Food Essentials

In this issue…

- Annual Inspections and How You Can be Prepared
- Delivery vs. Off-site Catering: What's the Difference?
- Record Keeping
- What to do if you Receive a Foodborne Illness Complaint
- Probe Thermometers: How & Why?
- Hand Washing Requirements
- Cooking Meat Safely
- Trading at Local Events
- Food Safety Websites
- Licence Renewals

Annual Inspections and How You Can be Prepared

Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) conduct annual inspections of food businesses to ensure they are complying with the *Food Act 2006* and the Food Standards Code. If a complaint is received or issues are noted at the annual inspection then additional inspections may also be required. When undertaking inspections there are many areas of operation that EHO's will look at. They may ask questions, observe employees, check records, look through the premises, and undertake temperature tests during the inspection. This is to determine if your food business is meeting the relevant requirements, such as:

- Food is stored in a safe way, at appropriate temperatures, and protected from any potential sources of contamination,
- Food is prepared and handled in a way that limits the time it is out of temperature control,
- Employees demonstrate good hygiene practices and have the appropriate skills and knowledge for what they are doing,
- The food business is kept in a clean condition and food contact surfaces are cleaned and sanitised correctly,
- Records show pest control, waste oil disposal, exhaust hood cleaning, and other necessary services are in place,
- The kitchen, storage areas, and all equipment and fittings are maintained in a good condition,
- There are hand washing facilities, a probe thermometer, a storage area for staff items, and a bathroom available for staff use, and
- There is a food safety supervisor that is reasonably contactable at all times.

Annual inspections may be conducted at any time without prior notice. To make sure you are always ready for an annual inspection you can undertake a self-assessment against the requirements of the *Food Act 2006* and the Food Standards Code. These documents can be accessed online, or you can download the self-assessment checklist produced by Queensland Health 'Know your food business: A self-assessment guide to the Food Safety Standards' which is available on Council's website.

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.

Cooking Meat Safely

As all raw meats can carry harmful bacteria, it is important to cook all meat properly to kill the bacteria that can cause foodborne illness.

Meat from certain animals or that has been minced or chopped up may contain harmful bacteria throughout. This means it must be cooked all the way through. This includes poultry, pork, rolled joints, burgers, sausages, chicken nuggets, kebabs, kidneys, liver and other types of offal, and any meat or fish that has been minced or skewered.

Thorough cooking will reduce dangerous bacteria to safe levels. Some foodborne illness causing pathogens can protect themselves from cooking, so while they will not be present in enough numbers to make someone sick just after the food is cooked, they can start growing again if the cooked food is left at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C for too long.

Licence Renewals

Ensure your Food Business Licence renewal paperwork is received by 30 June 2020. Food businesses that do not renew their licence by 30 June 2020 may face financial and possible legal consequences.

Trading at Local Events

Events such as Rockhampton River Festival are becoming increasingly popular. If your food business is looking at having a stall at an event, you may require a 'temporary food business licence'. This type of licence covers the temporary set-up used at events.

Individuals or businesses intending on having a stall at an event must make sure that their stall meets the requirements of the Food Safety Standards. Council has a Temporary Premises Fit-Out Guide. The guide provides information on the requirements for design, construction and fit-out of temporary food premises. The guide and Food Business Licence Application Form can be found on Council's website.

To make an application you must complete the form and submit it to Council with the application fee and supporting information. Please ensure you submit your application in plenty of time before the event. The *Food Act 2006* provides Council with 30 days to assess the application which may be extended if further information is required.

Food Safety Websites

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

- Queensland Health: www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/industry-environment/food-safety
- 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

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

Delivery vs Off-site Catering: What's the Difference?

Delivery involves simply delivering food that has been prepared and packaged in a licensed kitchen to the customer. However off-site catering involves a business serving potentially hazardous food at a place other than the principal place of business for the food business. This is usually to cater for an event. To undertake off-site catering, a licensed food business is required to hold an accredited food safety program.

Off-site catering does not include delivering food under an arrangement with or on the order of a consumer, such as delivering pizzas from a takeaway pizza shop; or the sale of food from mobile premises or temporary premises, such as the sale of ice-creams from a mobile ice-cream van.

Record Keeping

It is recommended all food businesses keep records to show the business has been taking reasonable measures to receive and produce safe and suitable food. Records help show the food business has taken due diligence. What records are recommended to be kept?

- Temperature logs,
- Incoming goods logs,
- Cleaning schedules,
- Maintenance logs, and
- Pest control logs.

Examples of record templates can be found in Council's Food Business Licensee Guide which is available on Council's website.

Temperature Control Record

Date & Time	Food Description	Visual Check	Temp °C	Corrective Action	Checked By

What to do if You Receive a Foodborne Illness Complaint

Customers may sometimes contact a food business with the belief that they have become ill after eating there. If this occurs you should assure the customer that you take complaints seriously and you will be looking into the matter. You should take down the contact details of the customer and the time the complaint was made. It will also help to ask for some further information including:

- Date and time the food was eaten,
- If any other people they dined with are also ill,
- The types of food they consumed,
- What food they believe caused the illness, and
- Whether or not any suspected food remains in their possession.

The person making the complaint is not required to provide any of the above information, but you should advise it will help you in determining what food may have caused their illness. If they choose to answer the questions, you should treat all information in the strictest confidence.

An employee receiving a complaint should immediately inform the supervisor or proprietor of the food business of the details of the incident. The supervisor or proprietor should check if any of the food suspected to have caused the illness remains on their premises. If so, all suspected food remaining should be hygienically contained, labelled as 'suspected unsafe food' and placed in refrigeration, separate from other food.

If Council or Queensland Health investigates, an Environmental Health Officer will advise you what to do with the food. If two or more people allege they were sick from the same food or they ate food from your food business on the same day and time, you should contact the local Queensland Health Public Health Unit to report the incident.

Probe Thermometers: How and Why?

If your business stores, transports, prepares, cooks or sells potentially hazardous food, then you must have a thermometer so you can measure the temperature of the food regularly. The type of thermometer required is one that can be inserted into the food. This means it must have a probe. The thermometer must be accurate to ±1°C.

Using a thermometer will demonstrate the temperature is controlled and potentially hazardous food has been cooked, cooled and reheated sufficiently and is being stored at the correct temperature. Equipment that is used to store and display food, such as cold rooms, Bain Marie units and display cabinets often have a thermometer fixed to the equipment. While these thermometers are useful, they do not measure the actual temperature of the food and you will still need to have a separate probe thermometer that can be inserted into the food.

It is important to ensure the probe of a thermometer is thoroughly cleaned and sanitised after each use. The probe comes in direct contact with food and it has the potential to cause cross contamination. Thermometer probes can be cleaned by washing in hot soapy water, then sanitising using a food grade sanitiser especially when moving from raw products to cooked products. Remember use a disposable paper towel to dry the probe before use or to allow it to air dry.

Hand Washing Requirements

All food businesses must provide hand washing facilities for food handling staff. The hand wash facilities must be provided with warm running water, soap and paper towels for drying hands. Using the hand washing facilities for any purpose other than the washing of hands, arms and face is not permitted as it can cause cross contamination.

Food handlers must wash their hands whenever their hands are reasonably likely to contaminate food. This includes washing their hands:

- Immediately before working with ready-to-eat food after handling raw food,
- Immediately after handling raw meat or processed (or cut) fruit or vegetables,
- Immediately after using the toilet,
- Before starting to handle food or returning to handling food after other work, such as handling money,
- Immediately after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, eating, drinking, or using tobacco or similar substances, and
- After touching hair, scalp, or a body opening.