



# Ready for Trading - Contents

---

## Retail Detail

- Shop Design, Fixtures and Fittings**
- Shop Display and Merchandising**
- What to Stock**
- Sourcing and Managing Suppliers**
- Stock Rooms and Storage**
- Applying for an Off-Licence**
- Security**

## Profitable Retailing

- Income, Profit and Pricing**
- Cash Register or EPOS?**
- Manning Your Shop**
- Opening Hours**
- Publicising the Launch**

## Legislation and Best Practice

- Trading Requirements**
- Health and Safety**
- Food Safety & Hygiene**
- Fire Safety**
- Disabled Customers**
- First Aid**
- Underage Customers**



# Shop Design, Fixtures and Fittings

---

**Once you have secured your premises, you need to consider 'the look' of the shop as well as the practicalities of layout, equipment and furnishings. How people view the shop will depend on many things, but how it looks and feels is a key factor.**

---

## Getting the Right Image

In many ways, a village shop is the most difficult of all to get right, as you are trying to capture a relatively small market containing a broad sector of people with different tastes, styles and budgets. What attracts one customer might very well deter another. Whatever look and design you do go for, should be determined by a mandate set by the wider community - remember, this is a community-owned shop and needs to appeal to the widest possible sector of the community. The chosen look and design will also depend on the building, the budget and on what was there before. When designing your shop, consider hiring a professional shop fitter, or at least seeking their opinion by getting a quote.

Some practical considerations to consider include:

- Plain coloured floors show up dirt from customers shoes more than patterned ones
- White walls and ceilings make a shop seem bigger and lighter
- Distinguish your shop from competitors, or major stores by avoiding specific colours or design features
- Highlight that the shop is community owned by use of photographs of the shop development process, framing a share certificate on the wall, or including an area for community notices and information.

## Shop Furniture

Think carefully about space utilisation, bearing in mind that each square metre of shop floor is costing you money in terms of rent, rates, heating, lighting and cleaning. Whilst an antique pine table with wicker baskets might establish a certain ambiance, a whole shop using such fittings might be hard to justify! Keep in mind flexibility and adaptability - the range and quantity of stock you sell will change over time depending on seasons, availability, demand and promotions - for this reason, any shelving you purchase or commission must be adjustable.

**wooden shelving** - provides a traditional, but up-to-date feel, and is a solid, practical option.

**chrome or metal racking** - practical, but can appear dated in style.

**wicker baskets** - good for displaying fruit, vegetables and bread and contributes to the feel of fresh and local produce.

**furniture** - if space is not too limited, you could use an old dresser to display jams and chutneys or a pine table on which to place the wicker baskets of fruit. This will contribute to the shop feeling 'individual'

## Sourcing Shelving

Many community-owned shops use second hand display units, shelving and refrigeration units from supermarkets when they are upgrading their stores. Whilst these might compromise the look of the shop, not be the right size or be noisy or inefficient, these are often offered for free or at a reduced price, which provides an affordable or temporary solution for a new community-owned shop when starting out. The Plunkett Foundation can provide help and signposting for current supplier listings and also know when second hand supermarket furniture and equipment is available.

---



---

## Refrigeration

Commercial refrigeration is very expensive compared with domestic models, and breakdowns can be crippling in terms of ruined stock and engineer call-outs. As with shelving, second hand equipment is available from supermarkets, and whilst good to get you going, they are not always the most energy or space efficient, nor the most attractive or reliable. Chest freezers will be cheaper to buy, but upright freezers are more space efficient and will enable customers to see all your stock. Some branded drink chillers will be sponsored and will therefore be cheaper.

## Essentials

As well as the shop floor space, you will also need to consider the inclusion of the following into your design:

*Stock room, Staff/Customer Toilet, Hot water for cleaning and hand washing facilities, Security equipment (alarms, CCTV, a safe), An office and office equipment, Lighting, Power supply, Air conditioning (refrigerators give off excess heat), Fire extinguisher, First Aid box*

---

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Look for Local Food Toolkit** - a practical guide for village shops wishing to increase sales of local and drink. Produced and published by the Plunkett Foundation, available on application only.

**How to Open a Local Food Shop** - a practical retail guide including shop design, layout and merchandising. Produced and published by the Plunkett Foundation, available on application only.

**Fixtures and Fittings Checklist** - a checklist of fixtures and fittings required by a typical shop.



Click here to see more tools

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network:**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Making Local Food Work:**

<http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/>

**Rural Shops Alliance:**

<http://www.rural-shops-alliance.co.uk/index.htm>

**Acknowledgements: Rural Shops Alliance**  
**Last reviewed: July 2010**



# Shop Display and Merchandising

---

**Merchandising is a term used to describe the actions and methods that retailers employ to influence their customers' decisions in what and how much they buy. Successful merchandising makes sure that products are displayed, priced, positioned and promoted in such a way that the profitability of all sales space is utilised.**

---

The Plunkett Foundation can provide retail and merchandising support. Some large wholesalers and major manufacturers will also provide shops with practical help in merchandising with free display units and/or 'planograms' (a diagram to indicate the best position of each product with the overall display).

## Shop Exterior

Your first priority will be to get customers to want to come into the shop, so make the most of the space outside and give them a first good impression.

**Signage** - ensure people know you are a village shop and ideally a community-owned one. Use a blackboard to indicate any fresh or local produce. Promote other services you provide or items you sell unique to your shop.

**De-clutter** - ideally keep all windows and doors free of posters, news items and equipment as you can designate an area for this inside. Also, avoid placing your internal shelving or refrigeration units in the window area - looking through the window from the outside and seeing the back of a dusty fridge will not encourage people to come in!

**Obstructions** - remove any barriers to people coming into the shop off the street such as litter bins, cars parked directly outside, bikes leant on the shop front.

## Interior Layout

Customers will need to be encouraged to 'shop the whole shop' through strategic positioning of goods.

**Front/Back** - The front of the shop should be used for shoppers in a hurry – newspapers, impulse sweets and snacks, sandwiches and soft drinks, greetings cards - and the back of the shop to draw people in – dairy, fresh bakery, frozen etc

**High end / Low end** - high value items such as spirits and products of a dangerous nature should be controlled behind the till area and have to be asked for by customers

**Customer Journey** - People think in 'meals' so the shop should follow a similar pattern - breakfasts, lunches, dinners...and then cleaners...paper products...pet foods...etc. Block displays vertically, rather than horizontally to avoid having cleaning products for example, on the shelf below cereals. Fruit and veg should always start the food displays and lead onto the rest of the grocery and provisions displays. Frozen food and perishables should be towards the end of a shopping experience.

**Spacing** - Aisles should be kept clear to allow easy access, and ideally no less than 1m apart.

**Lighting** - extra spotlights on featured products will draw the customers' attention. Shelving units should run parallel to strip lighting to avoid dark areas. 'Dead' bulbs in spot lights of refrigeration units will deter customers from those areas.

