

The Food Act 2006

Preventing food poisoning

Food poisoning is a food business related hazard that must be effectively managed to avoid its occurrence, and possible litigation.

All food handlers must be informed that they must not handle food if they are ill or have an infection, which can easily transfer harmful bacteria or viruses to food, particularly if:

- ▶ they are vomiting or ill with diarrhoea, fever or sore throat with fever; or
- ▶ their doctor has diagnosed them as having or carrying a food borne illness.

Food handlers must let you know that they cannot work as a food handler if they have one of the above conditions or symptoms.

What to do

If a food handler tells you they are ill:

- ▶ direct the food handler to immediately cease work which involves handling food
- ▶ reallocate duties, so that the person is assigned nonfood handling jobs while the condition persists.

If a food handler has infected sores on their hands, arm or face or any discharges from their ears, nose or eyes (such as a cold or conjunctivitis) they must take extra precautions to prevent food being contaminated. For example, cover the skin sore or take medication to dry up the discharge. They can then continue to work with food for sale.

Resources

Queensland Health has produced a variety of booklets and fact sheets to assist you produce safe food. These resources are available at:

www.health.qld.gov.au

Alternatively you can contact your local population health unit or Council.



Does my food business
comply with

The Food Act 2006



Produced by:

Queensland Health
Environmental Health Unit

Floor 10, Queensland Health Building
147 - 163 Charlotte Street
Brisbane Q 4000
www.health.qld.gov.au

The Food Act 2006

From 1 July 2006, Queensland will have a new Food Act aimed at strengthening the safety of our food supply and reducing the administrative burden on food businesses.

This brochure will tell you what you need to do.

Do I need a licence to operate as a food business?

If you are a manufacturer or sell unpackaged food you will be required to hold a current food business licence from your local government. The licence covers both the licensee and the premises. The requirement for separate registration of the premises will cease from 1 July 2006. Your current licence, however, will continue until expiry even after 1 July 2006.

Display of licence

You must display your food business licence where it can be seen by the public.

In addition, some businesses which are currently licensed will be exempt from licensing as they are considered low-risk activities. The exemption for licensing applies to businesses which only sell:

- ▶ unpackaged 'snack food'
- ▶ whole fruit or vegetables
- ▶ beverages (other than fruit or vegetable juices processed at the place of sale) or ice (including flavoured ice)
- ▶ seeds, spices, dried herbs, tea leaves, coffee beans, ground coffee
- ▶ many non-profit organisations.

If you think that your business falls into one of these categories, contact your local government environmental health officer to discuss your requirements.

Do I need a licence to operate as a mobile food business?

Mobile food businesses will only require one licence to operate anywhere in Queensland.

This licence can be issued by one of the local governments you intend to operate in. This change will have significant benefits for mobile food businesses by reducing the administrative processes and costs associated with holding more than one licence.

Food safety supervisors

In order to increase the food safety skills and knowledge available in every food businesses, the new Act introduces the requirement for food safety supervisors from 1 July 2007.

After 1 July 2007, every licensed food business is also required to nominate a food safety supervisor to their local government within 30 days of receiving their new licence.

A food safety supervisor is a person who:

- ▶ can identify, prevent and alleviate food safety hazards
- ▶ has skills and knowledge in food safety relating to the type of food business
- ▶ supervises and gives direction to food handlers regarding food safety
- ▶ is available to be contacted by the local government to discuss food safety issues relating to the food business.

Food safety programs

The new food legislation does include food safety program requirements for some caterers and all private hospitals. However, food safety programs will not be required before 1 July 2007. More information will be provided to food businesses before then.

Food safety requirements for food businesses

Thermometers

All food businesses are required to have a probe thermometer and use it to monitor temperatures of food. The thermometer must be accurate to +/- 1°C. These thermometers are not expensive and can be purchased from catering supply companies.

Temperature control

To prevent food poisoning safe storage temperatures are 5°C or colder or 60°C and hotter.

Bacteria that cause food-borne illness can grow at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C, which is known as the temperature danger zone. The fastest rate of growth is at around 37°C, which is human body temperature.

Keeping food cold

When preparing food, you need to ensure that you have enough refrigerator space to store the food. It is important to remember that refrigerators do not work properly when food is packed tightly into them because the cold air cannot circulate.

If you are running out of room in your refrigerator, remove foods that are not potentially hazardous such as drinks. The temperature of drinks is not critical and they can be kept cool in insulated containers with ice.

Hand washing

One of the most important measures to protect food from contamination is proper hand washing, because clean and dry hands prevent the transfer of harmful germs.

All food businesses must have hand washing facilities that are easily accessible by staff. The hands wash basins must be connected to a supply of warm running potable water and of a size that allows the easy and effective washing of hands. A supply of paper towel and liquid soap should be located near the hand basin.

There are five steps that should be followed when washing hands:



- Step 1: **wet** hands
- Step 2: **soap** hands
- Step 3: **rub** thoroughly - wrists, forearms, between fingers
- Step 4: **rinse** in clean water
- Step 5: **dry** on paper towel

