Food Essentials

Chopping Boards

Using chopping boards during food preparation is a routine activity and using them safely is essential to preventing food borne illness

Worn, damaged or cracked chopping boards can harbour bacteria that survive the sanitising process. Replace chopping boards when they become worn or damaged.

Food Safety Quiz

1. The refuse area of a food business is not considered part of the food premises? True/False
2. Meat slicers are only required to be cleaned and sanitised at the end of each day? True/False
3. Gloves need to be changed after handling money? True/False
4. Exhaust canopies are required to be regularly maintained? True/False
5. Mop buckets can be filled/emptied at the food preparation sink? True/False
6. Thermometers are required to be calibrated. True/False

Is Your Exhaust Canopy Clean?

The food standards code state that "Food premises must have sufficient natural or mechanical ventilation to effectively remove fumes, smoke, steam and vapours from the food premises."

If you prepare and cook food in your premises you will most likely have an exhaust canopy above your cooking and dishwashing equipment. Exhaust canopies are designed to remove combustion gases, odours, grease/oil, smoke, steam and other contaminates from the cooking process. Properly installed exhaust canopies are designed to and operate in accordance with Australian Standards (AS 1668 parts 1&2).

In order for exhaust canopies to operate efficiently your canopy must be maintained and cleaned frequently. It is important that filters are cleaned regularly to ensure optimum efficiency. One option is to utilise a commercial cleaning or swap program, as many food businesses do not have the facilities, appropriate chemicals and knowledge to clean the filters effectively. The canopy hood and internal surfaces, including the hood gutters and exhaust plenum (rear chamber behind filters), require cleaning also. If you can see evidence of oil appearing on your external ductwork you need to have this immediately cleaned by professional contractors.

A list of commercial contractors can be found in the phone directory, or on the internet.

Canopies and associated ductwork laden with grease and oil may pose a food safety risk and also a significant fire danger.

Waste Storage

Overflowing or soiled garbage facilities are often observed at inspections. Facilities must be kept clean and tidy, adequately sized and emptied frequently enough to contain the volume of rubbish produced. They should also be enclosed to prevent pest entry.

When rubbish bins become cracked/ damaged they should be replaced.

The refuse area of a business is considered part of the food premises, so remember to keep it clean and tidy.

Food Safety Supervisor

The *Food Act 2006* requires every licensable food business in Queensland to have a food safety supervisor.

A food safety supervisor means a person who:

- Knows how to recognise, prevent and alleviate food safety hazards of the food business has skills and knowledge in matters relating to food safety relevant to the food business;
- Has the authority to supervise and give directions about matters relating to food safety to persons who handle food in the food business; and
- Is reasonably available to be contacted by the local government that issued the licence and persons who handle food in the food business while the food business is being carried on.

The recommended training for food safety supervisors is conducted by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Training may be completed face-to-face or online. The costs associated with the food safety supervisor training vary dependant on the training provider.

Is Your Thermometer Reading Correctly?

Your thermometer plays a vital role in your business by ensuring that the food you are supplying and being supplied with is safe.

Your thermometer needs to be calibrated regularly to ensure it still reads correctly. National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited technicians can test and calibrate your thermometer, but ensure that they are accredited and can provide a calibration certificate.

The other option is to check yourself. There are two methods for testing your thermometer, the Ice Point Method and the Boiling Point Method.

Ice Point Method

- Fill an insulated cup with crushed ice and add a little water
- Stir the ice and let sit for at least two minutes to stabilise
- Suspend your thermometer in the cup, ensuring it does not touch the bottom or edges
- Wait two minutes or until your thermometer stops changing
- The thermometer should read 0°C ±1°C

Boiling Point Method

- Heat a pot of fresh water until a rolling boil is achieved
- Suspend your thermometer in the pot, ensuring it does not touch the bottom or edges
- Wait one minute or until the thermometer stops changing
- The thermometer should read 100°C ±1°C

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Renewal of Food Business Licence

Ensure your Food Business Licence is renewed by 30 June 2016. Food businesses that do not renew their licence by 30 June 2016 will face financial and possible legal consequences.

Have you made any changes?

Making structural changes to your food premise 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

Cleaning and Sanitising Mechanical Equipment

Mechanical equipment include stick blenders, food processors, vitamisers, slicers and other similar devices.