## Display

**Point of Sale Material** - this is used to support and promote a product, create impact and inform customers thus influence their decision to buy. POS material should be consistent if

---



possible throughout the shop, include pricing and be legible.

**Point of Difference** - being a community-owned shop is really something quite different and special, and certainly an achievement to emphasise to any customers who may not be aware. Use signage to say 'community-owned', put volunteer rotas in a visible place, use name badges which say 'volunteer', provide a dedicated space for community notices. This will certainly add to the friendliness of the atmosphere within the shop, and may also encourage customers to buy more goods from the shop, become a 'shareholder' in the business, or sign up to becoming a volunteer.

**Impact Displays** - these are areas dedicated to a particular product or group of products, such as a Halloween theme, or local produce. Impact displays should be in visible and accessible areas and are most commonly found on vertical shelving or gondola ends.

**Hot Spots** - are the most visible areas the customer sees and are drawn to when they enter the shop. These should be attractive and contain the fastest moving items (best sellers) in the shop. It is a good idea to place impulse items adjacent to hot spots to maximise the chance of impulse buying.

**Related Products** - grouping products together can gain an additional sale, such as strawberries and cream, pasta and pasta sauces.

**Shelf edge Labelling** - this will enhance the customer experience and create a professional store image.

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Look for Local Food Toolkit** - a practical guide for village shops wishing to increase sales of local and drink. Produced and published by the Plunkett Foundation, available on application only.

**How to Open a Local Food Shop** - a practical retail guide including shop design, layout and merchandising. Produced and published by the Plunkett Foundation, available on application only.

**Plunkett Foundation Retail Review** – a retail audit to be carried out by a Community Retail Adviser with a member of the community shop. Available from the Plunkett Foundation.



Click here to see more tools

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network:**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Making Local Food Work:**

<http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/>

**Rural Shops Alliance:**

<http://www.rural-shops-alliance.co.uk/index.htm>

**Acknowledgements: Rural Shops Alliance**  
Last reviewed: April 2010



# What to Stock

---

**What goods will your customers want to buy and what services would they like offered? Your initial questionnaire will give you your starting point, but generally a good village store should offer four different types of goods and services:**

---

## Core Goods

These should include the basic foods which give people a reason to visit the shop daily, or top up their weekly shop for everyday essentials. This list includes, newspapers, bread and milk, fruit and vegetables, greetings cards and stationery, household cleaning products.

## Additional Goods

After the 'core goods', additional goods available differ from shop to shop, depending on the market demand and your local area. Some shops include in-house counters for fresh produce including meat, delicatessen, fish, cooked food (pies), bread etc. Some arrange for mobile services such as the fish monger to call weekly to encourage people to walk up to the shop. Some are able to provide lunches with freshly made sandwiches or warming up pies and pastries in a microwave. Think about local produce from local farms, Farmers' Markets and Country Markets, or agreeing to host local box scheme drop-offs. Consider luxury food ranges of jams, preserves, teas, and biscuits. Would there be a demand for fresh flowers and bedding plants? Have you got room for seasonal goods such as charcoal, Easter eggs or Christmas cards? Do you wish to sell wine, beers and spirits?

## Core Services

This is essentially the basic service that customers expect from a local shop - acceptance of debit/credit cards, cash back facility, Post Office or postal services.

## Additional Services

Depending on your location, market demand and staff/volunteer resources, you may be able to offer additional services either directly, or through running errands to the local town or by contracts with service providers.

Direct services you could offer include; dry cleaning, home delivery, prescription drop off and collection point, sale or return on wine and beer, free loan of glasses, DVD hire, in-shop tasting, mobile phone top-ups, drinks dispenser, microwave (for heating pies etc), cash machine if you don't have a post office counter, loyalty scheme, notice board with a small, weekly display charge, website for information or online ordering, photo developing and passport photos, photocopying and fax facilities, a coffee shop or seating area, National Lottery (subject to Camelot), space for local artists to display their work.

## More Things to Remember

- It is good practice not to overstock – 80% of sales are usually from 20% of the stock range
- Remove slow selling lines and replace with more desirable products
- Find reliable suppliers and build good relationships with them
- Minimise your own 'out of stocks' – one too many and people will quickly assume this is always the case and stop coming
- Regularly re-evaluate your own stock range



- Focus on convenience and specialist products
- Be aware of trends nationally and within retail industry
- Look for high gross profit opportunities
- Offer a 'food to go' section
- Offer healthy options
- Create offers on the back of local and national promotions

## Introducing New Goods and Services

Are you providing the goods and services your customers want? Keep talking to your customers to make sure – volunteers can do this too - and retain a suggestions box, or 'behind scenes' list that volunteers can add to if a request has been made and the manager isn't in the shop at the time. Introducing new lines and products helps keep customers interested and will help draw in new ones - but beware of offering to meet every request, some specialist items simply will not sell in sufficient quantity - and some will not sell at all despite being requested.

*"Retailing is trying and testing things: you will quickly know the successes and failures. Evolution not revolution is a strong way of growing a business. A shop should never stop evolving".* Chris Coe, Community Retail Consultant.

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Stock and Services Checklist** - a reminder of the stock and services that fall under the four typical types of stock and service shops offer.

**Sourcing Stock** – a contact database for wholesalers.

**100 Must Stock Lines** – A list of the 100 best sellers.

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Making Local Food Work:**

<http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/>

**Rural Shops Alliance**

<http://www.rural-shops-alliance.co.uk/index.htm>

**The Independent Retailers Confederation**

<http://www.independent-retailers.co.uk/>

**Retail Enterprise Network**

<http://www.retail-network.org/>



Click here to  
see more tools

**Acknowledgements: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council**  
Last reviewed: July 2010



# Sourcing and Managing Suppliers

---

**You will probably set up accounts with a range of suppliers - most village shops have one main supplier for regular grocery and household items and a myriad of smaller suppliers for other goods.**

---

## Stocking Policy

Before selecting your supplier or sourcing a range of goods it's a good idea to determine what your stocking policy is and what criteria you want to fulfil. For example, you may want to stock fair trade or locally sourced products, be able to offer the cheapest option on a number of your top selling lines, or a combination of all of the above. Whatever you decide it can be useful to draw up a list of questions to ask all suppliers to ensure they can meet your requirements.

## Wholesalers

Community Owned shops are known to use wholesalers such as Palmer and Harvey, 3663, SUMA, Bookers, Brakes, and the local Cash and Carry. The delivered wholesaler will bring pre-ordered products to your door, which offers greater convenience and reduces time and manpower required. Delivered wholesalers provide an integrated offer (complete package of goods including ambient, chilled and frozen, alcohol etc), together with providing loyalty rewards, retail and product support, free delivery, and advice relating to merchandising and point of sale materials. However, there will often be a minimum order value, and buying goods in this way, may compromise the independence of your shop, and flexibility to introduce local produce.

