

Food Safety is Your Business



A GUIDE FOR FOOD BUSINESSES



ACT
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Health

Health Protection Service

Health Directorate
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DISCLAIMER

This guide, *Food safety is your business*, will help food business managers and staff understand food safety practices and procedures.

Food businesses must comply with all relevant requirements of ACT law. However, this guide does not cover all the requirements of the *Food Act 2001*, the Food Regulation 2002 or the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. Users must use their own judgment, as the information provided is not legal advice. Any legal advice should be from a qualified solicitor.

This guide may contain errors, and the information in the guide may change at any time. Links in the guide to web addresses and legislation were accurate at the time of printing. Users should consult the official documents if they intend to use them in any way.

The ACT Government accepts no responsibility for any action taken because of using information in this guide. The ACT Government is not liable for any damages resulting from the use of this guide. The ACT Government does not assure the accuracy of the information on websites referred to in this guide, nor any information on websites that the ACT Government does not manage.

Words and terms defined in the Glossary on page 30 are shown in **orange** at their first mention in the text.

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INTRODUCTION

All food sold in the ACT must be safe for people to eat. To ensure that food is safe, all **food handlers** must know how to keep food safe and must use their skills in food safety at work at all times.

This guide has been prepared for food handlers, to provide a basic understanding of:

- personal health and hygiene practices;
- food safety practices and procedures;
- **temperature control**;
- the **contamination** of food;
- cleaning and sanitation;
- food preparation premises and equipment;
- pest control management.

In this guide, a 'food handler' is any person who works in a food business, and includes managers, supervisors and staff.

This guide is based on the *Food Act 2001* (the Act), the Food Regulation 2002 (the Regulation) and the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (Food Standards Code). It is a general summary and does not cover all the requirements. Managers of food businesses should read the Act, the Regulation and the Food Standards Code to ensure that their businesses comply with the law. Failing to comply is an offence.

The Health Protection Service of the ACT Government monitors compliance with the Food Act and the Food Standards Code. The Health Protection Service works with businesses to improve and maintain high levels of food safety in the ACT.

Design and construction requirements for food premises, equipment and food vehicles are not included in this guide. Contact the Health Protection Service for help with these requirements. See the contact details on page 29.



WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is for all who manage and work in food businesses in the ACT that prepare and sell food.

Examples of food businesses include:

- cafes and restaurants;
- take-aways;
- catering businesses that provide food at their own premises or off-site;
- supermarkets and delicatessens;
- fruit and vegetable shops selling prepared salads;
- butchers and poultry retailers;
- market stalls.



WHAT IS 'SAFE' FOOD?

'Safe food' is food that will not cause illness or other physical harm to the person eating it. Safe food does not contain **bacteria** that could cause illness, toxins (poisons from bacteria or moulds), chemicals or foreign substances.

When you are storing, displaying or transporting food that can easily become unsafe (known as 'potentially hazardous food') you must ensure that the food is kept cold at 5°C or below, or kept hot at 60°C or above. Keeping food cold or hot to keep it safe is known as **'temperature control'**.

Most packaged foods are marked with a 'best-before date' or a 'use-by date'.

- The 'best-before date' is the date after which the quality of the food may deteriorate.
- The 'use-by date' is the last date on which the food may be safe to eat. Food with an expired 'use-by date' must not be sold or used in cooking as it may cause illness.

UNSAFE FOOD

Foods that are unsafe and can't be sold include:

- damaged, rotten or old food;
- food that has not been at the right temperature;
- food containing foreign material or chemicals;
- poisonous food items (for example, certain mushrooms);
- food that has been in contact with pests;
- food that does not comply with the Food Standards Code, such as eggs with cracked or dirty shells.

If you think food is unsafe, throw it out.



FOOD SAFETY PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

All food handlers must have the skills and knowledge in food safety relevant to the work they do and must follow food safety principles.

To keep food safe you must:

- practice good hand washing;
- follow good personal health and hygiene practices;
- control the temperature of food (keep hot food at 60°C or above, and cold food at 5°C or below);
- protect food from contamination;
- keep the food premises clean;
- clean and **sanitise** equipment and utensils;
- maintain equipment in good condition;
- keep the food premises in good condition, that is, there must be no damage;
- keep the premises free of pests.



PERSONAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

People are the most common sources of food-poisoning bacteria. Bacteria are present in our waste, skin, noses, saliva, cuts and sores. People may carry and pass on these bacteria without realising. Bacteria can be transferred to food from unclean surfaces, unclean hands, unclean equipment and other foods. Bacteria can cause **food poisoning**, which can be a serious illness and may cause death.

Food handlers need to be particularly careful. They may contaminate food from their hands directly to:

- food;
- equipment used to prepare food;
- packaging;
- eating and drinking utensils used by customers.

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is very important and must be done properly. You must:

- Wash your hands in a **designated hand washbasin**.
- Thoroughly wash hands in warm running water using soap or other cleanser—do not use a bowl of water.
- Thoroughly dry hands on a single-use towel.

Do not wash hands in sinks that are used for washing equipment or food.

Food handlers must not clean toilet facilities. This should be done by someone who is not a food handler.

PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR FOOD HANDLERS

- Wash and dry your hands whenever you think they are contaminated.
- Prevent anything from your body contaminating food.
- Don't sit on food preparation benches.
- Don't leave your personal belongings on the benches.
- Cover exposed sores with a waterproof dressing or disposable gloves. Wash your hands and change your gloves regularly.
- Wear clean outer clothing. Change aprons or other clothing if they are soiled.

- If sneezing or coughing are unavoidable, use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth, immediately put the tissue in the bin, and wash and dry your hands.
- Never blow into a bag to open it to put in food.
- Never blow on food for any reason.
- Do not spit, smoke or use tobacco in areas where food is handled.
- Only eat when you are outside the food preparation area.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE FOR MANAGERS

- Provide hand-washing facilities, with warm water, soap and single-use towels, that are only used for hand washing.
- Ensure the hand washbasins are always accessible.
- Tell your staff of their health and hygiene obligations.
- Tell your staff what you expect them to do if they:
 - » have symptoms of a food-borne illness;
 - » know they are suffering from, or are a carrier of, a food-borne illness;
 - » have infected cuts or sores.
- Ensure all staff know and understand their personal health and hygiene responsibilities.
- Ensure staff follow health and hygiene practices.
- Provide a place separate from food for staff's personal items and clothes.
- Ensure staff do not spit, smoke or use tobacco in food areas.
- Keep an illness register to record staff illness.
- Do not allow visitors to enter food areas.
- Do not allow pets or other animals to enter food areas, but note that **assistance animals** are allowed into the same areas as customers.

DEALING WITH FOOD-BORNE ILLNESS

Sick food handlers must not work, and should stay home. If a food handler is sick, they may contaminate food or equipment. A person with diarrhoea, or who has been vomiting, is more likely to spread bacteria.

Food handlers should tell their supervisor if they are unwell, even if they are not sure of the cause. This is particularly important if they have diarrhoea, vomiting, fever or a sore throat.

Food handlers must tell their supervisor if they have an infected skin lesion, infected cut, or discharges from the ears, nose and or eyes.





TEMPERATURE CONTROL

You must ensure that the temperature of potentially hazardous food is controlled at all times.

Food that may contain food-poisoning bacteria and will support their growth are called 'potentially hazardous foods'. The temperature of these foods must be controlled to ensure bacteria do not reach levels in the food, or form toxins (poisons) in the food, that could cause food poisoning.

Examples of potentially hazardous foods are:

- raw and cooked meat;
- smallgoods such as strasbourg, ham and chicken loaf;
- dairy products and dairy-based desserts such as cheesecakes and custard tarts;
- seafood;
- processed fruits and vegetables;
- cooked rice and pasta;
- foods containing eggs.

Most types of bacteria that cause food poisoning grow in potentially hazardous foods at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C. This temperature range is called the '**temperature danger zone**'.

Some types of bacteria will grow at low temperatures, in refrigerators or cool rooms. In order to prevent bacteria growing to levels that could cause illness, potentially hazardous food stored at 5°C should not be kept for more than 7 days.

Bacteria will not grow in frozen food. Freezing does not destroy bacteria, and they will grow rapidly when the food thaws. Manufacturers' recommendations on food labels are a good guide to how foods should be stored.

Foods that are not potentially hazardous may become potentially hazardous if you alter the food in some way.

Custard powder, for example, is not potentially hazardous because it is too dry for bacteria to grow. But the custard becomes potentially hazardous when milk is added.

Most raw whole fruit and vegetables are not potentially hazardous because they do not allow any food-poisoning bacteria to grow. But, when they have been cut, bacteria may be able to grow on the cut surface, and so prepared fruit and vegetables should be stored chilled.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Temperature control is the use of temperature to protect the safety of food and minimise the growth of bacteria. This means keeping chilled food at 5°C or below, and hot food at 60°C or above.

If you prepare or sell potentially hazardous food, you must have a thermometer to check the temperature of the food. The thermometer must be a food grade thermometer, which is accurate to $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$. The thermometer must have a probe so that the internal temperature of food can be measured. The thermometer must be kept at the food business, and must be cleaned and sanitised before every use. This is important to prevent contamination from one food to another.

CHILLED POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

- Regularly monitor the temperature of your cool room and refrigerators to ensure they keep food between 0°C and 5°C.
- Record these temperature checks, the date and time they are done, and the temperatures measured.
- Randomly check food items to ensure that chilled food is 5°C or below and that frozen food is frozen hard.
- Do not leave potentially hazardous food at room temperature. Refrigerate it.
- To maintain temperature, replace lids or close display unit doors when not being used.

HOT POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

- Regularly monitor your hot display units, hot holding ovens and bain-maries to ensure they keep food at 60°C or above.
- Record these temperature checks.
- Stir liquid foods to ensure an even temperature.
- Replace lids on serving dishes on buffets to maintain temperature.
- Heat the food to 60°C or above before placing in a hot display unit.

RECEIVING, STORING, DISPLAYING AND TRANSPORTING POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

When you receive potentially hazardous food, you must accept it only if it is 5°C or below, or 60°C or above.

- Measure and record the temperatures of these foods when they arrive.
- Measure and record the temperatures of these foods when they leave the premises, for example, before they are transported to another site.

