

Information Brochure for Food Handlers

FOOD HYGIENE



A Guide to Good Food Hygiene in Food Premises



Development & Environmental Services Group

Council's Environmental Health Officers
are available to provide advice and guidance

Telephone: 4429 3111

A Guide to Good Food Hygiene in Food Premises

This booklet has been produced to provide assistance and guidance for persons, organisations, clubs and the like engaged in or wishing to carry out food handling activities.

These guidelines are supplementary to requirements outlined in Council's Food Premises Code and Council's minimum standards for the use of mobile food stalls/vehicles and temporary food stalls.

For enquiries in connection with these guidelines or any standards in respect to handling of food for sale, please contact Council's Environmental Services.

Telephone numbers for enquiries – Nowra 4429 3111 or Ulladulla 4429 8999.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The basic aims of good food hygiene are:–

- to ensure that food reaches the consumer in an undeteriorated sound condition.
- to avoid transfer of disease.
- to prevent food poisoning.
- to maximise shelf life of the food.

In summary, these aims are achieved by:–

- ensuring high standards of foods and raw materials when received.
- protecting food from contamination by micro-organisms.
- minimising the growth of micro-organisms.
- ensuring proper stock rotation and destroying all food which has been kept too long.

2.0 ASPECTS OF GOOD FOOD HYGIENE

2.1 Keep your Food Premises Clean

Dirty premises promote breeding of vermin such as cockroaches, flies, rats and mice, which contaminate food with micro-organisms. Accumulation of dirt, food scraps and dust also provide a medium for growth of micro-organisms which are transferred directly and indirectly to food.

Keep your premises clean, paying attention to everything, i.e. walls, floors, ceilings, benches, receptacles, machinery, chopping boards, refrigeration units, utensils, fittings, rear yard, grease traps, food transport vehicles.

Some rules to remember when cleaning:–

- Ensure that hot water is available on the premises at all times.
- Ensure that food, dirt and dust do not accumulate anywhere on the premises.
- Pay particular attention to surfaces which come into direct contact with high risk foods, i.e. cutting knives and utensils, meat slicers, mincers, food trays.
- Eating and drinking utensils should be thoroughly cleaned in hot water of not less than 77°C.
- The use of sanitizers (e.g. chlorinated powdered detergents) is considered essential in food premises, particularly on surfaces coming in direct contact with food.

- Ensure that you use the right cleaning agent for the job. A wide variety of cleaning agents is available for food premises, each designed for specific application.
- Ensure that sponges, mops, towels, etc. which are used for cleaning are cleaned and disinfected daily. The use of clean disposable paper towels is strongly recommended.
- Keep your trade waste area and rear yard clean to reduce incidence of vermin.

2.2 Ensure your Food Premises are Maintained in a Good State of Repair

Disrepair promotes accumulation of dirt and food, access and breeding of vermin, difficulty in cleaning and so affects the food you sell.

Ensure your premises are maintained in a good state of repair. All surfaces which come in direct contact with food should be smooth, impervious and free from cracks, holes, corrosion and flaking paint, i.e. benches, shelves, trays, chopping boards, machinery.

Walls, floors and ceilings should be properly sealed to prevent access of rats, mice and cockroaches and smooth and impervious to permit ease of cleaning.

Refrigerators, freezers, coolrooms, bain maries, refrigerated displays, etc. should be properly maintained to deliver correct temperatures and minimise microbial growth.

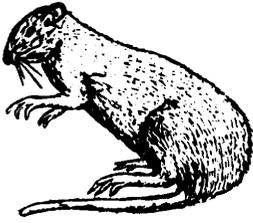
2.3 Keep your Premises Free from Vermin (*refer Illustration 1*)

Cockroaches, flies, rats and mice spoil food with urine and faeces, damage packaging and transfer disease and food poisoning bacteria to the food you sell. Cockroaches and, in particular the German Cockroach, are a major problem in food premises.

The German Cockroach only grows to about 2 centimetres. In addition to spoiling food, they have been involved in carrying diseases such as diphtheria, dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis. They thrive in kitchens, pantries and storerooms, particularly in cracks and crevices and where starchy foods are available.

