

Labelling of Packaged Foods

Information for traders

This leaflet covers the labelling of food which has been packaged by retailers, wholesalers or manufacturers, for retail sale from premises other than at the place of packing. The main labelling requirements are set out by the **Food Labelling Regulations 1996**, however you should be aware that other regulations apply to specific types of foods.

What labelling is required?

The labelling requirements are 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
- a percentage quantity indication for certain ingredients or categories of ingredients (also known as a 'QUID' declaration)
- a 'use by', 'best before' or 'best before end' date, or possibly a lot or batch number
- any special storage or use conditions
- the name and address of the manufacturer, packer or seller
- place of origin, if its omission could mislead
- any instructions that are necessary to use the food

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, which also need to be followed. For example:

- should your product contain any additives (such as colours or preservatives), its name or 'E' number must be preceded by the category name of the additive in the ingredients list
- certain information, such as the name, quantity declaration and date marking, must be in the same field of vision on a label - all the information must be clearly legible and the name must not be interrupted by other words or pictures

Some products also have specific additional labelling requirements. For example:

- jam requires a fruit and sugar (soluble solids) content declaration
- chocolate requires a percentage cocoa solids declaration and milk chocolate requires a percentage milk solids declaration
- beef is required to be labelled with specific origin and traceability information
- baby food requires a statement of the minimum age of child for which it is suitable and a specific nutritional declaration

Other labelling requirements:

Specific additional information must be included on the label if it applies to the food. For example:

- Specified allergenic ingredients must be indicated in the labelling of pre-packed food and alcoholic drinks (please see our leaflet 'Specified Allergenic Ingredients' for more information (http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/std35_tcm9-8377.pdf))
- alcoholic drinks need to declare their strength (percentage - volume)
- food or ingredients that have been irradiated must be declared and labelled 'irradiated' or 'treated with ionising radiation'
- food or ingredients which contain, consist of, or are produced from genetically modified organisms are subject to special labelling requirements
- raw milk that has not been heat-treated is required to be marked with a warning
- if food has had its shelf life increased by being packaged in certain gases, it must be marked 'packaged in a protective atmosphere'
- foods which contain sweeteners, both sweeteners and sugar, aspartame or polyols are required to have specific labelling declarations alongside the food name

- products consisting of skimmed milk together with non-milk fat, which are not specifically formulated for babies and young children, must be labelled with a warning that the product is not suitable for feeding babies

Additives

Foods containing one or more of the following food colours

- Sunset yellow (E 110)
- Quinoline yellow (E 104)
- Carmoisine (E 122)
- Allura red (E 129)
- Tartrazine (E 102)
- Ponceau 4R (E 124)

are required to be labelled with a warning statement as follows: -
 'Name or E number of the colour(s)': may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children.

Labelling claims:

- there are special rules concerning the labelling of food as 'organic'
- there are guidelines to be followed when words such as 'natural' are used
- there are guidelines to be considered concerning descriptions of foods as suitable for vegetarians or vegans
- there are special considerations relating to the use of illustrations
- if a food makes a claim regarding any of the following: slimming, extra vitamins or minerals, low nutrient content etc, specific compositional requirements as well as compulsory nutritional labelling is triggered. See below

Nutritional labelling:

Unless claims are made about the product, such as those given above, there is no legal requirement to give nutritional information. If you give nutritional information, either to comply with the regulations, or voluntarily, they must be in one of the two formats below:

Per 100g or per 100ml:Energy - kcal/kJ

Protein - g

Carbohydrate - g

Fat – g

Per 100g or per 100ml:Energy - kcal/kJ

Protein - g

Carbohydrate - g

of which sugars - g

Fat – g

of which saturates - g

Fibre - g

Sodium – g

You may give additional nutritional information in this format per specified serving, eg, per biscuit, or per 230g serving.

Nutrition and Health Claims

When making a voluntary nutrition or health claim you must comply with the requirements of European Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on food.

A nutrition claim is defined as: - any claim which states, suggests or implies that a food has particular beneficial nutritional properties due to the presence, absence, increased or reduced levels of energy or of a particular nutrient or other substance, and includes claims such as “source of calcium”, “low fat”, “high fibre” and “reduced salt”.

A health claim is defined as: - any claim that states, suggests or implies that a relationship exists between a food category, a food or one of its constituents and health. This would include claims such as “calcium helps build strong bones”. More general claims such as “good for you” may also be health claims, and the Regulation takes these into account.

For further information or advice on nutrition and health claims please contact this department.

Exemptions

There are special provisions for bread, flour confectionery, edible ices and cows' milk, which allow some labelling provisions to be reduced and/or for some information to be given on associated notices. This applies where the food is packed by the seller for sale on the premises

from which it is sold, or from his/her other premises trading under the same name, his/her market stall or his/her mobile premises. Please ask for further information if this applies to you.

Other requirements

In the majority of cases, food must be labelled with a quantity marking in metric and it may have to be packaged in specific quantities.

Where can I get further help?

This leaflet is not an authoritative document on the law and is only intended for guidance. For further details or clarification contact Derbyshire Trading Standards at:

Chatsworth Hall
Chesterfield Road
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3FW

Telephone:

Businesses:	Call Derbyshire	08 456 058 058
Consumers:	Citizens Advice consumer helpline	08454 040506

Fax: 01629 536197

Website: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

We want everyone to be able to understand us. On request, we will arrange:

- Language interpreters, including for sign language
- Translation of written materials into other languages
- Materials in large print, on tape or in Braille.

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