Your local cash and carry will also provide a comprehensive range of goods, of which you can choose from on demand, in your own quantities and without being committed to a minimum order. You will be able to see the full range of goods on offer, take advantage of any special offers and buy in new lines that may be on promotion. However, sourcing goods this way can be time consuming - owing to the time and cost of travelling to the warehouse, selecting and buying the goods and bringing them back to the shop. The flexibility of a cash and carry also has the drawbacks of anyone who visits a shop or supermarket for personal consumption - they may be out of stock of a particular product, you may forget specific items, you may be distracted by other items not on the shopping list, and you may quantity errors.

## Supermarkets

Increasingly, owing to competitive prices, buy-one-get-one-free offers, and ability to buy in small quantities, community-owned shops have been buying (non chilled or frozen) goods from local supermarkets. Discount schemes for community shops are available from the Co-operative Group.

## Local Suppliers

Community-owned shops may not be able to compete with larger retailers on price, but they can compete in terms of their knowledge of local producers and in their ability to buy in small quantities from producers who would not otherwise be able to meet the supply and demand requirements of a larger retailer. Local food will give your shop a point of difference - an added reason for a customer wishing to visit - as well as demonstrating to your customers, your ethical and green principles.

When sourcing directly from a producer it is worth establishing what accreditation they have. As a minimum, they should have engaged their local environmental health officer and hold a basic food hygiene certificate. There is also formal accreditation in place such as the British Retail Consortium,



which is what the major distributors and retailers work to, and SALSA – Safe and local supplier accreditation – as well as membership to accredited organisations such as the Soil Association. All of the above will individually demonstrate a suppliers' ability to adhere to certain basic standards. Sourcing local produce, however, can be more time consuming and less reliable in supply terms in comparison to sourcing from conventional wholesalers.

## Delivery / Collections

If shops decide on a delivered service it is worth agreeing delivery days and times in advance and advising suppliers of any specific delivery requirements / restrictions your shop may have i.e. limited access, no stock room, no deliveries before 8am etc. If volunteers are collecting goods, remember there is an obligation on the shop to cover their insurance. For this reason, nominate just two or three people responsible for collections and ensure they have the appropriate level of insurance. Alternatively, buy a cheap van and get it insured.

## Additional Guidance

- Check terms of payment and supply with all your suppliers: many suppliers offer a free delivery service and a short credit period, depending on the amount of stock ordered and the shop's credit worthiness!
- Ask about sale or return or discounts available, often suppliers expect to discount off of their list price.
- Hold an open day for suppliers to come and meet with you and discuss yours/their terms.
- Build a trustworthy relationship with your suppliers: ensure that orders are placed regularly and payments are made on time.
- Ask the supplier for recommendations and suggestions. Change the range of stock to keep customers interested.
- Agree minimum order levels and general requirements before you begin trading and at regular intervals thereafter. Once you have an established trading pattern you may be in a better position to negotiate on terms and deliveries.

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Stock Rooms and Storage Advice Sheet** – advice on storing your stock, including managing stock received.

**Supplier Questionnaire** – a series of questions to ask suppliers to help identify the best deal for you

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**The Co-operative Food Group:**

Contact the Plunkett Foundation to put you in touch with your local contact

Last reviewed: July 2010



Click here to  
see more tools



# Stock Room and Storage

---

**Not all community-owned shops will be able to accommodate an on-site stockroom, but a stock area creates the opportunity to get better wholesale prices from buying in larger quantities, it helps to reduce the number of deliveries required and subsequent delivery costs, and reduces the likelihood of running out of popular stock which will help to keep your customers happy.**

---

## Stores and Stockroom Management

- A proper Inventory must be kept with all items listed and clearly identified
- A "First in - First out" procedure should be strictly followed to prevent goods from becoming out of date
- Regular Stock Checks should be carried out to identify the quantities of each item held in storage. EPOS will monitor this automatically, but a physical stock count is good practice and should be done at least twice a year
- Stockroom Turnover should be calculated by dividing the number or value of each item purchased and brought into the storeroom in the last twelve months by the number or value of that same item counted at the Stock Check. This will show how often the particular item is being turned over in a year, and if the Stock Turns figure is divided into 52, it will show how many weeks of stock and hence money is being tied up. Targets should be set to improve these figures by examining and weeding out items which have the lowest Stock Turn figures and the highest number of weeks of stock tied up.
- Service Level can be calculated to check that the store is fulfilling its purpose of having critical goods available on demand without waiting for purchase orders to be raised and for goods to come in. A record should be kept of all demands not met or with balances to follow. These should be compared to the total of all demands made on the store and a percentage of successful over total demands should be calculated.
- All stores should be kept clean and tidy and very careful attention paid to safety and fire regulations.

## Consider your own Requirements

- Consider seasonal requirements – Christmas, for example may see average sales increase by 40-50%
- Avoid too much shelving in the stockroom as this can often lead to the staff and volunteers trying to keep the stock room orderly and replenished rather than focusing on keeping the actual retail area fully stocked
- Keep the space as open as possible, to enable incoming deliveries to be dropped easily, and then inspected, sorted and put away
- The stockroom may also be where the office is located, or even a kitchen area or space where food is prepared



## Off Site Solutions

- Before you consider external storage solutions, decide whether it is possible and more cost efficient to secure more regular deliveries of stock
- Garages within the village can sometimes be an affordable storage solution – although some landlords have policies preventing this use
- Consider unused barns and outbuildings within the village, but these may have to be modified to keep them secure from rodents and damp
- Is there anywhere in the village for a purpose built timber store? These can be water and air tight as well as secure from break-ins. Shipping containers have a similar advantage, and again, can be kitted out with shelving
- Do you need an energy supply for fridges and freezers? Is it cost efficient to be paying for chillers as well as external storage?
- Contact your insurance company about security requirements – are alarms required, for instance, or will they even cover an external store?
- Don't stray too far from your shop – if you have to start incorporating travel costs to retrieve stock from a lock-up, trips to the cash and carry might be a cheaper alternative...

## The Problems with Stock Rooms and Stores

- The cost of goods tied up in storage will be using money that could provide a better return on investment elsewhere
- Stock is held for much longer than was originally planned and are not making money for the business – its becomes in effect, 'dead capital'
- Goods can too easily be kept "just in case they are needed" rather than because they are definitely going to be required, which is again, an ineffective use of the working capital of the business
- Stored goods can become forgotten about, lost, damaged, out of date and unfit for use

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Stock Count Template** – a template to assist regular stock counts.