The best method of control of vermin is preventative by keeping food covered, ensuring that the premises are kept clean, in good repair, and free from cracks, holes, crevices and other spaces which provide a harbourage for vermin and a means of access. Flyscreens are essential.

If preventative measures fail, vermin may be eradicated by use of pesticides, traps or baits.



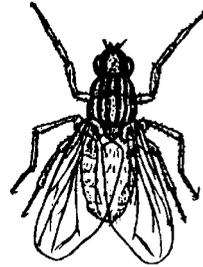
The Norway Rat (*rattus norvegicus*)



The Roof Rat (*rattus rattus*)



House Mouse (*mus musculus*)



Flies (*diptera*)



Male



Female

Egg Capsule



Nymph

German Cockroach (*blatella germanica*)

Illustration 1 – Common Vermin found in Food Premises

Regular inspection and treatment by professional pest controllers is recommended in food premises every 3 to 6 months.

2.4 Ensure that Perishable Food is Maintained at Appropriate Temperatures *(refer Illustration 2)*

The rate of growth and multiplication of micro-organisms is dependent on the temperature of the surrounding environment, e.g. food. Under ideal temperature conditions, 10 bacteria can multiply to 2,621,440 organisms in six hours.

Microbial growth occurs at temperatures of between 5°C and 60°C — this is the Danger Zone.

All raw foods such as chickens, meat, seafoods and milk contain large numbers of bacteria and such foods may only require a short time within the Danger Temperature Zone to cause food poisoning.

Ensure that when thawing frozen food, this is done either in the refrigerator, cool running water or a microwave oven and as briefly as possible.

Food which has been cooked, e.g. chicken, fish, rice, meat, etc., should be kept hot, i.e. above 60°C, or kept cold, i.e. below 5°C.

Do not allow perishable food to stand at room temperature longer than absolutely necessary.

Regularly check temperatures of bain maries, display refrigerators, freezers, food warmers, etc. to ensure temperatures are correct.

Do not overstack display refrigerators.

REMEMBER: *The longer perishable foods are kept within the Danger Temperature Zone between 5°C and 60°C, the greater the risk of food poisoning.*

2.5 Ensure Good Personal Hygiene

The human body and clothes are a reservoir for micro-organisms. Good personal hygiene can minimise human contamination of food and reduce the risk of food poisoning.

- Food handlers should wash hands regularly, i.e. on arrival at work, after visiting the lavatory, after using a handkerchief, after any work break, after applying hands to the face or head.
- Hands and fingernails should be kept scrupulously clean and washed using soap and hot water, then rinsed and dried with clean paper towels or a hot air drier.

