to be made up in specific quantities. These must be stated in metric quantities and must be easy to understand, clearly legible, easily visible, not hidden or obscured, or interrupted by any other written or pictorial matter. A secondary imperial indication can be given if you wish.

Size of fonts must be:

Nominal weight	Minimum height of figures
0-50g	2mm
>50-200g	3mm
>200g-1kg	4mm
>1kg	6mm

Nutrition labelling

There seems to be some confusion amongst packers as to whether or not this is required. Nutrition labelling is optional unless a claim is made, e.g. low fat. In this case, a nutrition statement must be on the labelling and should include, as a minimum the amount of energy, protein, carbohydrate and fat in 100g of the food. This can be calculated using analysis or using tables, but it may be simpler not to make a claim in the first place.

Lot marking

To permit recalls each batch of food must be identified by a code. This could be all the food packed in one day but if you apply the same code to a large batch you risk having to recall large amounts of food. You can use a best before date (if it indicates at least a day and month), a number, or some other code. If you do not use a date, the letter "L" should precede the code to make it clear that it is a lot mark.

Organic Foods

The use of the word "organic" is very tightly controlled and cannot be used without complying with complex rules, even to describe ingredients or in advertising associated with food.

What is Organic?

The description 'organic' can only be used to describe agricultural products, livestock and food which are produced and prepared in accordance with the detailed standards laid down. These standards also include requirements for record keeping, labelling, marketing and an inspection and certification system.

The methods of production, processing etc of organic products have to be inspected and certified by an authorised body to ensure that they meet the specified standards (please contact us for a list of these authorised bodies).

Organic foods from countries outside the European Community may only be imported if the country is on the approved list drawn up by the European Community Commission. The consignment of food must be accompanied by a certificate of inspection from the competent authority or body in the country of origin, stating that it was produced within a system of production and inspection which are equivalent to those required in the Community.

The Business Names Act 1985

The Act allows the Secretary of State control over the name you choose for your business and regulates disclosure of business ownership - in other words, what and how you must tell others about the ownership of the business.

The Act applies to:

- a company which trades under a name which is not its corporate name;
- a partnership which does not trade under the names of all the partners;
- an individual who trades under a name other than that person's surname, with or without his or her first names or initials.

If you trade under your own name, e.g. John Smith trading as J Smith, you are not covered by the provisions of the Act, but if you add any words other than your initials or forenames, e.g. John Smith trading as Smith's Autos, you are covered.

If the Act applies to you, (see above), you must comply with all the disclosure requirements. You will need to disclose (as appropriate):

- the corporate name;
- the name of each partner, or
- the individual's name, and
- in relation to each person named, an address in Great Britain at which documents can be served.

You must display the information in a prominent position so that it can be read easily, in all the places where you carry out your business and where you deal with customers or suppliers.

You will need to show the information clearly on all:

- business letters;
- written orders for the supply of goods or services;
- invoices and receipts; and
- written demands for the payment of business debts.

For further advice please contact your local Trading Standards.