

FOOD BUSINESS NEWSLETTER

2024 AUTUMN EDITION

MINIMISING CONTACT WITH READY-TO-EAT FOODS

Food handlers are required to take all practicable measures to prevent unnecessary contact with ready-to-eat food. Ready-to-eat food is defined as food that is ordinarily consumed in the same state at which it is sold. Examples include but are not limited to fresh sandwiches, prepared salads, cooked meats, and cooked chips. Ways to minimize contact include using gloves, spoons or tongs to handle ready to eat food. Such measures are proven to significantly reduce the risk of food contamination.



HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

Food handlers must:

- Take all practical measures to prevent hair contaminating food i.e. tie-up long hair.
- Not handle food whilst diagnosed or experiencing symptoms of an infectious illness where there is a reasonable likelihood of food contamination e.g., vomiting and /or diarrhea.
- Ensure their clothing is clean.
- Cover bandages and dressings on exposed parts of the body with a waterproof covering.
- Remove loose jewellery and avoid wearing jewellery on hands and wrists.

A food business has responsibilities under the Food Standards Code (the Code) to ensure staff have appropriate, skills, knowledge and training for food handling activities.

LABELLING

Information that a food label MUST contain:

- A **name** for the food which is prescribed by the Code, or a name/description that describes the foods true nature.
- The production '**lot**' of the food prepared under the same conditions and during a particular span of time (date coding can in some circumstances satisfy the requirement for a lot number).
- **Name and street address** of the supplier of the food (e.g. the manufacturer, marketer or importer).
- A **list of the ingredients**.
- A statement of the **shelf life** of the product, (i.e. 'use-by' or a 'best before').
- The **nutrition information panel** (NIP), which shows the quantity of the basic nutrients contained in the food, per serving and per 100g . Certain packaged foods are exempt from the NIP requirement e.g. herbs and spices, and prepared sandwiches.
- The **country of origin** of the product and its ingredients.
- **Warning and advisory** statements and declarations of the presence of substances which may adversely affect the health of people with allergies and food (see the list of the allergens required to be declared on page 02).



REMINDER: STANDARD 3.2.2A

Standard 3.2.2A applies to food businesses that handle unpackaged, potentially hazardous and, ready-to-eat food.

Depending on your food business activities, certain businesses will need to implement either the first 2 or all 3 of the below tools:

- 1** Have a qualified **Food Safety Supervisor**
- 2** Ensure **all food handlers are trained** in food safety and hygiene, or can demonstrate adequate skills and knowledge
- 3** Keep records of important food safety information or be able to **show your food is safe**

School canteens, children's services that supply food, supermarkets, greengrocers, delis, coffee vendors that sell potentially hazardous food, correctional centres and boarding schools have until 08 December 2024 to comply with the new changes under Standard 3.2.2A.



LABELLING EXEMPTIONS



Some food offered for retail sale is exempt from general labelling requirements. Exemptions apply if the food is:

- Unpackaged.
- Made and packaged on the premises from which it is sold (in this circumstance food business staff should be able to communicate to consumers what allergens are contained in the food if asked).
- In an 'inner' package, not designed for sale without the outer package.
- Sold at a fundraising event.
- Packaged in the presence of the purchaser.
- Whole or cut vegetables and fruit, in a package which displays the nature and the quality of the food (sprouting seeds are excluded from this exemption).
- Delivered packaged and ready for consumption at the order of the consumer.
- Displayed in an assisted service display cabinet where the consumer can readily ask food business staff information regarding the contents of the food product.

Even exempt food must comply with the requirement for the various warning statements required by the Code for safety reasons and also for foods that are genetically modified or irradiated. With the exception of the presence of royal jelly, genetically modified foods and irradiated foods, this requirement can be met either by displaying the required information in conjunction with the food (mandatory for royal jelly) or providing the information to the purchaser on request.

For further information on labelling, you may [click here](#).

DISPLAYING FOOD IN YOUR PREMISES

Foods on display are vulnerable to contamination i.e., from customers touching, breathing, sneezing or coughing on the food, from dust and pests or from microorganism growth due to insufficient temperature control. In food premises, all food should be displayed in a way that keeps it safe and suitable. Extra care should be taken with unpackaged foods (as they are more vulnerable to the exposure of hazards), ready to eat foods (as they will not be further treated to remove any contamination before it is eaten) and potentially hazardous foods (because if contaminated with pathogenic microorganisms, these could grow to unsafe levels in the food during display).

Practical measures to protect food on display include covering food by using food grade cling wrap, bags, paper strips, lidded containers, removable covers (i.e. cloches and chafing dishes) or display cabinets. Food displays should be located at a height where children are unable to reach, away from draughts that might blow in dirt, insects, and chemicals etc. and away from insects or chemicals dropping from pest control devices (zappers and sprays).

For any questions or queries relating to the content of this newsletter, please contact Council's Environmental Health Team on 02 6226 1477 or council@yass.nsw.gov.au

WHAT MUST BE DECLARED?

Below is a list of foods and ingredients that are required to be declared on a food label if they are contained in the product:

- wheat
- fish
- crustacean
- mollusc
- egg
- milk
- lupin
- peanut
- soy, soya, soybean
- sesame
- almond
- Brazil nut
- cashew
- hazelnut
- macadamia
- pecan
- pistachio
- pine nut
- walnut
- barley, oats and rye must be declared if they contain gluten.
- sulphites (when added in amounts equal to or more than 10 milligrams per kilogram of food).

