

food safety



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ISSUE 4

FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISORS

A Food Safety Supervisor is a person who:

- is trained to recognise and prevent risks associated with food handling in a retail food business
- holds a current FSS certificate (no more than five years old)
- is not an FSS for any other food premises or mobile catering business, and
- can train and supervise other people in the business about safe food handling practices.

(Sec.106B, Food Act 2003) The aim of a Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) is to prevent customers from becoming ill from food poisoning as a result of incorrect handling and preparation of food.

Statistics show that incorrect food handling practices in retail food businesses account for more than 1/3 of foodborne illness outbreaks in NSW. (NSW Food Authority, July 2016)

The FSS requirements apply to businesses that process and sell food at the retail level, e.g. food that is:

- Ready-to-eat,
- Potentially hazardous (requires temperature control), and
- Not sold and served in the supplier's original packaging.

Businesses need to appoint at least one FSS per premises. Businesses with several premises cannot use the same FSS for each premise. They must nominate a different FSS for each of the premises. The nominated FSS should be someone that is available at the premises majority of operating hours.

Business Owners/Proprietors:

- Need to put into place effective food safety processes
- Need to notify their food business with the local council
- Need to ensure their business complies with the Food Standards Code and other food safety requirements
- Need to appoint an FSS
- Will continue to be liable, as at present, if a food safety breach does occur
- Ensure a copy of the FSS certificate is kept on the premises at all times

Food Handlers:

- Must have the skills and knowledge relevant to their food duties to keep food safe (e.g. a chef will need greater food safety skills and knowledge than a waiter or kitchen hand)

Food Safety Supervisor:

- Nominated by the business owner and works under the direction of the owner
- Supervises food handling in the business to make sure it is being done safely
- Needs to understand the overall food safety processes of the business as it applies to all staff

A business must appoint at least one FSS per premises (or per business for mobile caterers) within 30 days of the original FSS ceasing to act in that role.

FSS certificates expire 5 years from the date of issue. A food business has 30 days to ensure:

- The FSS renews their training within 30 working days
- Another FSS with a current qualification is appointed.

For more information on this please refer to:

www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/rp/fss-food-safety-supervisors

CUTTING & SERVING BOARDS

As with any surface that comes into contact with food items, the cleanliness and maintenance of cutting and serving boards is key to preventing microbial cross-contamination.

Avoid cross-contamination:

- Always avoid cutting ready-to-eat food, such as bread or salad, on a board that has been used to trim raw meat, poultry and seafood without washing and sanitising the board first.
- To wash and sanitise a board proper attention should be given to the grooves, scratches, gauges and cuts that may form on the board.
- Food should not be prepared or served on boards with deep gouges and cuts because of the risk of cross-contamination from bacteria and viruses hidden in these marks.

- Serving food on boards is strongly discouraged however if you proceed to do so first ensure that a layer of single use waxed paper is placed between the board and food.
- If cutting or serving boards cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitised because of damage to the surface they should be replaced with new boards.

Boards used for the preparation or presentation of food must be washed with hot soapy water and rinsed with clean water before being air dried, or patted dry with clean paper towels. Following the cleaning process, the boards can then be sanitised.

All cutting boards should be replaced periodically due to inevitable surface wear or as soon as they become too worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves. If ever in doubt about the condition of the board it's best to throw it out.

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY

Food business operators have a responsibility to ensure that water used in food preparation and provided to patrons for drinking is safe. This includes water from private supplies including rivers, creeks, bores, dams and rainwater tanks. To be safe for human consumption drinking water must not contain:

- Disease-causing microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, or parasites); or
- Chemicals at potentially harmful levels

The physical quality (appearance) of the water should be good. It should have no suspended material such as clay or silt, and it should be clear, colourless and well aerated, with no unpleasant taste or odour.

Contaminated water can cause illness in people who drink the water or eat food that has been prepared with it.