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network:**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**The University of Edinburgh:**

<http://www.pps.ed.ac.uk/about/procurement/manual/stores.htm>



Click here to  
see more tools

**Acknowledgements: University of Edinburgh**  
**Last reviewed: July 2010**



# Applying for an Off Licence

---

**Throughout the United Kingdom, the sale of alcohol is restricted - pubs, restaurants, shops and other premises must be licensed by the local authority. An individual or individuals held responsible for the premises must also hold a personal licence.**

---

## Before you Start

- Assess the unmet local demand for alcohol in the area - not all community-shops decide to sell alcohol depending on competition, demand, and available space within the premises.
- Assess the cost of licensing both individuals and the premises
- Assess whether an off licence will give a justifiable increase to profit margins, bearing in mind the relatively high cost of stock and licensing fees
- Assess the security requirement relating to high value stock
- Assess how many personal licence holders you require – you will need at least one who will also be the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS), but do consider having more so that there is adequate cover should the licence holder cease to work in the shop

## What Licences are required to sell Alcohol?

- Under the Licensing Act 2003 separate licenses are required for premises and individuals
- A Premises Licence allows alcohol to be sold from particular premises
- A Personal Licence allows an individual to sell, or give authority to sell, alcohol from any licensed premises

## Who Issues the Licences?

- The responsibility for the licensing of both premises and individuals to sell and supply alcohol rests with district councils
- A Personal Licence application must be made to the district council responsible for the area in which you live, even if the premises from which you will be selling are in an area under the responsibility of a different council
- Applications for a Premises Licence should be made to the district council responsible for the area in which the premises are situated

## The Personal Licence

- The applicant must be aged 18 or over and hold a licensing qualification such as the BIIAB Level 2 National Certificate for Personal Licence Holders or the GOAL Level 2 Certificate for Personal Licence Holders.
- A licence holder is able to sell alcohol from any licensed premises
- The current cost of a Personal Licence is £37 and is valid for ten years
- Not everyone who makes a sale has to be a licence holder but all staff should receive training on the sale of alcohol, and anyone who is inexperienced or under 18 should have direct supervision
- The applicant must have a basic disclosure certificate issued by the Criminal Records Bureau and sign a declaration that he/she has not been convicted of a foreign offence



---

## The Designated Premises Supervisor

- There must be one appointed DPS per licensed premises, who will be held as the person in overall charge of the premises. He/she must be a personal licence holder
- The DPS must be nominated on their personal application form and consent to being the DPS on the premises application form
- The DPS does not have to be on the premises at all times, but must take responsibility for what happens on the premises
- He/she should ensure that staff have full understanding of the Licensing Laws and that they are fully trained to sell alcohol
- A person can be a DPS for more than one premises at a time

## The Premises Licence

- The application for a Premises Licence can be made by anyone aged 18 or over who proposes to sell alcohol by retail from a particular premises.
- There is an initial fee for licensing the premises and an annual renewal fee The Licence runs for the lifetime of the business

## How to apply for the Premises Licence

- Contact the licensing department of your local District Council
- Complete the application form and operating schedule. This sets out details of how the licensed premises will operate such as what activities will be carried out, where the alcohol will be stored, the name of the nominated DPS and ways in which the licensing objectives (prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm) will be promoted
- Draw up a plan of the premises showing where the alcohol and fire fighting equipment is situated on the premises. Unless previously agreed with the licensing authority, this should be on a scale of 1:100
- Submit the application to the district council and send copies to responsible authorities such as the police, fire authority etc. A full list is supplied with the forms
- The applicant is required to place a blue site notice at the premises and place an advertisement in the local press, giving information about the application and how interested parties can make representations
- There will be a 28 day period of consultation
- The council will promote the licensing objectives by attaching conditions to the licence
- An application will be granted automatically if there are no objections

## Further Information

---

### Useful Tools and Resources

#### Relevant Organisations and Websites

##### The Plunkett Foundation:

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

##### The Plunkett Community Shops Network

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

Last reviewed: July 2010



Click here to  
see more tools



# Security

---

**Security is an issue for all village shops, and given that 'prevention is better than cure', it is worth taking time to consider the potential security risks. Professional advice should be sought and it will be worthwhile investing in the best systems you can afford.**

---

There are six aspects of security to be considered: Shoplifting; Card, cheque or currency fraud; Violence; Dishonest suppliers; Robbery; Burglary.

## **Shoplifting**

Shoplifting is theft by customers - and customers can come in a variety of guises: Opportunists who are tempted by unattended or too easily accessible items; regular thieves who steal on a small but regular basis (and who are occasionally regular and trusted customers); casual thieves; theft can sometimes be in collusion with staff - who 'allow' theft or undercharge or make unwarranted refunds. The shopkeeper's first line of defence against shoplifting is vigilance. Would-be thieves often act suspiciously - for example, they examine the shop and the environment rather than the goods. The shopkeeper's best reaction to someone they are suspicious about is to offer to help them find what they are looking for, or to busy themselves near the person. A shopkeeper can legally exclude anyone from his or her shop.

## **Card, Cheque or Currency Fraud**

This is an increasing area of theft. Again, vigilance is all important. Counterfeit currency is occasionally tendered and bank notes should be examined, bearing in mind that forgers are more likely to forge £20 or £50. Notes should feel right and the watermark and vertical strip should be in order.

## **Violence**

Violence is abuse, threats and assaults against staff and it is worth giving careful thought to your shop layout to minimise the risk: Does it enable the shopkeeper and staff to be separate from customers? Can passers-by see easily into the shop? Is there adequate lighting? Is there an easily accessible telephone?

## **Dishonest Suppliers**

It is worth being aware that, on occasion, suppliers and their van drivers can be less than honest in matters like short delivery or overcharging on invoices. Again, vigilance is the best defence. Finally it is worth recording that for the majority of community-owned shops the security issues they have to face on a day to day basis are minor ones.

## **Robbery**

This is the crime of stealing, aggravated by violence or the fear of violence. Safety to those working in the shop is paramount. You should advise all staff to accede to any demands, and quickly - the sooner the confrontation is over the better. There should be no thoughts of fighting for the money or goods. If possible, stay calm. The more you can observe and remember (and write down immediately after) the better you will be able to assist the police.



---

You might want to consider the following practices:

**Remove surplus cash** - several times throughout the day transfer to a safe and never count takings in view

**Avoid** - displaying large amounts of cigarettes and alcohol

**Install** - time-locked safe and panic alarm system

## Burglary

This is the crime of entering a building as a trespasser with the intent of stealing. There are a number of steps you can take to minimise your risk:

**Remove the temptation** - No cash in sight and a visibly empty till at night, erect notice saying that no cash is kept on the premises, reduce key items on display such as cigarettes and alcohol, keep stockroom door closed at all times.

**Make burglary difficult** - Give thought to the quality of the doors, doorframes, windows, window frames, locks, skylights and your safe; consider fitting shutters and grilles (external ones may need planning permission); consider intruder alarms and out of hours lighting; consider concrete bollards or strategically placed concrete flower boxes to deter ram raiding.

## Further Information

---

### Useful Tools and Resources

#### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Local Police:**

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/>



Click here to  
see more tools

Last reviewed: July 2010



# Income, Profit and Pricing

---

**What a shop charges for its goods, the mix of goods in stock and the cost of the goods from the supplier are crucial factors in the viability of a business. Your village shop should aim to achieve an average gross profit margin of between 18-26%. Profit margins on goods vary widely so a balanced mix of high and low margin goods is needed to achieve a sustainable overall profit.**

---

## Income and profit

In the business plan you will have set yourself income and gross profit budgets. These now need to be translated into weekly and monthly targets. Engaging all staff (voluntary and paid) with weekly sales and monthly gross profit targets is vitally important to share in the success and challenges of running a sustainable and profitable shop. An environment where everybody is interested in the shop's performance will generate excitement, new ideas and ultimately success.

