

Welcome

to the Winter edition
of Food News!

This bi-annual
newsletter is designed
to bring you the latest
news and information
on all things food!

We welcome any
suggestions with
ways to improve the
newsletter and will
also consider requests
for future articles.

Missed a newsletter?
Not to worry, all past
editions of Food
News are available to
download from our
website.



There have been several recent enquiries about the topical issue surrounding the use of refillable cups customers provide when purchasing hot beverages from food businesses.

The City of Charles Sturt acquires food safety guidance and advice from SA Health who has confirmed that currently there is no State-based policy or regulation that impacts refillable beverage cups. Whilst we acknowledge that the use of refillable cups from customers may introduce a potential source for cross-contamination, we also recognise that there are environmental impacts associated with the disposal of single-use cups.

Food businesses that choose to refill customer cups should employ 'best practice' procedures to manage the risks associated with handling and filling foreign containers. Businesses are not

required to clean and sanitise the customer's refillable cups, however, soiled cups would present an added potential for cross-contamination onto hands, food and food-contact surfaces. Businesses may refuse to accept 'soiled' or dirty cups, as an added control measure to manage contamination risks.

Council Environmental Health Officers encourage food handlers to employ good hand washing practices and to ensure hand washing facilities are well-equipped at all times. This includes providing a constant supply of soap, single-use paper towels or another effective means to dry hands, such as an air hand dryer.

What is potentially hazardous food?

Potentially hazardous foods (PHFs) are foods that have to be kept at certain temperatures to minimise the growth of any pathogenic micro-organisms that may be present in the food or to prevent the formation of toxins in the food.

Examples of PHFs include, but are not limited to:

- Raw and cooked meat, poultry and fish
- Dairy products (e.g. milk, custard, cream etc.)
- Raw and cooked eggs and egg products
- Kombucha, kefir etc.

- Cooked rice, noodles and pasta
- Gravy and soup/stock
- Casseroles, curries, lasagne
- Cut fruits and vegetables
- Sprouts (bean, alfalfa etc.)
- Some protein/bliss balls, raw slices etc.

PHFs must be stored and displayed at a temperature that will minimise the growth of food poisoning bacteria in the food. This temperature must be at or below 5°C, or at or above 60°C. PHFs may be kept out of temperature for up to 4 hours if using the 2 hour/4hour rule. For more information on the 2hour/4hour rule contact the Environmental Health team on 8408 1111.



Be shelf aware

There are many methods used to prolong the shelf life of different types of food but generally if you intend to keep food longer than 5 days you should have appropriate laboratory testing conducted on a standard recipe to confirm the safety of your food items.

Date marking provides food handlers and consumers with an understanding of the shelf life of food; this is based on either quality attributes of the food or health and safety considerations. All Foods degrade at different rates which is why storage instructions also must be clearly understood.

The date mark indicates the length of time food should keep before it begins to deteriorate. In Australia and New Zealand, there are two main types of date marking, these are 'best-before' and 'use-by'. A 'use-by' date is the last date on which the food may be eaten safely. The only way to determine this date is through laboratory testing. The test required may depend on the food type and can

be any of the below listed categories individually or in combination:

- Microbiological – various categories
- pH (acidity)
- Water activity (aw)

Some foods even when stored in regular temperature control can have an increase in bacterial load over time which is another reason why a food business must prove safety of food products through food testing.

Your inspecting officer may discuss food safety risks associated with your processes, or require you to provide evidence of your food's shelf life to ensure that only safe suitable food is served to the public.

This may also be requested if you are handling foods that are high risk and the time that the food is

to be considered safe is unknown.

If you are doing any of the following processes, laboratory testing for food safety may be required.

- Canning
- Pickling
- Vacuum packing
- Freezing
- Storing in oil
- Adding ingredients to a commercially

- produced, store bought product.
- Refrigerating / cooling

Shelf life testing is available through NATA accredited Lab and SA Pathology located in Adelaide. Details for both laboratories are available on the document titled Food Premises – Local Equipment Suppliers List which can be found on the Charles Sturt website.



Ice Ice Baby

Ice is not something you normally think of when thinking about food. But when ice is put into drinks or used in direct contact with stored food, ice is considered to be food.

Ice can become contaminated with harmful bacteria and has even been associated with a number of food poisoning outbreaks. This is why how ice is made is very important.

Ice machines can come in a variety of shapes and sizes: domestic or industrial; storage or make and eject; or cube ice maker or flake ice maker. Regardless of the type of machine, making sure that the space around the machine is clear and clean, and

the components are clean is key to producing healthy ice and will also improve the performance of your machine.

Cool tips:

- Regularly using your food grade sanitiser on the inside surfaces of your ice machine helps prevent mould build-up;
- Inspect your machine at least once a week for mould or dust build-up;
- Inspect your machine at least once every 3 months for any

repairs that might be needed;

- The ice machine operator's manual will provide guidance on how to clean all the water contact surfaces of your machine – some of these surfaces

may not be able to be accessed without removing parts of the machine; and

- Professionals can be contracted to clean, service and maintain these machines.



You may have noticed that in the last few months we have been completing our food inspections on an electronic tablet. We are hoping to go fully paperless with our communication to all our food businesses. This means that you will be receiving your

inspection reports via email. If you haven't received yours after your inspection please don't hesitate to contact Council.

Don't forget to provide your email address to us so we can keep you in the loop!

Contact Council on 8408 1111 - Environmental Health Officers are always available to offer free & friendly advice on how your business can achieve Deliciously Safe or for general food safety advice.

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