# Instructions for the retail sales and deliveries of foodstuffs during the COVID-19 pandemic

Under these unusual conditions, an operator may deliver food to customers without notifying the control authority of the food premises as required by the Food Act. If their operations continue after conditions return to normal, the operator must notify the control authority. However, you should notify the health inspectors about any changes in your operations (delivery or retail sales), also under unusual conditions, by sending them a free-text email (ymparistoterveys@lohja.fi) or by calling (see contact details for environmental health).

Restaurants can sell takeaway food to their customers, even if the restaurant is otherwise closed during the coronavirus outbreak. Only ready-made servings are allowed during the outbreak. During these unusual conditions, a customer could agree to pick up their order from the restaurant or the order could be delivered to the customer, depending on which method the operator chooses.

The operator must observe good hygiene in all of their operations. During deliveries, temperatures must remain at the levels required by legislation.

In their own-check plan, an operator must present the ways with which they ensure that the temperature requirements are fulfilled.

*Concerning serving, retail sales and deliveries:*

**- The temperature requirements must be observed at all times**; operators must ensure that foodstuffs are maintained at adequate temperatures during all stages: reception → storage → handling → heating up the food → refrigeration → serving → delivery

- The requirements set in section 8 of decree 1367/2011 concerning for how long food can be served applies to hot and cold food. The limit of four (4) hours applies to food, which is served at a temperature that is different to its sale or storage temperature. The serving times concern food sold on a self-service counter.

- Locations that serve food must give the following information about their unpacked foodstuffs:

* The foodstuff's name (in writing)
* Ingredients and products that may cause symptoms or allergic reactions
* The country of origin of the meat used (in writing)

- Food that is sold or served hot must be kept hot throughout the sales and service (minimum of +60 degrees Celsius). Hot food must remain hot during delivery as well. Perishable food must be delivered in refrigeration (usually below +6 degrees Celsius).

- Refrigerated food must be cooled from +60 °C to +6 °C or below within four (4) hours. Therefore, the temperature of refrigerated food must be +6 °C or below during deliveries (1367/2001).

- Takeaway containers must be suitable for food contact.

- The temperature of delivered foodstuffs must be controlled with a refrigeration plant or another method, such as by using a thermo box that contains a hot/cold gel mat depending on whether it is a refrigerated or hot delivery.

- Restaurants can use private cars to deliver food, as long as it does not risk the foodstuffs in any way.

- Foodstuffs must be packed in clean delivery boxes or containers for the delivery. When delivering food that requires refrigeration, you must use a clean container suitable for refrigeration, such as a cool bag.

- The space where delivery boxes and containers are kept during delivery should also be protected with a clean cover, such as a protective cloth, tarpaulin or other similar item.

- A temperature data logger is not required in deliveries of under 2 hours or deliveries, in which foodstuffs are delivered directly to the end-consumer.

- You can find more information about delivery temperatures on Evira’s guide 16025/6 (in Finnish, a guide concerning the foodstuff hygiene in notified food premises; sections 6 and 11, and pages 50 and 54–55).

**Temperature requirements for refrigerated food**

* Fresh fishery products packed in a vacuum or protective gas: between 0 °C and +3 °C.
* Other packed and unpacked fresh fishery products, boiled seafood, and defrosted unprocessed fishery products: temperature of melting ice (between 0 °C and +2 °C).
* Cold-smoked and lightly salted fishery products as well as processed fishery products packed in a vacuum or protective gas must be kept between 0 °C and +3 °C.
* Minced meat and liver: +4 °C or below.
* Perishable dairy products that are at least pasteurised or processed in an equivalent manner: +8 °C or below.
* Other perishable food, including milk, cream, sprouts, chopped vegetables, live seafood, sushi, perishable fishery products besides those mentioned in section 1, and kalakukko mentioned in section 5: +6 °C or below.

*Other matters to consider:*

If a restaurant operator sells packed servings in retail, they must consider the following:

- Packaging materials must be suitable for food contact. Their package markings may contain a glass-and-fork symbol, which means the material is suitable for food contact, or the packing material’s name or other written details indicate it is safe to use in contact with food.

- The packages of packed products/servings must contain all necessary food information and highlighted allergens. Nutritional values are not mandatory.

- Selling periods must remain short, unless the preservability of the products has been tested.

The control authority follows the Finnish Food Authority’s guidelines regarding the retail sales and delivery of foodstuffs. Other matters food operators should consider during the COVID-19 pandemic are listed on the Finnish Food Authority’s website:

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/yritykset/elintarvikeala/elintarvikealan-yhteiset-vaatimukset/usein-kysyttya-covid-19-koronaviruksesta--elintarvikealan-yrityksille/toiminnan-muuttaminen-poikkeustilanteessa/>