## Pricing policy

There is no fixed approach to pricing with methods varying from shop to shop – some choose to use RRP (Recommended Retail Price), some put a higher mark up on premium products, others apply a standard mark up on different categories of goods. Whatever your approach, create a clear set of guidelines that will be applied consistently and achieve your target gross profit.

## Mark up and gross profit

Before setting the selling price, it is very important to understand that mark up and gross profit margin are different. Whilst they both express the profitability of an item;

**Mark up** is profit expressed as a percentage of the cost price

**Gross profit margin** is profit expressed as a percentage of the selling price

If in your business plan you budgeted an average gross profit margin of between 19 – 26%, you will require an average mark up on the cost price of between 25 – 30%. Mark up will always be higher. The profit you need to make on items sold will need to take into account any wastage (stock unsold as a result of damage, or not selling before its sell-by-date) and all other direct selling costs (labour and overheads).

For further guidance on price setting, and understanding mark up and margins, including a 'Ready Reckoner' – see the 'Useful Tools and Resources' section.

## Known Value Items (KVIs)

KVIs are basic commodities that are price sensitive. Generally, customers know what prices they expect to pay for such goods and trade is very competitive. Products such as newspapers, tea, cornflakes, milk, pet food etc fall into this category so beware of increasing the profit margin too much on these. This could make prices unacceptably high to your customers and suggest that yours is an 'expensive' shop.

Products that do not have a known value can be priced more flexibly. These include delicatessen items, chocolates, wine, toys, garden products.



---

## Value Added Tax

VAT must be added to the selling price if the item is liable for VAT. This is currently set at 17.5%, except for items which are charged at 5% (coal, fuel and some personal hygiene items). The invoice received from the wholesaler or supplier of the goods will indicate which goods are liable for VAT.

## Displaying Prices

Display the price of an item clearly - either on the item using a pricing gun and labelling system or on the shelf edging if an EPOS system is in operation in the shop.

If using a pricing gun, try to ensure that the price label is straight and does not obscure any important information that is on the label or wrapper. To make it easy to distinguish between goods that have VAT and those that do not, it may be useful to print the prices on different colours of labels e.g. white for goods without VAT, yellow for goods with VAT. This will make it easier for counter staff and volunteers to ring the items through the till using the correct category key.

## How to increase profit margins

- Reduce the amount of wastage from poor stock control
- Purchase products at a lower price, but charge the same retail price
- Stock a broad range of goods that span both high and low margin items
- Change the product mix so there are more high margin items of a non KVI range
- Reduce the number of markdowns and offers
- Price your services higher
- Stock more seasonal items
- Increase retail prices
- Reduce overheads – consider staff, energy and water, rent, insurance etc
- See 'Developing a Profitable Shop' section of the Advice Sheets

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Plunkett Profit Guidelines** – a guide to what margins you can expect to make against product lines.

**Ready Reckoner** – a tool for converting mark-up to margin.

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Wikipedia:**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross\\_margin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_margin)



Click here to  
see more tools

**Acknowledgements: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council**  
Last reviewed: July 2010



# Cash Register or EPOS?

---

**A fully utilised EPOS (electronic point of sale) system can deliver consistent pricing, accurate stock control, financial reporting and volunteer confidence. However, the initial purchase cost, on-going back office in-put and training needs can mean community shops struggle to make proper use of it.**

---

The use of EPOS divides opinion – some shops see it as indispensable and others will avoid it completely. Many community shops opt for a simple cash register and still operate a professional, accurate and profitable business.

## Cash Register

- Low cost – but extra equipment will also be required e.g. pricing guns, scales
- Requires accuracy by till operators to ring goods through correctly e.g. under the right category for VAT calculation, at the right price
- Refunds on the till can be corrected without changing stock figures
- Manual stock counting necessary when generating orders and stock taking
- Manual pricing of all goods required. Prices need to be calculated when new delivery comes in. There may be discrepancies between the price of old and new stock
- Takes longer to put goods out and count up stock
- Does not keep count of stock
- Gives reports on VAT and cash amounts expected in till
- Regular updating of information on system not required
- Figures produced by tills are adequate for VAT and tax purposes

## EPOS System

There are four types of EPOS systems used by shops:

1. EPOS: Records line-by-line sales, sends data to separate spreadsheet for analysis
2. EPOS: Full sales analysis within the package
3. EPOS: Sales analysis and stock control
4. EPOS: Sales analysis, stock control and ordering stock electronically

There can be a significant purchase cost for EPOS equipment. It requires regular staff time to keep the system updated, and it can be a complicated system for volunteers to use. However, the benefits are:

- It eliminates the need for individual pricing of items
- Price changes can be implemented quickly when a new cost price come through to protect gross margin
- There is less room for error in the price of goods sold
- Can give daily, weekly and monthly sales figures; year on year comparisons
- You are able to have a read out of sales so you can monitor any stock losses more closely
- Stock information readily available – gives detailed reports on frequency of sale of goods, slow moving/unprofitable lines, margins, stock holding
- You can accurately monitor sales by time of day and use the information to help plan staff rotas and even shop opening hours



- It makes day-to-day re-ordering easier. You have clear information on what is selling and when it needs to be re-ordered
- Automatic stock ordering is possible provided the system is updated regularly
- The process of scanning provides a more professional transaction at the till and will offer customers an itemised receipt
- Pricing labels on shelf edges can be easily printed and changed. Any price changes are managed centrally. Manual pricing of non bar-coded items may be required
- It will reduce the time required for bookkeeping and therefore cost
- VAT Returns are easier to complete

For shops with very low levels of turnover it is quite likely that the cost and effort is not worthwhile. It is also true that the time saved by using an EPOS system is usually on tasks that volunteers would be quite happy carrying out. Typically, shops with weekly sales over £2500 would definitely benefit from having an EPOS system, though some shops with much lower turnovers are known to be successfully using it.

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Financial Management** - A financial management training manual for community owned shops

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>



Click here to  
see more tools

Last reviewed: July 2010



# Manning your Shop

---

**The success and long-term health of any village shop will depend more on the personality and retailing skills of the shopkeepers than on all the other factors combined. Those serving in the shop must like selling to the public, meeting people, being friendly without being presumptuous and have a smile for all customers!**

---

## Staffing Structures

The staffing structure of your shop will depend very much upon budgets and local circumstances. The options available are:

- Volunteer staff,**
- Employed staff**
- Employed manager with volunteer assistants**

The ideal situation is to have a paid manager with either paid or volunteer assistants, as this can give a greater sense of control, organisation and stability to the business. Whilst volunteers will be at the heart of most community-owned shops, especially in the day-to-day running of the shop, a paid manager will be able to provide the overall continuity and ensure the shop is meeting the performance targets set by the management committee. If you do have a manager (paid or voluntary) make sure there are clear guidelines on how you want the shop to be run, performance targets, appraisal systems, etc. Remember, a manager is just that - he/she must be allowed to manage!

