

DOGGY BAGS

Supplying leftover food in doggy bags to customers is an accepted practice and not 'illegal'. However, having dogs in the bar or the dining room is, unless it's an assistance animal.

There are potential risks associated with giving customers doggy bags for food not consumed at a restaurant, hotel or food business. Businesses should be aware of these risks and how they can be minimised.

The term 'doggy bag' developed when food left uneaten at a restaurant was taken home for the family pet. Today, many customers will take home uneaten food to consume later on. Customers may be unaware that the safety of uneaten food taken away can become compromised.

The food purchased by a customer at a restaurant or food business becomes the property of the customer. It is not illegal to provide doggy bags and may be seen as poor customer service if they are denied this option.

Doggy bags differ from normal takeaway foods. Takeaways are intended to be eaten away from the premises and are packaged accordingly by the food business. They are generally served at an appropriate temperature (hot foods 60°C or above or cold foods 5°C or below).

Food for doggy bags can be exposed to the following hazards:

- Time in the temperature danger zone of between 5°C and 60°C,
- Handling by the consumer causing Golden Staph contamination which can facilitate a food-borne illness,
- Contamination with other food-borne pathogens such as Salmonella, and
- Cross contamination between cooked and uncooked foods.

If a customer requests a doggy bag, the risks may be minimised by:

- Transferring the food into a new food grade container,
- Place an instruction sticker on the container (the sticker explains the risks of doggy bags and sets suitable storage/reheating conditions for the food – available from the QHA), and
- Write the date on the container (and record in an appropriate record book if need be).