

Rat infestations, black sludge, and an open sewer cause closure of Dublin takeaways

Did your local takeaway make the list?

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Rat infestations, black sludge, and an open sewer caused the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) to order the closure of a number of Dublin food businesses in the first half of this year. Records of the Closure Orders presented by the FSAI to fourteen Dublin food outlets were obtained by Dublin Live under the Freedom of Information Act.

All outlets were ruled by FSAI inspectors to be in breach of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act 1998 or the European Communities (Official Control of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2010.

Under these regulations, a food business may receive an order if, in the opinion of FSAI inspectors, there is likely to be a "grave and immediate danger" to public health on its premises.

Orders can be placed on an entire premises, or just a specific part of one - such as a kitchen or storage area - and are lifted when there is sufficient improvement in the eyes of the FSAI. Aside from one business, whose Closure Order hasn't been lifted, all food premises have since complied with any remedial steps required by the FSAI to allow them to reopen.



The first Closure Order issued by the FSAI in Dublin this year was served on Pacino's Restaurant on Suffolk Street, Dublin 2.

Inspectors found the restaurant in breach of the FSAI Act 1998 after discovering "fresh rat droppings" on the floors of the main kitchen and basement store room, as well as on catering shelves where containers and utensils were stored.

They also found potential access points for rodents in a rear laneway, and closed the premises for a day until the issue was resolved.

The Closure Order against Pacino's was later lifted on January 12.



On January 10, inspectors at the Moore Street branch of Polish supermarket chain Polonez presented the proprietor with a Closure Order after finding evidence of mice throughout the building.

Noted in the the FSAI inspector's report was the discovery of a "large number of droppings", and an instruction to "thoroughly clean the whole premises".

The inspection order on Polonez was subsequently lifted the following day on January 11.

In February, Indian/Mexican takeaway Punjab Pantry on 39 Richmond Street South, Dublin 2 was closed following a number of breaches of the FSAI Act 1998.

Once again, inspectors noticed evidence of rodents, with "approximately 99/100 rodent droppings" and poor pest proofing found at the rear door of the building, where there was also a "large hole noted around pipework".

Among the inspectors' other findings were poor temperature control throughout the building, rusty cooking equipment, and dirt, food particles, and hair on food preparation services.

The closure order on Punjab Pantry was lifted four days later, although the takeaway was closed again on 27 July for another breach of the FSAI Act 1998, and order which still remains in place.



The same month, Jalapeño Mexican Restaurant, 46 Drumcondra Road Lower was served with a Closure Order for multiple breaches of EC (Official Control of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2010.

Inspectors found that the food handler on site was not trained in food hygiene, that the premises was in a "very dirty condition", that the customer toilet was broken, no staff changing facilities, and a broken fridge.

They also found that there was no pest control procedures in place, while the tenants of an apartment above the takeaway were also observed using the kitchen to prepare their domestic food "on an ongoing basis".

At the current time of writing, the order against Jalapeño Mexican Restaurant has still not been lifted.

In March, the Plaza Inn, 7 Sundrive Road, Dublin 12 was closed for breaches of the FSAI Act 1998 and the EC (Official Control of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2010.

The FSAI inspector noted "poor standard of operational hygiene practices", including dirty tea towels, food preparation containers covered in raw chicken, and inadequate pest control.

A build up of dead flies was also found on the electric fly killer, while there was black mould on the surface of a fan in the cold room.

In one incident, a staff member was observed cleaning a rainwater gully with his hands, proceeding to wipe "filthy" rainwater on an apron which was then worn in the kitchen to prepare food.

The closure order against the Plaza in was lifted almost two weeks later on March 15.



Later the same month, a Closure Order was served on Hailan Japanese Restaurant on Maher's Terrace, Main St, Dundrum for breaches of EC (Official Control of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2010. In their report, the FSAI inspector noted a number of "serious cross-contamination issues", including cigarette butts in a food-preparation area, sticky surfaces, and the storage of personal belongings in the kitchen.

In one case, avocado was prepared on a chopping board which had been used to prepare raw chicken without it having been cleaned beforehand, and in another, hair was found in a container of lettuce.

There was also found to be no separation of raw and ready-to-eat food in the fridge, while containers of tripe and beef were left to defrost at room temperature.

The Closure Order against Hailan Japanese Restaurant was later lifted on April 3.



On March 31, Lebanese Tapas, 21-21 Blackrock Market, Blackrock was closed following a number of breaches of the FSAI Act 1998.

Inspectors found "inadequate washing facilities", a lack of cleaning chemicals and sanitising standards, and an insufficient food safety management system.

The report added: "The food business was in a filthy condition, including the cooker, the fridge, the sink, the shelving, the walls, the wall tiles, the counter tops, [and] the food containers".

The Closure Order against Lebanese Tapas was later released on April 5.

On April 18, a Closure Order under the FSAI Act 1998 was served on New Century Thai and Chinese Take Away on Hart's Corner, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

During the inspection, inspectors found an open sewer improperly in the kitchen, poor food storage practice, and no record of a Food Safety Management system in place.



Staff knowledge of food safety requirements was deemed to be "poor", and in one incident, a staff member was found washing their hands in a food sink without antibacterial soap.

The Closure Order against New Century was lifted two days later on April 20.

On May 4, juice bar Yo & More in The Pavilions Shopping Centre in Swords was issued with a Closure Order for multiple breaches of EC (Official Control of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2010.

While the juice bar was allowed to remain open, the FSAI prohibited the use of the unit's rear store/kitchen for the production or storage of food and related items.

Once again, inspectors noted the presence of "rodent droppings" - this time in the internal part of an ice cream machine in the kitchen, which was also found to be kept in a bad condition.

Meanwhile, there was no hot water provided in any of the kitchen sinks, the drainage facilities were deemed "inadequate", and the kitchen was generally unclean, particularly on the walls and floor.

The Closure Order was eventually lifted the following month on June 8.



On May 10, the basement food production kitchen in Londis on Carmenhall Road, Sandyford,

Dublin 18 received a Closure Order after FSAI inspectors found a health risk due to a failure to adequately clean the premises.

The inspection report said: "The food production condition used for the production of high risk foods, was in a filthy condition on inspection. An accumulation of dirt, grease and grime was evident."

Among the findings were black splashes of dirt on the walls of the cold room, where "an accumulation of black sludge" was also found on the floor.

Black dust and dirt was also found on the fan guard in the cold room, while a trolley holding exposed pastries was "embedded" with dirt and grime.

The Closure Order was later lifted the following day on May 11.



In perhaps the most high-profile FSAI Closure Order this year, the kitchen and storage facilities of O'Dwyer's Bar and Grill on Strand Road in Portmarnock were closed on May 19 following a salmonella outbreak.

The issue was made against Flanreil Food Services Ltd, a catering company based in Fairview, who worked out of the kitchen.

Issuing the Closure Order, inspectors noted "a breakdown in the operational controls and the food safety management system...as evidenced by confirmed cases of a notifiable infectious disease".

The Closure Order was later lifted on June 15.

On June 1, another Closure Order was issued against Chinese restaurant East Oriental on Ardee Street in Dublin 8 because of evidence of a rodent infestation in food handling and preparation areas.

That Closure Order was lifted the following day on June 2.

Under Irish law, food business owners are urged to ensure their premises is compliant with FSAI legislation.