PREPARING AND PROCESSING POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

When preparing potentially hazardous foods bacteria may grow. Monitor the time food is at room temperature, and keep it as short as possible.

Bacteria may grow in foods during thawing.

- Only remove potentially hazardous food from the refrigerator when you need it.
- Serve the food or return it to the refrigerator immediately after preparation.
- Thaw frozen potentially hazardous food in a microwave, refrigerator or cool room.
- Thaw food completely before cooking.
- Do not refreeze thawed or partially thawed food.

COOKING POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

- Cook food such as meat and chicken to an internal temperature of 75°C or above.
- Use a probe thermometer to check internal temperatures.
- Whole pieces of meat such as roasting joints and steaks may be cooked rare.
- Chicken and minced meat dishes must be cooked right through to the centre.

COOLING COOKED POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

When cooling cooked potentially hazardous food, you must cool the food:

- from 60°C to 21°C in no longer than 2 hours;
- from 21°C to 5°C in no longer than 4 hours.

If cooked food is being cooled to serve later, you must cool it rapidly and then keep it at 5°C or below.

- Allow hot food to cool slightly (about 20 minutes) and then refrigerate.
- Check that cooked foods are cooled in the required time. If foods are taking too long then:
 - » divide large quantities of casseroles and other wet dishes into smaller quantities and place in shallow containers.
- slice roast meats and place the slices in shallow trays.

REHEATING COOKED AND COOLED POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

If reheating previously cooked and cooled food, you must reheat the food rapidly to 60°C or above.

Food must be reheated quickly because bacteria can grow while food is being reheated.

If the food is being reheated to serve or to display in a hot buffet, it must be rapidly heated to at least 60°C. Keep the food at 60°C or above until it is served.

Do not use bain-maries to reheat food. Reheat the food and then place in the hot bain-marie.

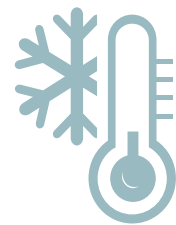
- Reheat food to 60°C or above to prevent bacterial growth.
- Reheat food quickly. Small portions heat faster.
- Reheat food once only.

USING TIME AS A CONTROL

There are occasions when it is impractical to keep the food at 5°C or below, or 60°C or above. Some examples are buffets at weddings and lunches for meetings. The food will be safe for a short time, unless it has been contaminated during handling.

The maximum time that potentially hazardous food can be in this temperature danger zone of 5°C–60°C is 4 hours. After 4 hours, any remaining food must be thrown away. The 4 hours must include any time that the food was between 5°C and 60°C during handling, during preparation and processing, after processing, during transport and, in the case of buffets, the time setting up.

If you wish to display or hold potentially hazardous food between 5°C and 60°C and then refrigerate the food, you must not leave the food between 5°C and 60°C for longer than 2 hours.



PROTECTING FOOD FROM CONTAMINATION

You must protect food from contamination at all times.

Contaminated food is food that contains bacteria, chemicals, foreign material or other matter that makes it unsafe to eat.

Bacteria are present in our waste, skin, noses, saliva, cuts and sores. Food handlers may carry and pass on these bacteria without realising. Bacteria may cause food poisoning, which can be very serious and may even cause death.

Bacteria can be transferred to food from unclean surfaces, unclean hands, unclean equipment and other foods. Bacteria are also found on raw meat and poultry. They can be transferred to food from contaminated surfaces and food handlers.

Pests such as rats, mice, cockroaches and other insects transfer bacteria from the environment and unclean surfaces to food.

Food poisoning can also be caused by viruses spreading to surfaces or to food from people's hands or mouths. Viruses do not grow in food but can cause illness when eaten. Viruses can survive in food and on food preparation surfaces for several days.

If chemicals that are not suitable for food are accidentally added to food, they may cause injury, illness or even death. Cleaning chemicals and other chemicals used in the food business must not be stored near food.

Foreign material, such as hair and insects, may contaminate food with bacteria.

Other foreign material, such as pieces of plastic or glass, may cause physical injury.

RECEIVING RAW INGREDIENTS AND OTHER FOOD SUPPLIES

You must only accept food that is protected from contamination and under temperature control.

Receiving or purchasing food items

- Choose your suppliers carefully. Purchase food items from trusted and reputable sources, for example, an ACT-registered food business.
- Ensure that food is delivered in clean containers and protected from contamination.

- Check your deliveries. Only accept food that is delivered in clean, undamaged packaging and transported in clean vehicles.
- Arrange deliveries when there is someone at your premises to assess and accept deliveries.
- Ensure invoices or delivery dockets state the name and address of the supplier and the identity of the food. Keep the invoices.
- Mark the date of delivery on containers of food to track the foods' freshness.

Receiving potentially hazardous food

- Arrange for your supplier to deliver chilled potentially hazardous food at a temperature of 5°C or below.
- If you receive hot potentially hazardous food, arrange for your supplier to deliver it at a temperature of 60°C or above.
- Check and record the temperatures of delivered food and reject any food that is not at the correct temperature.
- Check frozen food to ensure it is frozen hard and shows no signs of having been thawed and re-frozen (for example, ice crystals, misshapen packaging or badly fitting lids).
- Place all potentially hazardous food in appropriate temperature-controlled storage as soon as possible after it is delivered.