Rainwater:

If water from a rainwater tank is clear, has little taste or smell, is free from suspended material and comes from a well-maintained catchment (roof and gutters) it is unlikely to cause illness in most users. However this is not a guarantee of safety and contamination is not always visible.

To avoid or minimise water quality problems:

- Regularly clean the roof and gutters collecting rainwater to remove leaves, bird droppings and other organic matter.
- After a dry spell, divert water from the first rainfall using a first flush or bypass device (reduces the amount of contaminants entering the tank).
- Remove overhanging tree branches that may drop leaves into gutters.
- Paint or remove any lead flashings used in the roof construction.
- Install screens on tank inlets and overflows to prevent the entry of leaves and small animals (check screens regularly to prevent tanks becoming breeding sites for mosquitoes).
- Tanks should be examined for build-up of sediments every two to three years or sooner if sediments are seen in the water flow. Any build-up needs to be removed (desludged) as sediments can be a source of contamination, off-tastes and odours.
- Copper and lead can build-up in the water if the water supply has not been used for 24 hours or more and/or water has been stagnant in pipes. It is recommended that pipes are flushed for a few minutes until fresh water flows through from the tank.

Carted Water:

If your tank is to be topped up from another source, make sure that the top-up water is safe to drink (potable). If possible, use town drinking water to top up your system. When water is added to an empty rainwater tank it may resuspend the sludge at the bottom of the tank creating taste and dirty water problems. Ideally tanks should be cleaned prior to delivery of water.

Treatment:

A range of drinking water treatment processes can be considered for use in a private water supply. These include:

- Filtration (pre-treatment filtration and treatment filtration);
- Chlorine disinfection;
- UV disinfection.
- Whether the water is treated or not NSW Health recommends the following:
- Monitor the microbiological quality of the water supplied to consumers (i.e. at a kitchen tap or a tap where most people drink from) at least monthly by testing for the organism *Escherichia coli* (*E.coli*);

- Monitor the chemical and physical quality of the water supplied to consumers by testing at least annually;
- Test the water if there is any suspicion of blue green algae (cyanobacteria) contamination. This will indicate the level of contamination in the supply, if any.

For further information regarding private water supplies please refer to <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/water/Pages/private-supplies.aspx> or telephone NSW Health on (02) 9391 9000

CLEANING AND SANITISING

Under Standard 3.2.2 Clause 20 of the Food Standards Code a food business must ensure that all eating and drinking utensils and food contact surfaces of equipment are both clean and sanitised.

What is Cleaning?

Cleaning generally involves the following steps:

1. Scraping, wiping or sweeping away food scraps and rinsing with water
2. Washing using hot water and detergent to remove grease and dirt (protective gloves may be required)
3. Rinsing off any loose dirt or detergent residue.

What is Sanitising?

Sanitising is the process of applying heat and/or chemicals (or other approved processes) to a clean surface to reduce the number of bacteria and other organisms to a safe level. Sanitising can be performed using a dishwasher or chemicals.

To sanitise with a dishwasher:

- Use the correct type of detergent or sanitiser
- Use the hottest rinse cycle available (economy cycle on a domestic dishwasher is not adequate)
- Look over equipment and utensils when removing them from the dishwasher to check they are clean
- Clean the dishwasher so there is no build-up of food residues
- Regularly maintain and service the dishwasher according to the manufacturer's instructions.

To sanitise with chemicals:

- Only use chemical sanitisers that are designed for using in food premises (available from commercial chemical suppliers and retailers)
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions (specifically dilution rates, contact times, appropriate storage)
- When using a double bowl sink; items can be washed and cleaned in the left-hand bowl and then immersed in a chemical sanitiser solution in the right-hand bowl.

Vinegar and methylated spirits should not be used as sanitisers in commercial food premises. Vinegar is a weak acid and not effective and methylated spirits can leave chemical residue on surfaces.

Unscented bleach is a chlorine-based chemical that can be used to sanitise food contact surfaces when diluted correctly. Contact time with the sanitiser should be at least 7 seconds.

For more information on this visit the Food Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

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