



Prevention of Food Contamination

Fines of up to \$2500 apply!

Please ensure that all food handlers and business owners read this important information. Breaches relating to incorrect food handling practices will result in fines of up to \$2500.

Below are a number of key processes involved in your food business that require consideration to ensure food is protected from the likelihood of contamination.

Receiving

In accordance with the Food Safety Standards, a food business must take all practicable measures to ensure it only accepts food that is protected from the likelihood of contamination. To ensure your business only receives non-contaminated foods it is important that measures such as, ensuring there is always a staff member available to receive delivered foods, are implemented. Furthermore, foods being received should be randomly inspected at the time of delivery to ensure that they are protected from contamination and are being delivered at an appropriate temperature.

If any foods being delivered to your business are unprotected from the likelihood of contamination, or the food packaging is open allowing the potential for contamination, the food is to be returned to the supplier.

Storage

A food business must store foods in a way that will protect the food from the likelihood of contamination. All foods are to be covered with a food grade material such as, plastic wrap and aluminium foil. The use of food grade containers with lids, particularly for protecting dry goods, is also encouraged.

It is important to store raw foods separately or away from ready-to-eat foods to avoid cross contamination between the foods. Furthermore, foods should be stored on shelving and not directly on the floor to facilitate effective cleaning and to discourage pests.

Food storage areas are to be kept clean and free of pests to minimise the opportunity of external materials contaminating foods. Similarly, all cleaning products and personal belongings must be stored separate to food storage areas.



Processing

Processing is the activity conducted to prepare food for sale and can include everything from washing, chopping and cooking ingredients, to drying, thawing or simply reheating foods.

All necessary steps must be taken to ensure that the food being processed does not become contaminated. Contamination of food can occur due to many contributing factors caused by staff, equipment, food packaging and the food preparation area. For example, contamination of foods may occur from food handlers not washing their hands or not using utensils such as tongs and spoons to handle food, equipment being unclean and not in good repair, the food preparation area containing pests, dirt and dust and food packaging being damaged.

Display of Food

It is essential that all food on display is protected from the likelihood of contamination. Food with damaged packaging must be removed from display.

Food that is not packaged is particularly vulnerable to contamination and minimum standards apply which include:

- ensure that the food on display is effectively supervised;
- provide separate serving utensils or other dispensing methods that reduce the likelihood of food being contaminated;
- provide protective barriers, such as permanent sneeze guards on display units; and
- ensure that uncovered foods are not placed on a counter or bar where it can be contaminated.

Packaging Materials

It is important to recognise that a suitable food grade material is used for food packaging to ensure the food is not contaminated. Food packaging materials can contaminate foods chemically by leaching chemical substances into the food, by transferring micro-organisms, dirt or other foreign matters that may be present on the packaging material, or by parts of the packaging material breaking off and transferring into the food.

It is essential that food packaging materials themselves are protected from contamination before use. They are to be covered and stored in a clean and pest free environment.

Transport of Food

Unpackaged food is vulnerable to contamination during transportation, especially if the food is being transported with other materials. For example, contamination of foods can occur when raw and ready to eat foods are transported together and when foods are transported with other materials, such as chemicals and fertiliser. It is imperative that the area of the vehicle used for food storage is enclosed and maintained in a clean and sanitary condition and raw and ready to eat foods are stored separately. Packaged foods also require care during transportation to ensure damage is prevented and the food is protected from environmental factors such as rain, heat and chemicals.

If potentially hazardous foods are being transported they must be maintained at or below 5°C or at or above 60°C, unless time is used as an appropriate control to maintain the safety and suitability of the food.

Deliciously Safe Program

Compliance with proper food storage and prevention of contamination techniques may result in your business achieving full compliance at your routine inspection, making you eligible for the Deliciously Safe Program.

The Deliciously Safe Program recognises and rewards businesses within the City of Charles Sturt who achieve full compliance with legislation at their routine food premises inspections. A high profile sticker and a certificate will be provided for your business to display. This will identify to the public that your business was found to be fully compliant at the time of inspection, potentially attracting customers to your business.

Your business name will be listed on the City of Charles Sturt website and there is a potential for your business name to be listed in one of Council's community publications and social media communications.

Need More Information?

If you require further information regarding food safety or to receive a Food Safety Kit, please contact Council's Environmental Health Team. Furthermore, don't forget...you must always notify Council whenever you start a new food business, transfer ownership or change the food business name. Notification forms are available from Council or can be downloaded from the Council's website.

Check out our online Food Safety Training "I am Alert" via Council's webpage under [Services > Food Hygiene>Food Safety Training](#).