Hand Wash Facilities

All food businesses must ensure that hand washing facilities are provided for food handling staff.

Hand wash facilities must be provided with soap, warm water and paper towels for drying hands. Hand wash facilities should be used for the sole purpose of washing hands, arms and face. Signs can be put up that states '*For Hand Washing Only*' with a picture of hands being washed.

Hand wash facilities must be easily accessible and should not be obstructed by equipment such as mop buckets, bins etc.

Annual Inspections

Please be aware that Environmental Health Officers are not required to make appointments to conduct inspections of your food business. Under the *Food Act 2006* Environmental Health Officers are allowed to enter your Food Business whenever it is open to the public or conducting food handling activities.

Displaying Your Licence

The *Food Act 2006* requires all food businesses to display their current Food Business Licence. Remember to display your licence in a prominent position in a customer area when you receive your renewed licence each financial year.

Fact or Fiction

If food sits out for a few hours, I can just cook it to make it safe.

Fiction. While thorough cooking reduces or kills harmful bacteria, food left in the temperature danger zone may grow more bacteria than cooking can kill. Some bacteria can even survive boiling! Always keep food below 5° or above 60°C. And when cooling food, cool it rapidly.

Food that looks, smells and feels normal won't make people sick.

Fiction. Most foodborne illness is caused by food that looks, smells and feels normal. To keep food safe and avoid making people sick, cook thoroughly, separate raw and ready-to-eat food and maintain proper holding temperatures (below 5°C or above 60°C).

I can touch ready-to-eat foods with my bare hands even if I have washed them.

Fiction.

Food that is ready-to-eat may become contaminated by food handlers' bare hands. Even properly washed hands can contaminate foods. Although thorough and frequent handwashing can significantly reduce this risk, it does not eliminate it.

When handling ready-to-eat food, always use barriers like gloves and tongs.

Simply following best practices in my kitchen can help make my food safe.

Fact. Food can become contaminated before it gets to the kitchen. But proper kitchen procedures can eliminate most risk for foodborne illness. Best practices like handwashing, thorough cooking and rapid cooling will help keep your food, customers and business safe.

Food Essentials

Cold Room Maintenance

Cold room maintenance isn't as straightforward as it may seem. Cold rooms require regular checks to ensure they're running effectively and efficiently. This includes cleaning rollers, doors and shelving, reporting and fixing leaks, and ensuring the temperature is kept consistent.
Checking your cold room often means any issues are fixed as soon as possible avoiding any further damage. Follow daily, weekly, and 6 monthly checklists to make sure all aspects of the cold room are covered.
Your cold room manufacturer or specialist will have recommended maintenance requirements for your cold room. Here are some examples of items that may require your attention:

- Temperature
- Use by dates of produce
- Dirt, spillage, or mould
- Stock check and ensure the cold room isn't overloaded with produce
- Wipe all surfaces
- Record leaks
- Any damage to doors, seals or roller
- Engage a professional to conduct equipment checks such as vents and fans functionality, condenser and the evaporator.

If you carry out maintenance to manufacturer's requirements and to suit the products that you are storing, the working lifespan of your cold room can be increased and breakdowns reduced.

Single Use Plastics Ban

From 1 September 2021, single-use plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery, plates/ bowls and expanded polystyrene cups and containers will no longer be supplied in Qld. Contact Plastic Free CQ who will assist you in becoming ban compliant - www.plasticfreecq.org/join

In this issue...

Have You Made Any Changes?

Making structural changes to your food premises may require an amendment to your food business licence. If you are planning to renovate please ensure you discuss your proposal with an Environmental Health Officer to determine if an application is required. Any renovation must comply with the Food Safety Standards.

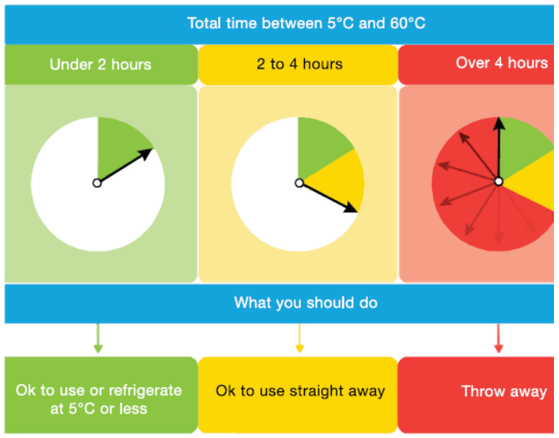
Rockhampton Regional Council
Contact us
Environment and Public Health Unit
P: 07 4932 9000 or 1300 22 55 77
E: enquiries@rrc.qld.gov.au
W: www.rrc.qld.gov.au
Connect with Council on social media

2-Hour / 4-Hour Rule for Ready-to- Eat Potentially Hazardous Food

The 2-hour/4–hour rule is a rule of thumb from the Australia New Zealand Food Safety Standards to help businesses deal with some of the practicalities of handling refrigerated ready- to- eat potentially hazardous food. It recognises there may be several circumstances where this type of food is brought out of refrigeration and held at temperatures above 5°C for convenience, for example while preparing food at a kitchen bench or displaying food for short periods.