The mechanical action of these devices can draw food and bacteria into the internal areas of equipment where bacteria can grow, multiply and then contaminate the next food that is prepared with the equipment. It is important that all equipment can be dismantled enough for it to be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised.

Mechanical equipment should be cleaned and sanitised as soon as possible after you use it so that food does not dry onto surfaces.

What are the steps for cleaning and sanitising mechanical equipment?

1. Disassemble machine including all blades.
2. Clean machine surfaces using hot detergent solution.
3. Rinse to remove loose food waste, grease and detergent.
4. Sanitise machine surfaces with an approved food grade sanitiser following the manufacturer's directions for dilution) or utilising a commercial dishwasher to clean and sanitise mechanical equipment parts.
5. Air dry, if possible, otherwise use clean paper towels.
6. Reassemble machine and cover when not in use.

Sinks in Your Kitchen

Most kitchens have several sinks that are required for different purposes. Mixing the use of sinks can result in cross contamination of food and food handling equipment. Kitchens have:

- Hand Wash Basin - used for the sole purpose of washing a food handler's hands, arms and face.
- Wash-up Sink - used for the washing and sanitising of utensils and food contact equipment.
- Food Preparation Sink - used for food handling processes eg. washing fruit and vegetables, rinsing cooked rice or pasta. The sink should be cleaned and sanitised if the food handling process involves raw meats
- Cleaners Sink - used for filling and emptying cleaning buckets

Ensure that you and your staff are utilising the correct sinks for the correct uses.

Money and Food, Not a Good Mix

Food handlers often have a glove on one hand for food handling and no glove on the other hand for handling money. However the gloved hand is often used to handle money. As money is passed from person to person, so are pathogens that can make people sick if they get into food and are ingested.

To prevent contamination of food from money, the roles of food handler and money handler should be separated, by dedicating a staff member to handle money only. If this cannot be achieved there are other methods of achieving this:

- No direct handling of ready to eat foods.
- Use tongs, spoons, utensils, bakery serving papers or other indirect means of handling food.
- Wash hands immediately after handling money and before handling food; or use single use gloves to handle food and then dispose of to handle money.

Remember single use gloves are exactly that, single use and must not be reused. Gloves must be changed before handling food, before handling ready-to-eat food, after handling raw food, after using the toilet, smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief, eating, drinking or touching the hair, scalp or body.

Quiz Answers: 1. False, 2. False, 3. True, 4. True, 5. False, 6. True

Why Premise Maintenance is Important

Regular premise maintenance is vital to maintaining food safety. Premise maintenance can also be financially beneficial in the long term by preventing larger repair bills, lost operating time and lost revenue.

Poor maintenance of a food premise and equipment can result in the following issues:

- Pests can enter the premise through holes and gaps in walls, floors and ceilings or under gaps in damaged doors.
- Pests once in the premise can hide in cracks and gaps in walls, floors and ceilings.
- Difficulty cleaning the premise and equipment without causing further damage.
- Difficulty cleaning the premise and equipment can result in an increase in accumulation of dirt and grime that can feed pests and grow microorganisms that can contaminate the food.
- Damaged equipment can result in physical contamination of food or a safety hazard for staff.
- Difficulties maintaining temperature control for hot and cold food storage units.

Always repair damage to a premise or equipment in a timely manner. Scheduling preventative maintenance for equipment eg. servicing, can prevent break downs and reduce the risk of possible food contamination.

Is Dining with Man's Best Friend Ok?

Food businesses can now choose to allow patrons to dine in outdoor areas with their canine companions. Other customer areas are still off limits to animals, other than assistance animals.

Outdoor Dining Areas means an area that:

- is used for dining, drinking or both
- is not used for the preparation of food
- is not enclosed
- can be entered without passing through an enclosed area.

Enclosed area means an area that, except for doorways and passageways, is substantially or completely closed, whether permanently or temporarily, by a ceiling or roof and walls or windows or both walls and windows.

If your business allows dogs in outdoor dining areas it is recommended that you consider the following and have procedures in place:

- removal and disposal of dog waste including clean up
- dealing with dog misbehaviour e.g. barking or fighting
- customer complaints.

It is also recommended that you consider:

- signage for the areas where dogs are permitted eg. allowed areas for dogs and what is expected of patrons who bring dogs
- tether points for dogs
- possible trip hazards (eg. leashes on pathways)
- provisions of water, storage of dog food and cleaning and storage of bowls for dog food or water
- insurance and public liability.

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