## Employment Rights for Paid and Volunteer Staff

**Health and Safety** - the community shop must provide a healthy and safe working environment; full insurance cover and compliance with Health and Safety at Work (HSW), and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) are essential

**Discrimination** - it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, sex and disability

**Consent** - Those working more than 48 hours per week must have consented to do so in writing

**Holiday** - All workers must have 4 weeks holiday per year (pro rata for part-timers)

**Breaks** - Anyone working more than 6 hours must have at least 20 minutes rest break; under 18s working more than 4.5 hours must have at least 30 minutes

**Records** - Environmental Health Officers are responsible for enforcement and may demand to see working hours and holiday records

**Part-time Workers** - Part-time workers are protected by the Part-time Workers Regulations 2000. This ensures that a part-time worker is not treated less favourably than his or her comparable full-time colleague, unless it can be justified.

**Minimum Wage** - The minimum wage is reviewed on 1st October each year. Minimum wages are set for 16-17 year olds, 18-21 year olds and adults.

## Volunteers

The minimum wage applies to 'workers' rather than 'volunteers'; however there have been a number of cases which show that the dividing line between these two legal concepts can easily become blurred, with the result that volunteers have been able to claim that they are in fact workers and therefore entitled to the minimum wage. To protect the organisation against such a risk it may be advisable to:



- Create a document to be signed by both shop and volunteer which clearly sets out the nature of the volunteer relationship. There should be no commitment on the organisation to provide work and no reciprocal obligation on the part of the volunteer to do the work other than when he or she wishes. It is acceptable to outline rules and procedures of the organisation, as long as it is clear that these procedures are voluntary for the volunteer and are not legally binding
- Ensure that the volunteer is only paid for genuine expenses and that this can be proved by way of receipts/vouchers. There is a danger that other payments, whether monetary or by the provision of a benefit in kind, could help to create an employment relationship entitling the volunteer to, amongst other things, the minimum wage.
- Be careful of giving rewards unless they are genuinely unexpected or a one-off gift. If it can be proved that the volunteer has an expectation to such payments then there is a risk that the volunteer will be held to be a worker.

## Training and Team Building

Regular team meetings are a good way of engaging all members of staff and volunteers in the overall performance of the shop, as well as keeping them informed of important changes. Team meetings are also a useful way of building team spirit. There are many external training opportunities for shop staff and volunteers, including the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's Awards in Food Safety, Health and Safety, and First Aid. RetailPlus is an independent organisation which offers training in convenience retailing and provides self-study workbooks based on the day to day business of retailing which leads to National Certificates and NVQs. You will also need to consider regular internal training on more day-to-day issues such as reducing wastage, stock counts, use of EPOS etc.

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Job Description** – a template job description for a Shop Manager and Assistant

**Organogram** – An example of a shop structure, with related responsibilities and tasks

**Staff Handbook** - a handbook for staff and volunteers at Urchfont Community Shop



Click here to  
see more tools

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Department for Business, Innovation and Skills:**

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/>

**RetailPlus:**

<http://www.retailplus-uk.com/>

**Business Link:**

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/>

**Acknowledgements:** Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

**Last reviewed:** July 2010



# Opening Hours

---

**The opening hours of your shop will need to meet the needs of your customers, your staff and your volunteers. It is essentially a question of balancing the costs of opening against potential sales.**

---

## **Guidelines**

One size does not fit all – for some smaller shops with a limited customer base, it may only be viable to open two mornings a week. In these cases, your customers will get to know your opening hours and will work around them. If you are a larger store, with the opportunity to catch passing trade, longer hours over seven days will help retain customers' loyalty and encourage repeat visits.

The demand for longer and later opening hours on village shops has grown with longer supermarket opening hours and the availability of home deliveries. Consult with the community to ask them what times they would most like the shop to be open. Back this up using EPOS, or a manual check over a sustained period to assess which hours of the day really does see the most sales. Remember, though longer hours may generate additional profit, they will also cost you in terms of staff and energy costs. Opening hours are difficult things to change – customers get used to a set time and day, but it is important to review them from time to time. Sometimes you can reduce hours. If the last hour of business is dead, then save costs and close early.

## **Sundays**

There are no laws restricting the trading hours of your business between Monday and Saturday. Small shops with a floor area of up to 280 square metres can choose their own Sunday opening hours. Shops larger than 280 square metres can only open for a maximum number of six consecutive hours between 10am and 6pm, providing they notify the local authority and provide visual signs of their opening hours internally and externally. If Sunday is not a regular trading day for your business, you can't pressure staff into working on Sundays. Forcing them to work or sacking an employee for not doing so is a legal offence. Your employees may have special employment rights if they're required to work in your shop on Sundays.

## **Further Information**

---

### **Relevant Organisations and Websites**

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Biz Help 24:**

<http://www.bizhelp24.com/business-law/business-trading-hours-law.html>

**Trading Standards:**

<http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/>

**Last reviewed: July 2010**

**Acknowledgements: Rural Shops Alliance**

---



# Publicising the Launch

**Publicising the shop opening in the days leading to the opening is crucial to the success of your project because it lets the wider community know that you exist, it makes people aware of the goods and services you offer, it emphasises community spirit, and it publicises the community as a whole.**

After the hard work in getting the shop ready to open, the importance of the actual launch can sometimes be forgotten. Involving a new person or people - ideally with good PR and marketing skills - to organise the launch can bring in fresh blood to an overworked, and perhaps weary, committee.

## Publicity

After you have decided what form the launch should take, pick a date and time when you can get the maximum amount of people to attend, and then notify all parties and issue invitations to: Shop supporters and shareholders; financial backers and investors; Parish council; your bank manager; advisers including solicitors, architects, builders, etc; Post Office representatives (if applicable); suppliers; Local dignitaries and celebrities; nearby villages (particularly those without a shop) and schools; and your Community Retail Adviser!

Send personal invitations as well as flyers, prepare roadside signs, make use of village notice board and newsletters, village websites and don't forget the effectiveness of word of mouth.

The Plunkett Foundation will happily support your shop in preparing and circulating your press release for shop openings. The Plunkett Foundation also maintain an online directory of all community-owned shops – you should make sure you supply all necessary information to Plunkett at the Launch Phase, including relevant contact details so that if press enquiries are made to the shop directly, they are able to get through to the most appropriate member of the committee.

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Plunkett Foundation Press Release** - a template press release and recipient list for community-shop openings.