STORING FOOD

You must store all food in a way that protects it from contamination.

- Only store safe food items. Throw out any food that you think is unsafe.
- Store all potentially hazardous foods at the correct temperature (below 5°C or above 60°C).
- Store all food in clean food grade containers with well-fitting lids or cover with plastic wrap.
- Separate raw and **ready-to-eat foods**.
- Store raw foods below cooked foods.
- Do not store food directly on the floor.
- In cool rooms or freezers, store containers of food so that there is airflow between them. Do not overload or stack food.
- Clear up spillages as soon as possible.

- Protect eating and drinking utensils and equipment once they are cleaned and sanitised, by storing them in clean cupboards or storerooms.
- Store chemicals in separate areas from food. Keep chemicals in their original containers.
- Pest-proof storage areas.
- Ensure that food items are not contaminated by pest control methods.

PROCESSING FOOD

When processing food, you must only use food that is safe.

Take all necessary steps to prevent food being contaminated.

The term 'processing' includes washing, chopping, slicing, cooking, thawing and cooling foods.

Do not use food if you know or suspect it is contaminated—throw it out.

The most likely time when food becomes contaminated is during preparation and after cooking. Bacteria can be transferred to food, including:

- from surfaces, utensils, clothing, sinks and chopping boards;
- from hands;
- from waste or unclean equipment;
- by using contaminated foods, such as eggs with dirty or cracked shells;
- from pests such as cockroaches, flies or rats in food preparation areas.

Processing

- Wash your hands.
- Only use safe ingredients.
- Eggs should be clean with uncracked shells or use pasteurised liquid egg.
- Use clean, sanitised chopping boards and utensils.
- Clean and sanitise all items between uses.
- Do not re-use single-use items such as plastic spoons or disposable gloves.
- Do not taste food with your fingers—use a clean tasting spoon.
- Separate raw food from food that is ready to eat.

- Wash fruit and vegetables before using.
- Only use the hand washbasins for hand washing—do not use them for anything else.
- Do not 'top up' containers—use a clean container for each new batch of food that is prepared or cooked.
- Notify your supervisor if you think you may have contaminated any food in any way.

DISPLAYING FOOD

When displaying food you must protect the food from contamination.

If unpackaged food is displayed (for example, in a salad bar) it could be contaminated by customers. If you have food for self-service, you must:

- supervise the display;
- monitor the temperature of food to ensure it is displayed at the correct temperature, and record the temperature;
- remove any unsafe food or utensils as soon as contamination occurs;
- provide separate serving utensils for each food;
- provide protective barriers (sometimes called 'sneeze guards').

Cover food displayed on counters or where customers could touch it. Examples are cakes or pastries on counters. Food must be protected from pests, dust and dirt, and from customers touching or handling it.

Do not display raw foods with ready-to-eat foods in the same unit.

Display

- Check packaging and remove any damaged packets.
- Supervise buffets and other self-service displays.
- Monitor hot food to ensure it is held at 60°C or above.
- Monitor cold food to ensure it is held at 5°C or below.
- Remove food if you think it may have been contaminated.
- Provide each food with a separate serving utensil.
- Do not top up containers on display. Remove the container and replace with a full one.
- Provide protective barriers or individual covers for self-service food on buffets.

- Provide covers for food items on display.
- Keep the display counters and all equipment clean and sanitised.
- Provide hand washbasins next to or near serving areas and ensure soap and single-use towels are always available.

PACKAGING FOOD

You must only use packaging material that will not contaminate the food.

- If you are packaging food, the packaging must be clean and suitable for its purpose.
- Packaging equipment must be clean and well-maintained to prevent contamination from broken parts or lubricants.
- Ensure vacuum-packing equipment is thoroughly cleaned and sanitised between packaging raw foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- Ensure the packaging is suitable for its purpose (for example, some containers are not suitable for microwaving or freezing). If in doubt, check with the manufacturer.
- Store packaging in a clean area, protected from dust, dirt and pests. Store containers upside-down so that dust, dirt or foreign objects do not fall in.
- Use proper food storage containers and label them clearly.
- Label all packaged food.

TRANSPORTING FOOD

Vehicles used to carry food during transport must be kept clean and in a good state of repair.

All food must be protected from contamination during transport.

- Transporting food includes deliveries to cafes, restaurants and other retailers and deliveries of take-away meals.
- Transporting food also includes carrying trays of food from your cafe to a local office for a catered lunch. You should treat it as a food storage area.
- Food should be completely enclosed in covered trays.
- Use insulated packaging or containers.
- Use clean, well-maintained delivery vehicles.

- Keep hot food hot, above 60°C.
- Load food into the vehicle from the cool room or refrigerator. Do not leave it on the loading area.
- Keep cold food at 5°C or colder. Use a refrigerated vehicle. If not possible, use ice bricks and insulated containers, or an insulated vehicle.
- Record temperature checks to ensure food safety (for example, measure and record food temperature on departure and arrival).

Maintain your vehicle in a clean and good condition.

- Clean your vehicle regularly.
- Include transport vehicles on your cleaning schedule so that it is understood who will clean it, when to clean it and how to clean it.
- Check that refrigeration units in vehicles are in working order.
- Check the temperature in the vehicle regularly.

