HARROGATE
CONVENTION CENTRE



Food, Drink & Compliance Guide

Frequently Asked Questions for Event Organisers

This FAQ guide has been created to help event organisers understand the requirements for bringing food, drink and related equipment into Harrogate Convention Centre.

It provides clear guidance on licensing, corkage, food safety responsibilities, refrigeration, coffee machines and venue compliance, helping to ensure that all activities are carried out safely and in accordance with legal and venue requirements.

By reviewing this information before your event, you can avoid unexpected charges, ensure the correct arrangements are in place, and help deliver a smooth, compliant and successful event experience for everyone involved.

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1. Personal Licences & Corkage

When do I need a Personal Licence?

A Personal Licence is required by the organiser, or a member of their team, if any exhibitors are bringing their own alcohol onto their stand for giveaways, or service.

Can exhibitors still bring their own alcohol if the organiser does not have a Personal Licence?

Yes. However, a member of the Matcham's catering team must be present on the stand whenever alcohol is being served or given away. The exhibitor will be charged for the catering staff member for a minimum of a 4-hour shift.

Can exhibitors bring in their own bar?

Yes. Bars are permitted, provided that:

- The event organiser holds a Personal Licence.
- The relevant corkage charges have been paid to Matcham's.

What is corkage & How to order?

Corkage is the charge payable when exhibitors bring their own food or drink onto site. Please contact Matcham's, Harrogate Convention Centre's in house catering team, on: MatchamsCatering@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk

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Can I provide alcohol for my event (bar or drinks reception)?

Yes, you can provide alcohol for the Matcham's team to serve. Please note:

- Staffing is not included; you will be charged for a minimum of a 4-hour shift.
- A personal license will not be required, as Matcham's will be serving.
- Corkage fees include storing and chilling drinks where required.
- You will be charged corkage.*
- Matcham's will provide glassware.

*Ask Matcham's for prices MatchamsCatering@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk

If you rather serve the alcohol yourself, then a personal license will be required.

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What does an exhibitor get if they pay the Alcohol & Soft Drinks Buyout Fee?

The Buyout Fee is a single payment that covers unlimited alcohol and soft drinks brought onsite during your event.

Please note:

- Covers unlimited drinks brought onsite.
- Does not cover coffee machine and/or hot drinks.
- Does not include storage or chilling.*
- Does not include glassware. *
- Please contact the catering team for more information.

There is also a buyout fee for soft drinks alone.

*If they would like storage & chilling and/or glasses this can be arranged with an extra charge.

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2. Food Safety Consultant Requirements for Event Organisers

Why do I need a Food Safety Consultant for my event?

If exhibitors are bringing their own food, drinks equipment, or coffee machines, a Food Safety Consultant is required to:

- Ensure food safety legislation is being followed.
- Monitor food storage and temperature control.
- Check allergen compliance.
- Reduce the risk of foodborne illness.
- Protect exhibitors, visitors and event organisers.

For events serving food and drinks to the public, a Food Safety Consultant helps ensure a safe and compliant event experience.

When do I need to appoint a Food Safety Consultant?

A Food Safety Consultant must be appointed when exhibitors are bringing:

- Coffee machines or barista machines.
- Sandwiches or other high-risk foods.
- High-risk bakery products.
- Any other food items requiring food safety oversight.

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3. Coffee Machines & Hot Drinks

Can exhibitors bring in a standard coffee machine?

Yes, provided that:

- The organiser has appointed a Food Safety Consultant.
- Relevant corkage charges have been paid.
- The machine has a valid PAT test, or proof that the item was purchased within 12 months of the date of use at the venue is provided
- Power has been booked in advance.
- Allergens are clearly identified.

As part of the corkage charge, Matcham's can supply water for the machine if required.

Can exhibitors bring in a barista coffee machine?

Yes, provided that:

- The organiser has appointed a Food Safety Consultant.
- Relevant corkage charges have been paid.
- The machine has a valid PAT test, or proof that the item was purchased within 12 months of the date of use at the venue is provided
- Proof that the machine has been tested to PSSR 2000 regulations compliance within 12 months of the date of use at the venue is provided
- All allergens are clearly identified, and the operators have received an acceptable form of allergen training (e.g. FSA Allergen training) – proof to be provided upon request
- Power has been booked in advance.

As part of the corkage charge, Matcham's can supply water for the machine if required.