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>



Click here to  
see more tools

Last reviewed: July 2010



# Trading Requirements

---

**The law states that in order to trade and in order to engage in a contract (the transaction for the sale and supply of goods) with a customer, there are certain requirements a trader has to follow.**

---

A person transferring or selling goods must have the right to do so and the goods must

- Correspond with the description
- Be of satisfactory quality
- Fit the purpose they were supplied for
- Be free from defects
- Be safe
- Be durable

Where goods are defective at the time of delivery there are several remedies the customer may ask for

- A repair or replacement
- A price reduction
- Rescission of the contract (i.e. return of the goods, part or full refund, and compensation, if appropriate)

It is a criminal offence to restrict the customer's statutory rights by means of a notice, statement or documents, for example a notice stating 'No refunds'.

Misrepresentation is an offence. This is a false statement about a product that made the customer decide to buy it, but which turns out to be untrue.

The trader is not allowed to limit or exclude liability for death or personal injury arising from negligence.

People injured by defective products may have the right to sue for damages. Manufacturers and importers are also liable.

The law also gives rights to anyone who was intended to benefit from the transaction, for example the right to return gifts.

The business ownership details should be displayed on the premises and on all business letters, written orders, invoices and receipts.

The Trades Descriptions Act states that a shop cannot give misleading information about its products and services.

A trader should display clearly with a notice what action he or she will take if goods such as dry cleaning or shoe repairs are not collected. It is sufficient to state how long the trader will keep goods and an intention to dispose of them after this date. Any time period would need to be reasonable.



---

## Further Information

---

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Ready for Trading Checklist** - a handy checklist to ensure everything has been considered before the shop opens for trading.

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**The Trading Standards Institute**

<http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/>



Click here to  
see more tools

Last reviewed: July 2010



# Health and Safety

---

**Whilst overall responsibility for health and safety control rests with the management committee, it is the responsibility of all - management committee, staff and volunteers - to ensure that the shop is a safe place to be.**

Health and Safety in the workplace is monitored by the Health and Safety Executive, but it is the role of environmental officers from the district council to visit shops, primarily to advise and then to ensure that correct practices are being enforced and dangerous practices are stopped. Since health and safety legislation requires both employers and employees to comply with certain minimum requirements, both can be held responsible in law if they fail to do so.

## Health and Safety Checklist for Village Shops

Health and safety requirements, guidelines and procedures should be applied to the following areas:

- General practices and procedures
- Preventing slips, trips and falls
- Manual handling
- Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH)
- Good housekeeping and standards of cleanliness
- Food handling regulations
- All aspects of fire safety and risk assessment
- All aspects of security, both of premises and personnel
- First aid provision
- Reporting of accidents including RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)

## Legal Requirements

It is important for every shop to have a health and safety policy and to have the following procedures in place:

- A written health and safety policy
- A written risk assessment
- A record of the significant findings of the risk assessment
- Consulting with staff and volunteers on health and safety matters
- The training of staff and volunteers on health and safety matters

Ideally, a member of the management committee or the shop manager will take responsibility for the general implementation of health and safety policy. This will involve:

- Keeping themselves informed on relevant health and safety matters
- Carrying out a risk assessment and reviewing it regularly
- Having procedures in place to ensure that health and safety issues will be dealt with effectively at all times
- Training and instructing staff and volunteers both at staff/volunteer induction and at regular updating sessions
- Supervising staff and volunteers in health and safety matters

The health and safety responsibilities of all staff and volunteers mean that they should:

- Take reasonable care of their own and colleagues' health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their actions



- Cooperate fully with management in ensuring that all health and safety standards and procedures relating to shop work are followed
- Immediately report to management any working situation they consider to be a danger to the health and safety of themselves or others

To ensure health and safety measures staff and volunteers should:

- Look out for hazards to both staff and customers
- Report any hazards or incidents to the manager/supervisor
- Follow guidelines particularly when lifting goods, cleaning floors, stacking shelves etc
- Keep the floor and aisles free of hazards
- Attend training sessions and cooperate with management

## Further Information

---

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Health and Safety Policy** – the Health and Safety Executive template which can be adapted by community owned shops.

**Risk Assessment** – a template to be adapted by community owned shops.

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Health and Safety Executive:**

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm>



Click here to  
see more tools

Last reviewed: July 2010



# Food Safety and Hygiene

---

**All retailers who sell food need to be aware of and comply with food safety and hygiene regulations. These need to be applied to food storage, display, handling and selling.**

---

Basic hygiene and food safety requirements are set out in the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 and the Food Safety (Temperature Control) Regulations 1995. Changes in food hygiene legislation which came into force in 2006 require retailers who sell food, including any food that needs to be kept cold in order to keep it safe e.g. milk, to complete a **written** Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) record. The Food Standards Agency has produced a special pack for retailers to explain the impact of the new food safety regulations. The pack 'Safer Food, Better Business for Retailers' is free and available to order from the Food Standards Agency on 0845 606 0667 or via **www.food.gov.uk**

## **'Safer Food, Better Business for Retailers'**

The pack is clearly laid out, easy to understand and explains what is required by law to ensure the safe handling of food in your business. It is strongly recommended that every shop obtains a copy and uses it to formulate best practice. It explains the various safety points, why they are important, what needs to be done to comply and what to do if something goes wrong. The pack supplies an 'opening' and 'closing' checklist, daily diaries and a 4- weekly review, plus a cleaning schedule and staff training records, all of which a shop is required to keep by law. You can use your own versions of these forms as long as they record the relevant information effectively. For stores that prepare or cook food such as 'bake off' products or making sandwiches, checks must be carried out to ensure that food is kept at the correct temperature and prepared in a clean and hygienic manner. More specialised shops such as delicatessens will be required to conduct a more detailed risk analysis, following the requirements laid out in the pack.

## **Staff/Volunteer Training**

Training on the essentials of food hygiene should be received by anyone starting work as a food handler for the first time. There are different levels of training for the different categories of food handler

- Those handling low risk or wrapped food e.g. counter staff (Category A)
- Those preparing high 'open risk' foods e.g. catering assistant (Category B)
- Those who have a supervisory role e.g. manager, chef (Category C)



---

## Further Information

---

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Safer Food, Better Business for Retailers** – See Food Standards Agency link below, for lots of advice and templates.

**Cleaning Checklist** – a template to ensure all areas of the shop are cleaned on a regular basis

**Refrigeration Temperature Records** – a template to record the temperature of all refrigeration units throughout the day

**Food Safety Checklist** – a checklist to ensure all food safety issues are considered

**Hot and Cold Food Display Advice** – Guidance on handling and displaying food



Click here to  
see more tools

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Food Standards Agency:**

<http://www.food.gov.uk/>

**Your Local Council/ Environmental Health Department:**

<http://mycouncil.direct.gov.uk/index.html>

Last reviewed: July 2010



# Fire Safety

---

**It is vital that consideration is made for everyone who might be on the premises or nearby, whether staff, customers or members of the general public. Particular attention should be paid to anyone who may have a disability or require special help.**

---

## Legislation

In October 2006 the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force, replacing most fire safety legislation with one simple order and ending the issuing of fire certificates. It is now a legal requirement for the person responsible for the premises to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of fire and make sure that people can safely escape from the building in the event of a fire.