If the vehicle is used for purposes other than carrying food, ensure that it is cleaned before food is transported, even if the food is packaged.



HOW TO MAINTAIN FOOD PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

You must maintain your food premises to a standard of cleanliness where there are no accumulations of food waste, recyclable material, dirt, grease or other visible matter such as mould.

A clean premises and clean equipment reduces the likelihood that food may become contaminated. Clean premises discourage pests such as cockroaches, rats and mice. For utensils, cutlery, food contact surfaces and some equipment, cleaning alone is not enough. These items need to be sanitised, which kills bacteria more effectively.

CLEANING

'Clean' means that all surfaces are free of visible dirt, grease, dust and food waste.

The recommended steps for cleaning are:

1. **Pre-clean** Sweep, wipe or scrape surfaces to remove scraps or residues.
2. **Wash** Wash in warm water with detergent to remove grease and dirt.
3. **Rinse** Use clean water to remove any loose dirt and detergent residues.
4. **Dry** Air dry or use a clean cloth.

Tiled surfaces that are cracked or broken, wood, flaking paint and surfaces that are cracked or broken cannot be effectively cleaned.

Food handlers should:

- tidy and clean as they work, returning items to storage areas and equipment to the dishwasher or sink when they have finished using them;
- wash equipment and clean bench tops as they finish one task and move to the next;
- follow a cleaning schedule that details what will be cleaned, when and how, and who is to carry out the cleaning tasks;
- empty waste bins during the day and at close of business;
- store garbage and recyclable material in bins with lids, away from food storage areas and arrange regular collections.
- clean garbage bins regularly.

Managers should:

- prepare a cleaning schedule that details what will be cleaned, when and how, and who is to carry out the cleaning tasks;
- ensure staff understand what they have to do and monitor that they complete the cleaning tasks effectively;
- ensure that tasks on the cleaning schedule are completed as required;
- Arrange regular collections of garbage and recyclable materials.

Clean as you go.

SANITISING

'Sanitise' means to apply chemicals to food contact surfaces to kill bacteria. Very hot water is also used to sanitise, for example, in a commercial dishwasher.

Clean and sanitise eating and drinking utensils before they are used.

The recommended steps for cleaning and sanitising are:

1. **Pre-clean** Scrape all food residues into a waste bin.
2. **Wash** Wash in warm water with detergent to remove grease and dirt. Soak or use specific cleaning product if needed.
3. **Rinse** Use clean water to remove any loose dirt and detergent residues.
4. **Sanitise** Use a commercial dishwasher or apply chemical sanitiser solution.
5. **Rinse** If using chemical sanitiser, rinse well (if the manufacturer specifies rinsing).
6. **Dry** Air dry or use a clean cloth.

Do not use cracked, chipped or broken eating and drinking utensils. All cracked, chipped or broken eating and drinking utensils must be thrown out.

You must ensure that eating and drinking utensils, such as cutlery, plates, cups and glasses, are in a clean and sanitary condition.

Cleaning and sanitising eating and drinking utensils

- Use a properly working dish or glass washer that the manufacturer or supplier states will clean and sanitise. (Dishwashers are usually more effective sanitisers than manual washing because they rinse in hot water and/or dry at higher temperatures.)
- Ensure wine, beer and spirit glasses are cleaned and sanitised in a glass

washer that rinses in hot water or uses a chemical sanitiser.

- If you do not have a dishwasher, or do not have one that will sanitise, use a commercial chemical sanitiser according to the manufacturer's instructions or soak items in water at 77°C for at least 30 seconds. To achieve this, water will need to be 80°C at the tap. Water this hot can scald and staff will need protective gloves and dipping baskets.
- Store all utensils upside-down in a clean area.
- Store and display cutlery in clean storage containers with handles uppermost so that customers take cutlery by the handle.

Sanitising food contact surfaces

Surfaces that come into direct contact with food, such as chopping boards and bench tops, must be cleaned and sanitised before use. This is to prevent bacteria from raw foods or other sources contaminating food.

Surfaces that touch ready-to-eat food must be cleaned and sanitised. These surfaces include food preparation benches and chopping boards.

Surfaces that are used to prepare raw food and then cooked food must be cleaned and sanitised between uses.

Food contact surfaces should be thoroughly dry before use. Moisture increases the likelihood that bacteria will be transferred to another surface.

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for preparing, using and storing sanitising solutions.
- If using hot water to sanitise equipment, ensure the water is very hot. It will need to be 80°C at the tap and about 77°C in contact with the surface. Water this hot can scald and staff will need protective gloves and dipping baskets.

HOW TO MAINTAIN THE PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT IN GOOD CONDITION

You must keep your food premises and equipment in a good state of repair and working order.

- The premises must be secure against the entry of pests such as rats, mice, birds, and cockroaches and other insects. Ensure doors and windows fit well. Repair all holes or gaps in walls, floors and ceilings.
- The premises must be protected against pests living there.
- Contact tradesmen promptly to arrange the repair or replacement of

broken wall tiles, worn floor surfaces and other defective parts of your premises.