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4. Snacks & Food

Can exhibitors or I bring packaged snacks such as crisps and chocolate to give away?

Yes. Provided:

- The relevant corkage charges have been paid.
- All allergen information is clearly displayed.

A Food Safety Consultant is not required for this.

Can exhibitors bring sandwiches or other food to give away on their stand?

Yes, but a Food Safety Consultant must be appointed by the organiser if the food includes high-risk items such as:

- Cooked Meats
- Poultry
- Dairy Products
- Eggs
- Seafood
- Cooked Rice
- Cooked Pasta
- Prepared Salads
- Soft Cheeses
- Coleslaw
- Pre-Cut Fruit
- Other Ready-to-Eat Foods

These foods support rapid bacterial growth and require strict temperature control.

Before bringing these items onsite, please check with the organiser that a Food Safety Consultant will be available.

Relevant corkage charges apply and allergen information must be provided.

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Can exhibitors bring cakes or cupcakes from a bakery?

Yes, provided:

- Relevant corkage charges have been paid.
- All allergen information is available.

However, if you are bringing high-risk bakery products, a Food Safety Consultant must be present at the event.

Examples include:

- Fresh Cream Cakes
- Cheesecakes
- Cakes Containing Custard Fillings
- Mousse Desserts
- Tiramisu
- Cakes with Raw Egg Products
- Cream-Filled Macarons or Éclairs
- Fruit Tarts Containing Fresh Cream or Custard

Please check with the organiser that a Food Safety Consultant will be onsite.

Can exhibitors cook food on their stand to give away?

No.

Cooking food on exhibition stands is not permitted.

If you require hot food, this should be ordered through Matcham's Catering. Please contact them at: MatchamsCatering@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk

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5. Catering Orders & Food For Own Consumption

Can exhibitors order food and drinks directly to their stand?

Yes.

Matcham's, the in-house catering team at Harrogate Convention Centre, offers a Stand Catering Pack with a wide range of refreshments and catering options.

This is the easiest and safest way to provide food and drink on stands.

Please contact the Matcham's Catering Team for assistance with ordering.
MatchamsCatering@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk

Can exhibitors bring food for their own staff to consume on the stand?

Yes.

You may bring food for personal staff consumption. Please ensure it is stored safely and appropriately.

A Food Safety Consultant is not required for this and there are no corkage charges.

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6. Refrigeration

Can exhibitors bring their own fridge for their stand?

Yes. You will need to:

- Ensure the fridge is PAT tested, or provide proof that the item was purchased within 12 months of the date of use at the venue
- Book power in advance.
- Inform the organiser that a fridge will be onsite.

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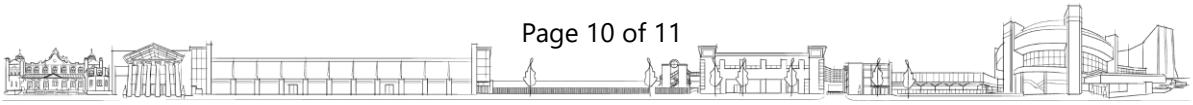
7. Compliance & Venue Requirements

What happens if exhibitors or I bring food or drinks onsite without notifying the venue?

If food or drink is brought onsite without prior approval:

- Any applicable corkage fees will be charged onsite.
- Payment must be made by card.
- If charges are not paid, you will be required to stop serving immediately.
- If the external catering requires a Food Safety Consultant and/or a Personal License Holder and there is not one appointed, then you will be asked to stop serving immediately.



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8. Quick Reference for Organisers

Brought in Product	Personal Licence Required	Food Safety Consultant Required	Corkage Fees Applies
Bar / Alcohol	Yes	No	Yes
Coffee Machine	No	Yes	Yes
Barista Machine	No	Yes	Yes
Packaged Snacks	No	No	Yes
Sandwiches / High-Risk Foods	No	Yes	Yes
Cakes & Cupcakes (Low Risk)	No	No	Yes
High-Risk Cakes & Desserts	No	Yes	Yes
Fridge on Stand	No	No	No
Food for Staff Consumption	No	No	No
Cooking Food on Stand	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	N/A

Need Advice?

If you are unsure whether your planned food, drink, or equipment requires a Personal Licence, a Food Safety Consultant, or corkage payments, please speak to the Matchams Catering Team before your event. We will be happy to advise and help ensure your event remains safe, compliant, and successful.

MatchamsCatering@harrogateconventioncentre.co.uk

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