

Food Safety Frequently Asked Questions

How can I tell if a food business is licensed?

It is a requirement that all food businesses display a copy of their Food Business Licence issued by Council at their business in a place visible to the public.

What do I do if I have seen a food business handling food unsafely?

Council investigates incidences of unsafe handling practices and conduct regular inspections of food businesses to ensure food is handled in a safe manner. Contact Council if you would like to make a formal complaint.

What to do if you suspect you have food poisoning?

If you are ill you should seek treatment from your doctor. Queensland Health is the lead agency for investigating incidences of food poisoning outbreaks. Without a diagnosis from a doctor or a faecal or sputum sample, it can be difficult to ascertain if you have suffered from food poisoning.

Food poisoning can be acquired up to 72 hours or more prior to noticeable symptoms appearing. Therefore, it is important to provide as much information as possible about any food you have eaten over the last few days. Samples of any leftover food you have eaten will also assist in determining what type of food poisoning you have suffered from.

Can Council take action if the food I ordered was not cooked the way I like?

Council's role is to ensure food businesses reduce the risk of unsafe or unsuitable food being sold. Council can not provide assistance if the food is not appetising, is burnt or not cooked to your satisfaction.

Can a food business supply doggy bags to customers?

The term doggy bag comes from food premises which have provided customers with left over food from their meal to take home for the family pet. However, today many customers will consume the food themselves at a later time.

There are no laws that prohibit food businesses from supplying customers with doggy bags. It is the restaurant's choice whether or not they decide to allow customer take home doggy bags.

Food from doggy bags can be exposed to food safety hazards such as temperature abuse and inappropriate food handling by the customer. If a food business chooses to supply doggy bags to customers that should take the following precautions:

- Have a set procedure for dealing with doggy bags and ensure all staff are instructed on this procedure;
- Transfer the food into a new container suitable for food; and
- Have an instruction sticker or leaflet which explains suitable storage and reheating requirements for the food.



Are food handlers required to wear gloves?

The *Food Act 2006* does not require food handlers to wear gloves when handling food. However, food handlers are required to take precautions to ensure food is adequately protected from contamination such as washing their hands and using tongs.

Gloves can be an effective means for protecting food from contamination however have their limitations and should be changed regularly. They should never replace washing your hands.



Do food handlers have to wear a hat when handling food?

The law does not require food handlers to wear a hat when handling food. However, food handlers and businesses have an overall legal responsibility to ensure they do not contaminate food.

Some food businesses may choose to have a policy requiring their workers to wear hats when handling food, particularly those with long hair.

Are tea towels allowed to be used in a food business?

The *Food Act 2006* does not specifically prohibit the use of tea towels. However, food businesses do have an overall legal responsibility to ensure they do not contaminate food. If a businesses uses tea towels they should ensure:

- They are washed and sanitised regularly;
- They are not used as a means to cover and protect food;
- They are not used a means of washing or drying hands; and
- They are not used if wet or visibly soiled or dirty.

What type of thermometer is a food businesses required to use?

The Food Safety Standards requires food businesses that store, transport, prepare, cook or sell potentially hazardous food to have a thermometer that can be inserted into the food. This means food businesses must have a probe. The thermometer must also be accurate to +/- 1°C.

Equipment that is used to store and display food such as cool rooms, bain marie units, and sandwich display units may have a thermometer as part of the equipment. This thermometer will measure the operational temperature of the unit.

While these thermometers are useful, they do not measure the actual temperature of the food. You will still need a separate probe thermometer to check the actual temperature of the food.

For more information contact Council's Customer Service Centre or visit our website.

Contact us

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