## Legal Requirement

As employers, the management committee is responsible for fire safety and are required to:

- Carry out a full fire risk assessment and record the findings (see Best Practice section)
- Inform staff of any risks
- Plan for an emergency
- Provide staff information and training
- Provide and maintain the means to detect and give warning in case of fire
- Provide and maintain the means of escape and emergency lighting
- Provide and maintain fire safety signs
- Provide and maintain fire fighting equipment
- Keep records of fire safety provision and maintenance

## General Guidelines

Most village shops will fall into the low risk category of fire risk and making the premises safe is generally a matter of common sense.

- Operate a No Smoking Policy throughout the premises
- Have an adequate number of fire extinguishers which are maintained twice a year and make sure staff are trained and confident to use them
- Install fire/smoke alarms and test regularly
- Check safety of electrical equipment regularly
- Ensure that all fire exit routes are clear of stock and other obstacles and that fire exit doors are accessible
- Remove waste materials from the shop regularly
- Keep the storeroom and refuse bins tidy and secure
- Give full training on all aspects of fire safety to staff and volunteers



---

## Further Information

---

### Useful Tools and Resources

**Safer Food, Better Business for Retailers** – See Food Standards Agency link below, for lots of advice and templates.

### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Communities and Local Government:**

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw/>

**Fire Gateway:**

<http://www.fire.gov.uk/>



Click here to  
see more tools



# Disabled Customers

**Disabled customers will be an important group of customers in your shop and it is worth taking time to ensure that you are able to offer them the best possible service and consideration.**

## Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) applies to all businesses that provide a service, offer facilities or supply goods, regardless of size. All staff and volunteers have to comply with the law. If someone breaks the law they could be taken to court and the person(s) responsible for the business may have to prove that everything had been done to prevent discrimination from happening. If not, they could also be found guilty of discrimination.

The Act concerns all disabled people, not just those using wheelchairs. Someone is disabled if 'their disability makes it difficult for them to carry out normal day to day activities' and the disability has to have lasted a year, or be likely to last at least a year, to count. This includes someone who uses a wheelchair or has difficulty walking, someone who is deaf, has significantly impaired speech, is blind or partially sighted, has continuing treatment for diabetes, someone with epilepsy, has a learning difficulty or a mental illness.

The Act also protects people who have a severe disfigurement or whose condition might initially have only a slight effect on their ability but is likely to get worse, such as people with cancer, HIV infections or multiple sclerosis.

Where there is a physical feature of the premises that makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to make use of a service, service providers have to take 'reasonable' action to remove or alter premises. This may include installing a permanent ramp to enable wheelchair users to gain access to premises previously reached only by steps.

'Reasonable' action is intended to be flexible and may vary according to the type of service provided, the resources of the service provider and the effect of the disability on the individual. However, although allowances may be made for small village shops, it is still necessary to comply with the law.

## Further Information

### Useful Tools and Resources

#### Relevant Organisations and Websites

##### The Plunkett Foundation:

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

##### The Plunkett Community Shops Network

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>



Click here to  
see more tools

Acknowledgements: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council  
Last reviewed: July 2010



# First Aid

---

## Legal Requirements

A first aid box should be kept on the premises and a person appointed to ensure that it is adequately stocked at all times. No medicines should be kept in the first aid box. All staff and volunteers should know where the first aid box is kept and how to obtain first aid support. A first Aid person also needs to be appointed. A Health and Safety Executive Accident Book should also be kept up to date, including the reporting of all serious accidents to the Health and Safety Executive.

## Appoint a First Aid Person

A person should be appointed to be responsible for taking action if there is an incident or accident that requires first aid by

- calling a doctor or phoning for an ambulance if secondary aid is appropriate
- reporting the accident in the accident book and to the shop manager
- ensuring that the hazard or cause of the accident has been removed if possible

In a community-owned shop, there may need to be several first aid people appointed to cover all eventualities.

## Giving First Aid

Only members of staff who have received formal first aid training should administer first aid, otherwise it should be left to the professionals. It is highly unlikely that there will be a trained first aide on site all the time, so staff should be instructed on the correct procedure to deal with a medical incident.

- Telephone for a doctor or ambulance as the situation demands
- Summon a local first aider and/or the shop manager
- Keep the patient as comfortable as possible until qualified help arrives

## Keeping Records, Accident Book

All accidents that result in injury, however trivial, and any near misses that had the potential to result in injury, should be recorded in the accident book by the person responsible for first aid or the shop manager. Records should be kept in the book available from the Health and Safety Executive.

## Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

Whilst it should be noted that this is unlikely to happen in village shops, you will be required to comply with the regulations if such circumstances occur. It does not require the reporting of all accidents, only those that result in

- Death
- Major injury
- Accidents resulting in an injury that requires the injured person to be away from work for more than three days
- Diseases
- Gas incidents

A full list of incidents that should be reported is available at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).



---

## Further Information

---

### Useful Tools and Resources

#### Relevant Organisations and Websites

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network:**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Health and Safety Executive:**

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm>

**The British Red Cross:**

<http://www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk/>



Click here to  
see more tools

**Acknowledgements: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council**  
**Last reviewed: July 2010**



# Underage Customers

**All staff and volunteers should know the law relating to the sale of age restricted products.**

## **It is illegal to sell the following items to a Person under the Age of 18**

- Cigarettes and tobacco
- Alcohol, including alcopops
- Fireworks
- Knives, blades, axes
- Substances that the shopkeeper may reasonably believe will be used for intoxication, e.g. butane gas, lighter fuel/fluid, solvent based glue, aerosols,

## **Items Not to be Sold to a Person Under the Age of 16**

As above plus:

- Lottery tickets
- Aerosol Paints
- Party Poppers
- Caps
- DVDs (as indicated on the DVD)

## **Tips for Dealing with Age Determination**

- If unsure, ask the person for proof of age that has a photo, name, date of birth and signature. If you are still not sure, call for assistance when possible
- Make sure your staff know what acceptable proof of age cards or documents look like.
- Have a notice or a till sticker that will act as a permanent reminder for your staff about age restricted products (free till stickers are available from Trading Standards).
- Keep a logbook detailing refused sales and instruct staff to complete it when sales have been refused - regularly review these records and sign that you have done so.
- In premises where goods are scanned at the till use the bar codes of age restricted goods to activate a till prompt to alert staff that they need to check the age of the purchaser.

## **Further Information**

### **Useful Tools and Resources**

**Underage Customer Log** – a record for logging refused sales

**Staff Training Record** – A record for logging staff trained on sales of age restricted goods

### **Relevant Organisations and Websites**

**The Plunkett Foundation:**

<http://www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm>

**The Plunkett Community Shops Network**

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

**Trading Standards Institute:**

<http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/>

**Last reviewed: July 2010**



Click here to  
see more tools