

Blackpool Council

Sampling Policy 2006 / 2007



1 Introduction

- 1.1 Blackpool Council recognises the important contribution food sampling makes to the protection of public health and the food law enforcement functions of the authority.
- 1.2 Public Protection Officers from Environmental Services Division will be responsible for undertaking the food sampling functions of the Council.
- 1.3 Consideration will be given to food sampling in the following specific categories: -
 - National, Regional and Locally co-ordinated surveys/ programmes;
 - Local food producers;
 - complaints;
 - process monitoring;
 - inspections;
 - Home Authority Principle activities;
 - special investigations.
 - imported foods

2 Food Sampling Surveys/ Programmes

2.1 Blackpool Council will make provision to co-operate, and where possible participate, in all food sampling surveys. However, some surveys may involve foods or food premises, which are either in short supply, or not available in Blackpool, in which case a reduced number of samples or no samples will be submitted to the laboratory.

2.2 National Surveys

2.2.1 National surveys may be organised through the Food Standards Agency, as part of the EC co-ordinated sampling programme.

2.2.2 The Local Authority Co-ordinating Body on Regulatory Standards (LACORS) also arrange National Surveys each year as required.

2.3 Regional Sampling Programme

2.3.1 A survey sub-committee comprising of officers from the Preston Microbiology Services, the Lancashire Food Officer Group and the Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group are responsible for drawing up and distributing a microbiological sampling programme every four months. This programme determines the number of samples required and the sampling frequency. In addition the LACORS NW Quality Panel consider regional sampling regarding compositional matters.

2.3.2 The Food Standards (Quality) Sampling programme is prepared in consultation with colleagues from the Lancashire Food Officer Group and the Manchester Food Liaison Group along with the Food examiner from Preston Microbiology Services.

2.4 Local Sampling Programmes

2.4.1 A local survey may be generated following a food poisoning incident or as a follow-up survey following a local sampling initiative.

- 2.4.2 A local sampling programme is undertaken in conjunction with the Public Analyst from all food producers within Blackpool in relation to composition description and labelling.

3 Food Complaints

- 3.1 Samples of food received as a food complaint may require either microbiological examination or chemical analysis. Preston Microbiological Services will undertake all microbiological examinations and the County Analyst based at the County Laboratory in Preston, is used for any samples which require chemical or compositional analysis. Both laboratories are approved by the Food Standards Agency for such examinations.
- 3.2 All food complaints are taken seriously and the results of an examination or analysis may generate the need for more controlled sampling of the food product or from the food premises.

4 Process Monitoring

- 4.1 The Authority will not normally undertake routine process monitoring. Sampling may take place if an adverse result has been detected by another local authority or if the processors own records indicate a potential ongoing problem.

5 Inspections

- 5.1 Food Sampling will not normally be undertaken as a constituent part of food safety inspections. However, it will be left to the inspecting officer's discretion whether to recommend to the Public Protection Manager/Public Protection Officer (Food Control) that food samples should be taken for monitoring purposes following any inspection.

6 Home Authority Responsibilities

- 6.1 Blackpool Council acts as 'Home Authority' for 4 food companies in the area.
- 6.2 There is no intention to take routine food samples from any food businesses for which this Authority acts as Originating Authority.

7 Special Investigations

- 7.1 Special circumstances may arise during a year which will require samples to be taken. These samples will most likely be generated during the investigation of food poisoning incidents. Samples may include environmental samples in addition to food/water samples.

8 Imported Foods

- 8.1 At present there are no companies or businesses in the Blackpool Council area, which regularly import foods. Therefore, no routine sampling of imported foods will be undertaken. If, however, circumstances change this Policy will be reviewed in the light of future developments.