- Equipment such as cool rooms, refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, and hot and cold water systems are essential to the safe operation of the business. Repair equipment immediately so that the business can keep operating.
- Do not allow tradesmen to work in food preparation areas while the business is operating. This is because of the risk of contamination from dust, dirt and dislodged material. You may need to close the business for a period to allow tradesmen to work.
- Clean food preparation areas and other affected areas before opening.
- Keep records of work that is completed. This will demonstrate to the **Public Health Officer** that you are maintaining your premises. It will also enable you to contact your tradesman again if needed.
- Material that is not used in your food business (for example, building materials or unused equipment) should be removed from the premises. It may provide somewhere for pests to live and will add to the cleaning tasks.



CONTROLLING PESTS

You must ensure your premises are free from pests.

Rats, mice, flies and cockroaches are the most common pests that might infest your premises. Pests are attracted to kitchens and food storage areas because these areas provide a warm habitat and a source of food and water.

Rats, mice and cockroaches are nocturnal so will be most active at night. Insects, including weevils and beetles (and their larvae), might be present in food or packaging delivered to your business. Once established in food containers or undisturbed places they will multiply rapidly.

Pests contaminate food and surfaces with bacteria from their urine, droppings and bodies. These bacteria may cause food poisoning.

Pest damage can result in spoilage and wastage of food. Whole or parts of pests may also find their way into food. Rats and mice gnaw cables, electrical wires and containers, and may cause extensive and costly damage to your premises.

Check for evidence of pests in your premises. Signs include:

- live or dead bodies, eggs, larvae and pupa;
- droppings from cockroaches, rats and mice;
- damage to packaging, food, wires, woodwork, cardboard or paper. (The incisor teeth of rats and mice continue to grow, so they tend to gnaw and damage food and packaging);
- footprints of rats and mice in spilt flour;
- musty odours—mice and rats have a distinctive smell;
- webbing produced by larvae that bind food particles together in food such as flour;
- customers' complaints of seeing pests (in your premises or in another part of the shopping area) or finding pests in purchased food.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT PESTS INFESTING YOUR PREMISES

- Employ a pest control company to eradicate pests.
- Pest-proof your premises.
- Ensure there are no holes or access points from outside.
- Provide self-closing doors, weather strips around doors, air curtains at

entries and fly-screens at windows.

- Ensure drains have grates.
- Remove sources of food by keeping all areas of the kitchen, equipment and storerooms clean.
- Clean before leaving at night.
- Remove all garbage at close of business and store in bins with close-fitting lids.
- Remove places where pests can breed, for example, unwanted or unused equipment.
- Use physical means such as traps to kill small numbers of pests. Know how to use the chemicals, baits and traps, and take care to avoid contaminating food.
- Use specific bait containers appropriate for the pest.
- Do not leave bait where other animals or children could eat it.
- Leave all chemicals in their original containers so that labelling and instructions are kept.
- Install ultraviolet (or similar) insect killers. Locate them away from food preparation benches, stove tops or other areas where fallen dead insects can contaminate food.



SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN FOOD SAFETY

A food business manager must ensure that food handlers and supervisors have the skills and knowledge in food safety relevant to the work they do.

Public Health Officers may assess the food safety skills and knowledge of food handlers when doing a **food safety inspection** in your premises.

WHAT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE DO FOOD HANDLERS NEED?

Food handlers must know the general principles of food safety and have the skills to practice safe food handling.

The skills and knowledge needed by food handlers will depend on their job and, in most cases, should be covered in this guide. Food handlers also need more specific knowledge and skills relating to their responsibilities, for example, receiving deliveries, storing food, cooking and temperature monitoring.

Supervisors will also need these skills and knowledge.

It is good practice to ensure that new staff can demonstrate the general skills and knowledge before they start work.

DO MY STAFF HAVE FOOD SAFETY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE?

Check if food handlers are carrying out food safety practices by observing them at their work. For example, observe if they use the hand washbasins for hand washing only and not for other purposes such as washing utensils. If practices are incorrect, train them in the correct practices.

It is more difficult to check knowledge because the food handler may be doing an action incorrectly for several reasons. The food handler:

- may not know it is incorrect;
- may have forgotten; or
- may know how to do it correctly but think it is not important to the business.

Check that food handlers know and understand why a practice is necessary.

Ask food handlers some questions to check their food safety knowledge. The checklists at Appendix 2 may help you. You may need to customise the checklists to suit your particular food operations.

You can print or copy the checklists in this guide for each of your staff. Discuss the results with them and agree on any actions. If you think a food handler needs more skills or knowledge, arrange training.

Keep the checklists to record your actions and to demonstrate to Public Health Officers that you are meeting your legal responsibilities.

OPTIONS FOR TRAINING

If your food handlers require more training, or refresher training:

- Someone on your staff could instruct or train your food handlers.
- You may have a staff member who has qualifications in food safety, supervising food safety or similar from the Canberra Institute of Technology or other registered training organisation, locally or interstate. Alternatively, you may have a staff member who has no formal qualifications but has the skills and knowledge to teach others.
- Someone could undertake training and then train others in the business.
- You could arrange for someone to attend a course on food safety and a course on how to train others.
- A registered training organisation could arrange a course specifically for your business, either on-site or locally.
- There are several organisations that will deliver on-site training.

For information on training in the ACT:

- check online or the Yellow Pages for training providers;
- contact the Canberra Institute of Technology.