The rule provides options for what can be safely done with ready- to- eat potentially hazardous food brought out of refrigeration, depending on how long it has been at temperatures above 5°C. If the total time is:

- Less than 2 hours, the food may be used, or refrigerated for later use
- Between 2 and 4 hours, the food may still be used
- 4 hours or longer, the food needs to be thrown out.



Why Use Shatterproof Bulbs?

Lights can be a source of food contamination in your food preparation & storage areas. If they shatter, glass and chemicals can get into food and onto your food preparation surfaces. For this reason, any lights in food preparation or storage areas, need to be covered or the bulbs used need to be shatterproof. Your inspecting Environmental Health Officer will check for these regularly on inspections.

Use by and Best Before Dates

Foods that must be eaten before a certain time for health or safety reasons should be marked with a use by date. Foods should not be eaten after the use by date and cannot legally be sold after this date because they may pose a health or safety risk.
Most foods have a best before date. You can still eat foods for a while after the best before date as they should be safe but they may have lost some quality. Foods that have a best before date can legally be sold after that date provided the food is fit for human consumption.

Foods that have a shelf life of two years or longer, e.g. some canned foods, do not need to be labelled with a best before date. This is because it is difficult to give the consumer an accurate guide as to how long these foods will keep, as they may retain their quality for many years and are likely to be consumed well before they spoil.

Types of Food Hazards

A food hazard is any agent that has the potential to pose a threat to human health or cause illness. When a hazardous agent comes in contact with food – it is called contamination. Food hazards are generally classified by their sources:

Biological Hazards – Includes bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites. To protect your customers from biological food safety hazards, pay special attention to storing your raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods at the correct temperatures and in the correct way to prevent contamination and spoilage.

Physical Hazards – Any foreign object in food (e.g. hair, nail/metal fragments, dirt, etc.). Prevent your food from coming into contact with physical food safety hazards through proper storage procedures. It is also important for all staff to maintain proper personal hygiene so that they do not transfer physical food safety hazards to raw, cooked or ready-to-eat foods.

Chemical Hazards – Includes toxic metals, pesticides and certain chemical compounds in foods. Kitchen staff should also be wary of handling chemicals such as pesticides and cleaning products. Chemicals must be stored away from food.

Dry Goods Storage

Attention to detail is often found lacking in the dry goods storage area in kitchens.

There are a few simple rules that can keep dry goods safe, wholesome and nutritious for as long as possible.

1. **Food Rotation**
   All food items should be date coded, and the practice of "First-In; First-Out" should always be implemented. It is always good to keep a readily accessible record of the "use by" and "best before dates" of received foods and a general chart of the shelf life of various items.

2. **Keep it Covered**
   Store open products in clean, uncontaminated, sealable containers. All opened products must be sealed to prevent the entry of pests and other forms of contamination.

   Bulk products such as sugar and flour can be emptied into tightly covered, properly labelled approved containers to prevent outside contamination. If a container is found to be damaged, the contents should be decanted into a sealable container. It is also good to note what foods require refrigeration once opened.

3. **Temperature and Ventilation**
   Storerooms should be kept cool, dry and well ventilated. The storage life of most foods are cut in half by every increase of 10°C, so it is best to keep the temperature of the storeroom between 10°C and 22°C. In addition, the storeroom should be free from un-insulated steam and water pipes, transformers, refrigerator condensing units and other heat-producing equipment.

4. **Sunlight**
   Avoid storing foods in direct sunlight. Sunlight promotes oxidation and therefore causes the loss of nutritional value and quality.

5. **Date coding**
   All dry good items must have some form of date coding. This is especially important when goods are decanted into re-usable containers. These containers should include the expiry date as well as the date on which the product was decanted into the container.

Common Food Safety Issues

If proper food safety principles are not followed, foodborne illness can occur. Often, managers or employees do not recognise that they may be contaminating the food they serve. In order to correct these behaviours, Environmental Health Officers inspect food businesses and discuss what needs to be corrected. Below are some common food safety issues and tips on how to correct them.

Improper Hand Washing:
Wet hands with warm water, apply soap, and rub hands together for a minimum of 20 seconds. Good hand hygiene is the first line of defence in preventing foodborne illness.

Improper Sanitising:
Keep foodservice equipment and food contact surfaces clean using proper washing and sanitising procedures.

Same Cutting Board:
Use separate chopping boards and utensils for raw and cooked/ready-to-eat foods.

Unsafe Food Holding:
Keep hot food hot, and cold food cold. Bacteria that cause food poisoning multiply quickest in the "Danger Zone" – between 5˚C and 60˚C.

Sick Employees Preparing Food:
Food workers should stay home when sick and for at least 24-48 hours after symptoms stop. Symptoms include but are not limited to: diarrhoea, fever, and sore throat.

Unsafe Food Storage:
Raw foods, such as meat, should never be stored above ready-to-eat foods like fresh fruit, salads, or desserts. The raw food may splash or drip onto the ready-to-eat food and result in cross-contamination.

Food Safety Websites

Please see below for some useful websites on food safety and regulation of food businesses:

- Queensland Health: https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/food-pantry
- Food Standards Australia & New Zealand: www.foodstandards.gov.au
- Safe Food Queensland: www.safefood.qld.gov.au
- Food Safety Information Council: www.foodsafety.asn.au