



NCASSTM
NATIONWIDE
CATERERS
ASSOCIATION

YOUR SMS FAQs ANSWERED

The NCASS Safety Management System (SMS) and risk assessments (RAs) have been developed by industry experts to support all members, both mobile and bricks and mortar, to trade safely and legally. NCASS provides all members with the necessary tools to comply with and exceed general Fire Safety, Health & Safety and Food Safety regulations, however, we understand that the world of compliance and the role of this documentation can feel overwhelming and confusing. As such, we've answered the 10 most frequently asked questions around the SMS and risk assessments.

DO I HAVE TO FILL OUT THE WHOLE SMS AND HOW MUCH IS RELEVANT TO ME AND MY BUSINESS?

No, you do not have to fill out the whole SMS. You only have to fill out the sections that are relevant to you and your business' activities. We would recommend that you take the time to read through the whole folder so that you can identify which sections are relevant to you and your business. We would also advise that all staff read through the relevant sections of the SMS so that the whole business understands and embodies the practices included.

CAN I USE THE SMS INSTEAD OF THE SFBB PACK?

Yes you can! Unlike the SFBB pack, the NCASS SMS provides comprehensive information on Fire Safety, Health & Safety and Food Safety, has been designed for mobile and bricks and mortar premises, and is constantly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in regulations. If you are using an NCASS SMS you do not need to fill out the SFBB pack.

DOES HAVING THE SMS MAKE ME COMPLIANT?

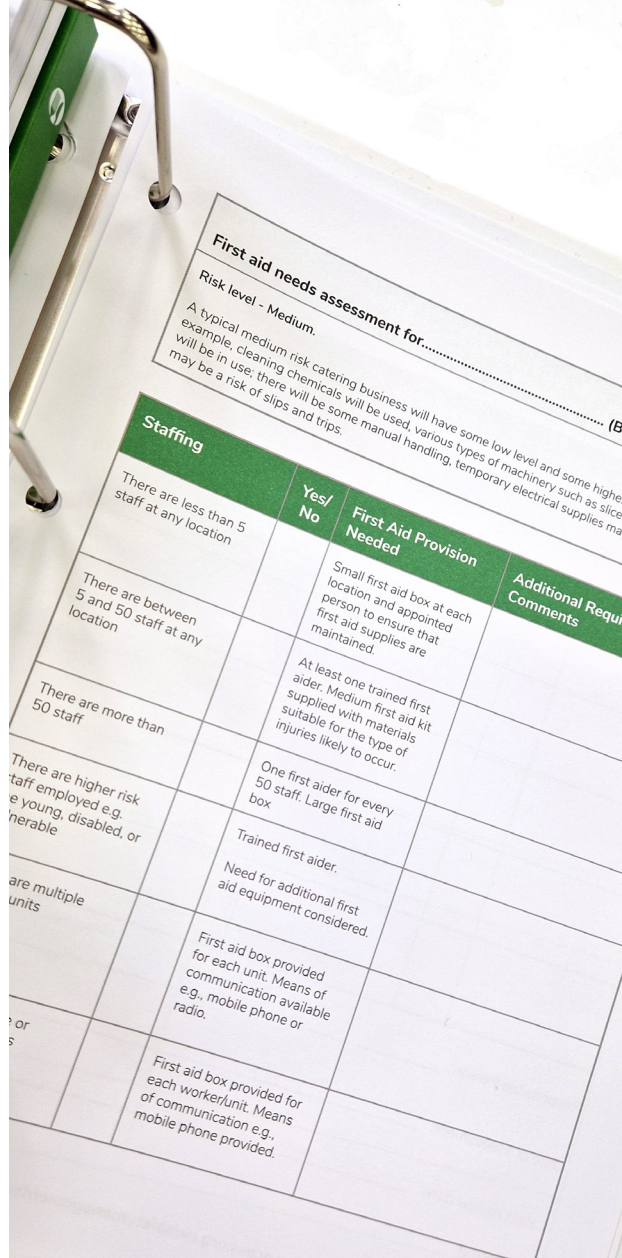
The SMS provides you with all the necessary information, processes and policies that, when followed properly, will make your business compliant. As well as outlining the correct procedures that should be followed, the SMS also includes a Daily Dairy and useful Additional Resources to record important checks and evidence that key controls have been implemented. Simply having the folder on site will not make you compliant, but the correct implementation of the SMS will reflect positively in the food hygiene rating awarded to your business.