Appendix 3 provides an example of a record sheet to record the training carried out by you and your staff.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Health Protection Service

If you would like more information about ensuring safe food in your business, contact the Health Protection Service on:

Phone: (02) 6205 1700

Fax: (02) 6205 1705

Email: hps@act.gov.au

Our offices are located at Howard Florey Centenary House, 25 Mulley Street, Holder.

You can go to www.health.act.gov.au/foodsafety for information. Food safety resources, including posters and information sheets, are available from the Health Protection Service and can be found on the website.

Food Act and Regulation

The Act and the Regulation can be downloaded from www.legislation.act.gov.au.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand

Food safety information can also be obtained from Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) at www.foodstandards.gov.au. This website includes the Food Standards Code, Food Safety Standards, fact sheets and some translations of fact sheets.

Another useful reference is *Safe food Australia: a guide to the Food Safety Standards*, at <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/publications>.

GLOSSARY

Assistance animal

A guide dog, hearing dog or other animal trained to alleviate the effects of a person's disability.

Bacteria

A living organism that is too small to be seen by the human eye. In this guide the term 'bacteria' has been used in place of microorganisms, viruses, fungi and parasites.

Contamination

When something enters or occurs in food and makes it unsafe to use as food.

Contaminated food

Contaminated food is food that contains a biological agent such as bacteria or viruses, or a chemical agent, foreign material or other matter that makes it unsafe to eat or otherwise affects its suitability as food.

Cross-contamination

This is when a food is contaminated with bacteria from another food, either directly, on the hands of a food handler, from a bench top, or on the surface of equipment. For example, if raw chicken is prepared on a chopping board, followed by salad vegetables, the salad would be contaminated with bacteria from the chicken and may cause food poisoning.

Designated hand washbasin

A basin that is used only for personal hand washing. In a food business, there must be a hand washbasin that is separate from the sinks in which food and equipment are washed. A designated hand washbasin should have warm water, soap or other suitable hand-cleaning agent, and single-use towels.

Food handler

Any person who works in a food business. They may handle food or touch surfaces that are likely to contact food (such as cutlery, plates and bowls).

Food-handling activity

Any activity involving the handling of packaged and/or unpackaged food.

Food poisoning

Disease or other illness caused by eating:

- food that has not been stored at the correct temperature;
- food that has been contaminated with food-borne bacteria or viruses;
- food in which toxins have been produced by food-borne bacteria;
- food in which toxins have been produced by incorrect storage (for example, potatoes not stored in the dark may develop solanine toxin);
- parts of food that are naturally toxic (for example, rhubarb leaves).

Food safety inspection

When doing a food safety inspection, a Public Health Officer will look at all areas of your food business. For example, they will:

- » inspect the cleanliness and condition of the premises;
- » ensure a designated hand washbasin is provided and used;
- » observe the manner in which food is stored;
- » observe food handling processes;
- » measure the temperature of refrigerators and cool rooms;
- » check the temperature of hot food;
- » assess the skills and knowledge of food handlers in relation to food safety;
- » look at the cleaning schedule;
- » ask for evidence of pest control measures.

Potentially hazardous food

Food that may contain food-poisoning bacteria and will support their growth are called 'potentially hazardous foods'. The temperature of these foods must be controlled to ensure bacteria do not reach levels in the food, or form toxins (poisons) in the food, which could cause food poisoning.

Public Health Officer

An officer responsible for enforcing the *Food Act 2001* or the *Public Health Act 1997*. Public Health Officers are employed by the Health Protection Service in the ACT Government Health Directorate. They carry photographic identification.

Public Health Officers conduct inspections of food businesses, provide advice to food businesses, respond to complaints about food businesses and investigate suspected cases of food-borne illness.

Ready-to-eat food

Food that is consumed in the same state in which it was purchased, and does not require further cooking, washing or processing.

Temperature control

Is the use of temperature to minimise the growth of bacteria and protect the safety of food. Generally, this means keeping potentially hazardous food below 5°C or above 60°C.

Temperature danger zone

Is the temperature range between 5°C and 60°C. Most types of bacteria that cause food poisoning grow in this temperature range.

Sanitise

Apply chemicals to food contact surfaces to kill bacteria. Very hot water is also used to sanitise, for example, in a commercial dishwasher.

APPENDIX 1: FOOD HYGIENE

Hand washing

Hand washing is very important. You must wash your hands:

- before you handle food, equipment or surfaces used to prepare food;
- before putting on disposable gloves to handle food. Change the gloves when you would otherwise wash your hands;
- after clearing dishes and utensils after customers have used them;
- after touching or scratching face, hair, nose, skin;
- after using the toilet;
- after smoking;
- after handling garbage;
- after cleaning tasks.

To wash your hands you must:

- Wash your hands in a designated hand washbasin. Do not use sinks that are used for washing equipment or food.
- Wash your hands in warm running water using soap or other cleanser—do not use a bowl of water.
- Dry your hands on a single-use towel.

To prevent contaminating food:

- Avoid jewellery, and clothing with loose buttons or pockets from which items could fall into food.
- Do not sit on preparation benches or leave your personal belongings on the benches.
- Wear clean outer clothing.
- Change into clean protective clothing when you arrive at work.
- Change aprons or other clothing if they are soiled, to prevent food contamination.
- Cover exposed or infected sores with waterproof dressings. Disposable gloves over your hands is one way of making a dressing on your hands waterproof.
- Change the gloves whenever you are required to wash your hands.
- Only eat when you are outside the food preparation area.