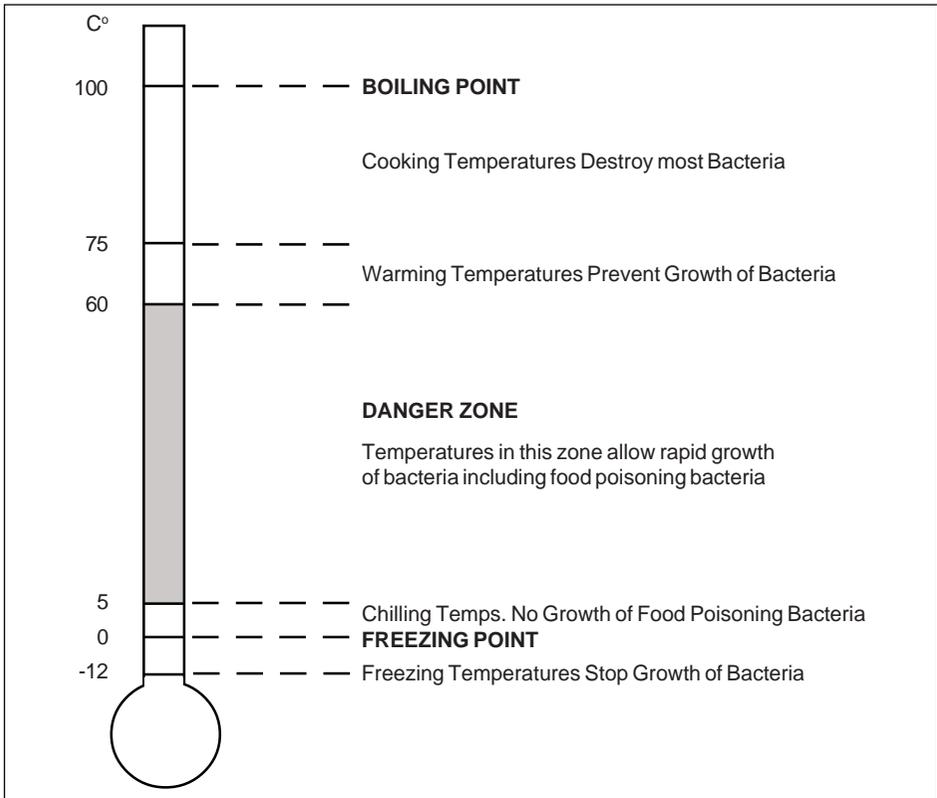


Illustration 2 – Effect of Temperature on the Growth of Bacteria

- Food handlers should not engage in food handling if they are ill or have skin infections, cuts or abrasions on hands or if wearing bandages on hands and arms.
- Keep clothing, uniforms and aprons clean.
- Do not smoke while handling food.

2.6 Minimise Contamination of Food

Micro-organisms are transferred to food from other reservoirs such as man, other food, animals and vermin. To minimise contamination, it is necessary to protect food from unnecessary direct or indirect contact with these reservoirs.

- Use utensils or disposable plastic gloves for preparing foods as much as possible. Use tongs, spoons, forks for handling breads, pastries, sliced meats, salad items, etc.

- Do not sneeze or cough on food.
- Cover foods at all times.
- Do not store cooked and uncooked foods together, the raw food will contaminate the cooked.
- Ensure that all surfaces coming in direct contact with food are maintained scrupulously clean.
- Animals are not permitted in food areas.
- Avoid bad hand habits, e.g. do not scratch head or other parts of body.
- Cook foods thoroughly.

2.7 Ensure that Perishable Food is not kept too long

Proper food hygiene practices can maximise the shelf life of perishable foods by slowing up the process of spoilage and putrefaction. Nevertheless, good hygiene practices cannot prevent the inevitable degradation of the food in time.

It is, therefore, essential to be aware of how long each particular type of high risk food has been kept, under what conditions and the condition in which it was received, to enable proper assessment of when such food should be discarded.

COMMON HIGH RISK FOODS

<p>Meat and Meat Products Fresh Meat (all forms) Fresh Poultry Game Meats Processed Meats e.g. ham Processed Poultry e.g. Chicken slice Meat by-products e.g. kidney Poultry by-products e.g. pate Meat Pastries e.g. meat pies Stocks and Broths e.g. soup Other Meat-containing foods, e.g. stews, casseroles, sauces, gravies</p> <p>Dairy Products Milk Cream Cheese Ice Cream Other Dairy Products</p>	<p>Seafoods Fresh Fish Shellfish e.g. prawns Processed Fish e.g. fish fingers</p> <p>Sweets and Desserts Custard Cream Cakes Artificial Cream Confectionery High Protein Desserts</p> <p>Miscellaneous Eggs Rice Salads Sandwiches Mayonnaise and Dressings High Protein Beverages</p>
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Food must reach the consumer in a sound undeteriorated condition.

Perished foods contain very high numbers of micro-organisms which may contaminate other food by direct contact, dripping, or indirectly by the air, or by contact with surfaces.

Ensure that perished foods are removed from the premises and destroyed as quickly as possible.

2.8 All Construction Works, Alterations or Upgrading to Food Premises should be done in accordance with Council's various Food Premises Codes

Council's Codes for Food Premises have been designed to promote high standards of hygiene.

Construction of food premises in accordance with Council's Codes facilitates easy cleaning and maintenance, minimal access and breeding areas for vermin and assists in reducing contamination of food.