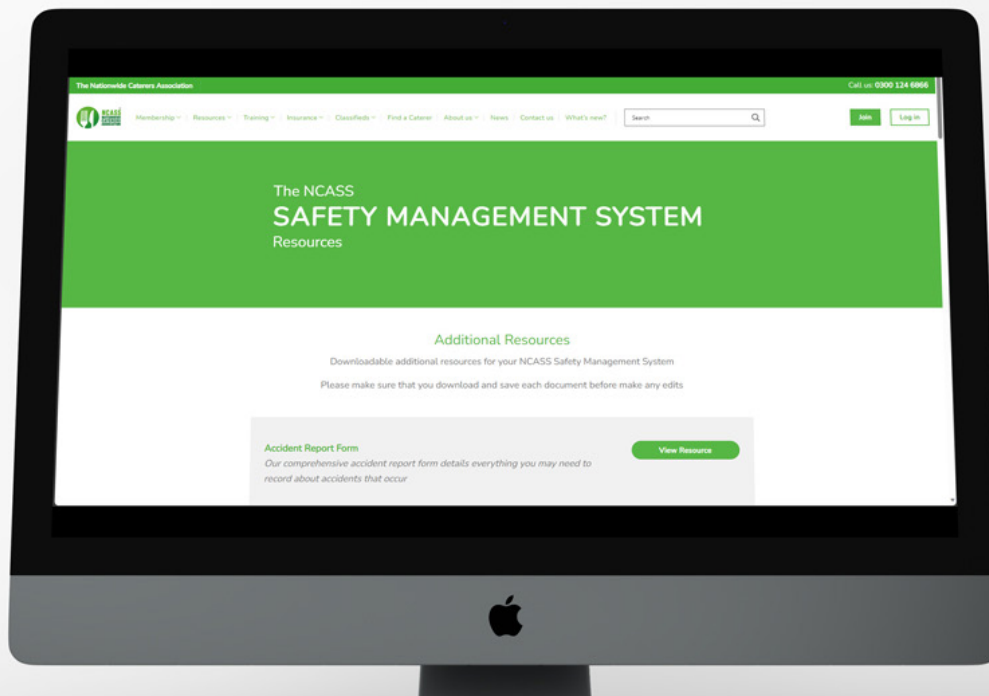
DO I NEED AN SMS FOR EVERY SITE I OPERATE?

Yes. Whilst you can move your SMS between units, we advise that you have a separate SMS for each site that you operate as there will be separate processes for each unit. Moreover, you will need a Daily Diary, as included in the SMS, for each individual unit. Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) will be looking to ensure that the SMS has been made applicable and specific to your business processes. Failure to adapt it to the business could impact compliance and the subsequent food hygiene rating you are awarded.

DO I NEED TO HAVE RAS?

Yes. Risk assessments are a legal requirement and an important aspect of running a compliant, legal and safe business. A visiting EHO will expect to see your risk assessments and that the practices listed within are being applied in real life. Risk assessments don't just highlight risks within your business, they also help your staff know what to do in potentially dangerous situations. Moreover, documented risk assessments will support the business with training staff on in-house procedures.





HOW LONG DO RAS TAKE TO FILL OUT?

This will vary depending on your business activities but on average it takes between 1 to 2 hours to complete your Health & Safety, Fire Safety and Food Safety risk assessments. Although this may seem like a long task, it typically only needs to be done once a year (unless something in the business changes) and it is a very important part of your compliance. Our advice is to take it seriously and not to rush it. It is important that you get it right and that you are familiar and comfortable with both the process and the contents of the documents.

I'VE CREATED MY OWN RAS WHY SHOULD I USE NCASS'S RAS?

NCASS risk assessments have been designed to make creating these highly important documents as simple as possible. They are amongst the most robust in the industry and have been assured through our Primary Authority partnership with Monmouthshire Council, the Royal Borough of Greenwich and East Sussex Fire Service. This ensures that they are fully comprehensive and as long as they are being properly implemented, the written content is unlikely to be challenged by your EHO. In line with the Primary Authority Partnership scheme, EHOs are required to contact our Primary Authority Partners to discuss any aspects of the SMS. They should not be directing you to use other compliance systems such as SFBB. If this happens to you then please do let us know.

HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO UPDATE THE RAS AND DO I NEED TO REVIEW THEM IF NOTHING HAS CHANGED?

Risk assessments will need to be updated when processes change within the business to reflect those changes and any new potential risks they may create. Even if nothing has changed, it is good practice to regularly review risk assessments and we would recommend that this is done at least annually to update and reflect any changes in regulations, reconfirm that your risk assessments are still relevant and reflect unexpected changes such as new members of staff who may present different risks to previous members of staff etc. It is also a useful exercise to help check through your processes in the business and train everyone in how things should be done and when.

WHY CAN'T NCASS DO MY RAS FOR ME?

Simply put, because you know your business best! NCASS provides you with all of the necessary tools to complete risk assessments however, you know your business inside and out, so you are best suited to fill out any risk assessments. An inspecting EHO may well question you on the contents of your risk assessments and a lack of understanding of the contents will cause you to score poorly in Confidence in Management. The best way to ensure both a thorough understanding of your risk assessments and that you and everyone within your business can answer any and all questions on them, is to complete them yourself.

WHERE CAN I FIND RAS ON THE MEMBER DASHBOARD AND WHERE ARE THEY IN THE SMS?

All risk assessments can be found on the Member Dashboard under NCASS Dashboard and then Risk Assessments. All the information that you need to fill out a risk assessment is included on the page so take the time to read through it carefully before proceeding. You should also complete your Health & Safety Policy and your COSHH Risk Assessment which can be found in the Company Documents area of your NCASS Member Dashboard. If you complete the documents within 5 working days of joining or renewing your membership with us, then they will be printed and included in your SMS before it is sent to you. If you are not able to complete the documents within 5 working days, your SMS will be sent to you without them included and you should complete, download and insert them into the relevant section of your SMS yourself.

If you have any more questions about your SMS or risk assessments, don't hesitate to give us a call on 0300 124 6866 and one of our friendly Account Managers will be happy to help.

Get in touch with our team and we'd love to have a chat.

Call us: **0300 124 6866**

Email us: **info@ncass.org.uk**

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