- Do not sneeze, blow or cough over unprotected food or surfaces used for food preparation.
- If sneezing or coughing are unavoidable, use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth, immediately put the tissue in the garbage, and wash and dry your hands.
- Never blow into a bag to open it to put in food.
- Never blow on food for any reason.
- Do not spit or smoke where food is handled.
- If you smoke, wash your hands before returning to work.
- Wash and dry your hands whenever you think they are likely to contaminate food.
- Tie back hair and/or cover with a hat or net.



APPENDIX 2: SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE CHECKLISTS

These checklists cover general skills and knowledge. You can change them to suit individual food handlers. Just add to the lists in the spaces provided.

Name of staff member Signature

Position Date

PROTECTING FOOD FROM CONTAMINATION

Skills	Yes/No
Handles food and utensils as little as possible	
Stores raw and ready-to-eat food separately	
Stores food in appropriate food storage containers	
Uses clean and sanitised chopping boards and utensils for preparing ready-to-eat foods	
Checks food deliveries for signs of broken packaging or other damage	
Uses separate utensils for different food items on display (or in sandwich bar)	
Does not use apron or soiled cloths for wiping hands, utensils or surfaces	
Washes hands before handling food	
Knowledge	Yes/No
Lists sources of contamination (relevant to the business)	
Gives examples of how foods can be contaminated	
Explains how displays of open food can be protected from contamination	
Describes how to store food in the cool room to avoid contamination	

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Skills	Yes/No
Checks temperature of potentially hazardous food on delivery	
Knows what the correct temperature should be	
Takes corrective action when temperatures are outside limits	
Stores chilled potentially hazardous food in the refrigerator or cool room promptly and correctly	
Stores hot potentially hazardous food promptly and correctly	
Stores frozen food promptly and correctly	
Cooks potentially hazardous food within temperature requirements	
Cools potentially hazardous food within temperature requirements	
Reheats potentially hazardous food within temperature requirements	
Monitors the temperatures in refrigerators and cool rooms at the nominated frequency	
Takes corrective action when the refrigerator or cool room temperature limits are exceeded	
Monitors food temperatures with correct use of a probe thermometer and takes appropriate corrective action if limits are exceeded	
Ensures food for preparation is removed from refrigerators or cool rooms only when needed, and returned promptly after preparation	
If food is stored or displayed outside temperature control, monitors the time the food is stored or displayed	
If the staff member is a supervisor: they correct staff who fail to do any of the above and explain the need for time/temperature controls	

Knowledge	Yes/No
Describes which foods used by the business are potentially hazardous foods	
Explains why potentially hazardous foods must be stored at 5°C or below, or 60°C or above	
States the times and temperatures required for cooling previously cooked potentially hazardous foods	
Explains how you reheat previously cooked, potentially hazardous foods for holding hot	
Explains why a probe thermometer is needed to monitor temperatures	
Describes how you can ensure large meat joints such as rolled roasts and turkeys are cooked	
Explains how long potentially hazardous foods can be displayed on a buffet at ambient temperature	

PERSONAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Skills	Yes/No
Wears clean uniform or protective clothing each day/shift and changes it when soiled	
Stores personal belongings in cupboard or locker provided	
Keeps hair tidy and tied back and wears head covering (if required)	
Does not wear inappropriate jewellery	
Washes and dries hands as necessary, for example, before starting to serve customers, on entering the kitchen, after blowing nose and after handling garbage	
Does not chew gum or eat food while preparing food	
Does not cough or sneeze over food	
Reports when feeling unwell or if suffering from any symptoms that could indicate food poisoning	
Covers cuts and sores with waterproof dressings or bandaids	
Wears disposable gloves as appropriate	
Uses disposable gloves correctly and when appropriate	
Knowledge	Yes/No
Explains why protective clothing (or uniform) is necessary	
Describes the symptoms of food poisoning	
Explains what a food handler should do if they feel unwell at work	
Explains why smoking and eating when preparing food is not permitted	
States the occasions when it is important to wash and dry their hands	

CLEANING, SANITATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PREMISES, EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES

Skills	Yes/No
Maintains a tidy, clean work area	
Correctly follows cleaning schedule (or instructions)	
Uses chemicals and cleaning materials according to instructions	
Uses only clean, sanitised equipment and utensils as appropriate	
Places garbage in designated containers	
Knowledge	Yes/No
Explains why cleaning is important	
Explains the difference between cleaning and sanitising	
States which equipment must be sanitised	

MAINTAIN THE PREMISES FREE OF PESTS

Skills	Yes/No
Checks for pests in the premises	
Uses chemical sprays correctly, and sets traps and baits as required	
Reports evidence of pests, damaged equipment or other maintenance matters that need attention	
Knowledge	Yes/No
Describes the signs that indicate there are rats, mice, cockroaches and other pests in the building	
Explains the rules about customers bringing animals into the premises	

APPENDIX 3: TRAINING RECORD

Staff name and position	Type of training or title of qualification	Date obtained	Signature

