

Managing allergen risks in your hospitality business

How Zonal's new integrated Menu Management solution provides an efficient and secure method of monitoring and sharing allergen data.

Zonal



Life and death

Some parts of your business really are a matter of life and death. Food safety management is one of them, especially when it comes to food allergies.

As the tragic case of Owen Carey, who died after eating a Byron burger, demonstrates, allergens can be fatal.

And sadly Carey isn't alone. James Turnbull died from anaphylactic shock after eating a takeaway. And Natasha Ednan-Laperouse died after having an allergic reaction to her Pret A Manger baguette, which is driving a change in legislation – Natasha's law – to force food business to include full ingredients labelling on pre-packaged food.

Food allergies are sadly very common. Like James Turnbull, 10 people a year in the UK die from food-induced anaphylaxis; in the US, nearly a quarter of a million people a year require emergency medical care for food-based allergic reactions. 40% of children are allergic to more than one food, and more than 170 different foods are known to cause allergic reactions.

Nearly
250,000

people a year require emergency medical care for food-based allergic reactions.



Managing the risk of allergens in your venues isn't just the right thing to do. It's a legal requirement too. The good news is that Zonal's new Menu Management solution can make it much easier to control, manage and inform your customers of any allergens – and it delivers many other benefits too.

In this, the first of three eGuides, we'll discover how Zonal's Menu Management solution can help you control allergens. In part two we'll explore how Menu Management can help reduce waste and make it easier to control inventory, and in part three we'll discover how to better control costs and improve profitability.

Food allergens and the law

Under [EU law](#) you must provide allergen information to consumers about pre-packed and non-pre-packed food or drink. You must also handle allergens adequately and ensure that your staff are trained about allergens.

There are 14 different allergens that you must inform your customers about. They are:



Celery



Eggs



Molluscs

Such as mussels and oysters



Peanuts



Cereals containing gluten

Including wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan), rye, barley and oats



Fish



Mustard



Sesame seeds



Crustaceans

Such as prawns, crabs and lobsters



Lupin



Tree nuts

Including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts



Soybeans



Sulphur dioxide and sulphites

(If they are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million)



You don't just have to notify consumers if these substances are used as ingredients. You also have to notify them if they might be present in the final product through cross-contamination or other means.



That's why some businesses warn that while their products don't contain nuts, their product is made in the same place as products that do.

A good example of an allergen that isn't an ingredient but that may be present in a food item is sulphites: they're often used to preserve dried fruit, and may still be present in end products such as jams or chutneys. If that's the case, you must inform your customers of the risk.

Why is allergen communication difficult?

Unfortunately even the most clued-up businesses don't always adequately inform their consumers about allergen risks.

They may have high staff turnover – hardly unusual in the hospitality trade – staff with communication problems, or staff for whom English is not their first language. All of these situations make communication and knowledge sharing difficult.



Suppliers play a role too. A change of supplier may introduce allergens into items where they were not previously present. And different venues in multi-site estates may have different suppliers, so the same product may have different ingredients and therefore different allergens. With more and more venues proudly boasting that all product is locally sourced, it's increasingly difficult to detail allergens across a multi-site estate.

As you can see, there's a lot that can go wrong. And your current system, or lack of a formal system, may be contributing to the problem.



If you're relying on manual entry and Excel spreadsheets there's lots of scope for human error and missed details; written notes may get lost or never get updated; the PoS system may not be connected to other systems and isn't updated when supplier or recipe details change.

That's where Menu Management can help.



The easy way to stay on top of allergens

Zonal's new Menu Management solution makes it easy to identify the allergens present in recipes, and quickly update team members and colleagues of any changes.

Not only that, but it makes life easier in many other ways too.

Here's how it works.



Create

When you create a recipe in the Menu Management system, you can experiment with different ingredient configurations to develop mouthwatering dishes. Each ingredient has the relevant allergen information associated, meaning the final version of each recipe therefore has details of any potential allergens baked into it, and can also be used to identify whether a dish is truly vegan rather than just vegetarian.



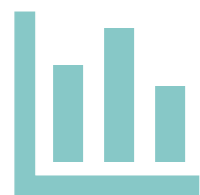
Define

The recipe builder also allows you to define portion sizes to ensure consistency in the content, quality and cost of each dish. This enables you to define your costs and set prices to ensure that you maintain margin.



Update

Because this is an integrated system, a change in the cost of an item from a supplier will automatically update the costs in the Menu Management module. For example, when the British growing season ends and the kitchen moves from locally sourced tomatoes to imported ones, you update the supplier and price details just once. The Zonal Menu Management system then makes the appropriate price change across every single dish that uses that particular kind of tomato.



Analyse

The system doesn't just make the changes. It also enables you to model their knock-on effects. Its analysis tools enable you to see the difference even the smallest price change will make to the overall profitability of your menu and identify whether you can absorb that change or if you will need to adjust your prices.



Share

Once the menu is complete, you can then create and share recipe cards – step-by-step guides detailing what to use and how to use it to create each dish. Those cards include lists of ingredients and allergens and even photographs to help ensure consistency of presentation and customer safety when it comes to potential allergic reactions.



By using the Menu Management system you're centralising your entire recipe database. This means you can automatically maintain accurate ingredient, allergen and cost information across every single item you offer in every single venue.

Not only that, but you're also getting the many other benefits of Menu Management too:

- » **Reduced paperwork**
- » **Better accuracy**
- » **Effortless updating**
- » **Seamless integration with Zonal's EPoS, Stocks and Purchase & Pay**

All technologies combine to deliver the ultimate end-to-end supply chain solution.

Why integrated systems are better for your business

When your systems talk to one another there are multiple benefits.

For food safety management it means automatic, estate-wide updates: if you change suppliers for a particular item and that change introduces a particular allergen, you can inform and update the entire estate immediately and automatically. There's no room for doubt over allergen information, so there's no danger of putting your customers' health or wellbeing at risk.

Integration also reduces workload and improves efficiency. When crucial information can move effortlessly between the different parts of your business there's no risk of human error from time-consuming and unnecessary re-keying of information.



The same instant data sharing that communicates allergen updates also applies to recipe changes, pricing changes, special offers and anything else your business needs to know about: simply make the change centrally and it's immediately pushed to everybody who needs it.



Last but not least, integrated systems are easier and more cost-effective to manage. When you use Zonal's integrated solutions there's a dedicated support team looking after your entire tech ecosystem, not just one part of it.

And because it's Zonal, that means your entire operation is being looked after by the best in the business: we live and breathe hospitality, and we don't work in any other sector. That means you have a knowledgeable, experienced team who know the industry inside out and who are there for you whenever you need them.

Don't risk your customers' health and your business's reputation. Ask for a Menu Management demo to see how complete control can make your customers better informed and your entire operation more efficient.

Contact us for a demo

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