RECOMMENDED REFRIGERATION TEMPERATURES AND STORAGE OF SOME PERISHABLE FOODS

Food	Recommended Storage Temp.	Suggested Length of Storage
Fresh Meat – roasts, steak, chops	-1 to 3°C	2 days wrapped 3-5 days unwrapped
Ground and Stew Meat	-1 to 3°C	1-2 days
Hams	-1 to 3°C	1-3 weeks
Bacon and Cured Meats	-1 to 3°C	1-2 weeks
Cold Cuts	-1 to 3°C	3-5 days
Poultry	-1 to 3°C	1-2 days
Fresh Fish	-1 to 1°C	2-3 days
Fresh Shellfish	-1 to 1°C	1-5 days
Smoked Fish	-1 to 1°C	2-3 days
Milk	2 to 4°C	5-7 days
Buttermilk, Sour Cream, other fermented milks	2 to 4°C	up to 2 weeks
Cream	2 to 4°C	5 days
Cheese (cheddar type)	2 to 4°C	variable (1-3 months)
Eggs (in shell)	2 to 4°C	1-2 weeks
Fruit Juices	0 to 7°C	1-2 weeks
Butter	0 to 7°C	8 weeks

NOTE: *The above suggested storage times apply to food which has been received in sound, wholesome, undeteriorated condition and which has been maintained hygienically at the recommended temperatures.*

STORAGE LIFE OF FROZEN FOODS

Product	Expected Storage Life in Commercial Freezer at -18°C	Recommended Max. Storage Time in Domestic freezer
Bacon (unsmoked)	2-4 months	2 months
Bacon (smoked)	2-3 months	1-2 months
Beef	10-12 months	6 months
Bread, baked	2-3 months	2 months
Bread, unbaked unrisen dough	3-4 months	2 months
Chicken	1 year	6 months
Concentrated Fruit Juices	2 years	6 months
Cooked, Spiced Dishes	3-4 months	2 months
Crab	6 months	3 months
Crayfish	6 months	3 months
Fish	8 months	3-4 months
French Fried Potatoes	2 years	6 months
Fruit	12-18 months	6 months
Green Vegetables	15 months	6 months
Ham (smoked)	2-3 months	1-2 months
Ice Cream	6 months	2 months
Lamb	10-12 months	6 months
Pies, Fruit, baked	3-4 months	3 months
Pies, Fruit, unbaked	8-12 months	6 months
Pies, Meat, baked or unbaked	4-6 months	4 months
Pork	6 months	3 months
Prawns	6-8 months	3 months
Turkey	1 year	6 months
Veal	9 months	6 months

Ensure all construction works, alterations and upgrading conform with the requirements of Council's Codes.

If your premises do not currently conform with these requirements, progressive upgrading in accordance with Council's Codes is strongly recommended.

Copies of Council's Codes are available from Council's Health and Community Services Division, free of charge, and your local Council Environmental Health Officer is available to assist.

Should you intend to renovate or upgrade your food premises, you should first seek the advice of your local Council Environmental Health Officer.

3.0 THE LAW

"Food" – means a substance or compound commonly used, or represented as being for use, as food or drink for human consumption or as an ingredient (whether or not after processing) of food or drink for human consumption or use, and includes:

- a) confectionery; and
- b) any spice, flavouring substance, essence, colouring matter or other ingredient whatever that enters into, or is used in, the composition or preparation of food or drink; and
- c) any substance or compound for the time being declared under this Act to be food.

Food hygiene in food premises is the subject of a considerable amount of legislation, however, Health Authorities rely mainly on the requirements of the Food Act, 1989, as amended, and Regulations.

The Food Act is basically designed to **protect the consumer** from being sold food which is:

- damaged or perished.
- unfit for human consumption
- mixed, treated or packaged in such a manner which is false, misleading or deceitful.
- contains additives exceeding the requirements of the Regulations.
- falsely described or not of the nature demanded by the consumer.
- **"Handling"** – in relation to food, means preparing, preserving, packing, storing, decorating, serving, converting or delivering food.

The regulations of the Food Act require stringent hygiene requirements for **all** commercial food premises and **additional** requirements are set down for butchers under Part 8 of the regulations.

Persons who contravene the requirements of the Food Act and Regulations may be liable to penalties of up to \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or both.

Your local Council Environmental Health Officer is available to assist with any enquiries you may have and further, more detailed information on Food Premises will be made available on request.

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