



Food Safety Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements

(Updated June 2004)

NOTE: The Food Safety Standards do not apply in New Zealand. The provisions of the food standards treaty between Australia and New Zealand do not include food hygiene standards.

What is this standard?

Standard 3.2.2 *Food Safety Practices and General Requirements* sets out specific food handling controls related to the receipt, storage, processing, display, packaging, transportation, disposal and recall of food. Other requirements relate to the skills and knowledge of food handlers and their supervisors, the health and hygiene of food handlers, and the cleaning, sanitising and maintenance of the food premises and equipment within the premises. If complied with, these requirements should ensure that food does not become unsafe or unsuitable.

Who must comply with this standard?

Food businesses must comply with this standard, unless they fall under the definition of 'primary food production'. See 'the fact sheet on Standard 3.1.1 *Interpretation and Application* for more information on this subject.

There are also requirements that relate specifically to food handlers.

Standard 3.2.2 *Food Safety Practices and General Requirements* includes some exemptions for charities and community groups and also for temporary food businesses and businesses operating from a private home.

Charities and community groups that sell low risk food (such as cakes and jams) or hot food that is sold as soon as it is cooked (such as sausages and steaks) need not comply with the requirement that food handlers have skills and knowledge that apply to the work they are doing. Temporary food businesses and businesses operating from a private home can ask their local enforcement authority for an exemption from some of the hand washing requirements.

What are the key provisions in this standard for food businesses?

- **Notification**

Contact details and information on the nature of the business must be given to the local enforcement agency, unless this information is provided already under an existing food business registration system. *(This requirement does not apply before February 2002)*

- **Skills and knowledge**

Food businesses must make sure that people who carry out or supervise the handling of food have appropriate skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene matters. Formal training is not necessarily required. Food handlers can also acquire skills and knowledge through, for example, 'in house' training, reading information provided by their employer, following specified operating procedures, or attending courses run by industry associations or a local council. *(This requirement does not apply before February 2002)*

- **Maintaining potentially hazardous food at correct temperatures**

To limit the growth of food poisoning bacteria in food, businesses must minimise the amount of time that potentially hazardous food is at temperatures between 5° C and 60° C. Temperature controls also apply to the receipt, storage, processing, display and transport of potentially hazardous food.

- **Cooking or another processing step to make food safe**

Where food must be cooked or otherwise processed to make it safe, food businesses must carry out this step correctly. For example, minced meat and chickens must be cooked right through to the middle to kill food poisoning bacteria.

- **Protecting food from contamination**

Food must be protected from contamination. There are also specific requirements for the protection of ready-to-eat food that is on display. These include supervision of the display area, separate serving utensils for each food, and protective barriers.

- **Food disposal**

Food that has been recalled or returned or that may not be safe or suitable must be labelled and kept separate from other food until a decision is made about what to do with the food, in accordance with the food disposal requirements.

- **Food recall**

Wholesale suppliers, manufacturers and importers of food must have a written recall system for the recall of unsafe food and must use this system when recalling unsafe food. In the event of a recall, you may find it useful to draw on the guidance in the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) *Food Industry Recall Protocol*. This is available on the FSANZ website (www.foodstandards.gov.au), or call FSANZ on +61 02 6271 2222.

- **Health and hygiene requirements**

Food businesses must:

- tell food handlers about their health and hygiene responsibilities;
- make sure that people who have or are carrying a disease that might be passed on through food do not contaminate food. Hepatitis A and illnesses caused by giardia, salmonella and campylobacter are examples of diseases that can be passed on through food;
- make sure that a food handler with infected skin lesions or discharges from his/her ears, nose or eyes does not contaminate food;
- provide adequate hand washing facilities and make sure that they are used only for washing hands, arms and faces; and
- make sure that people on the premises do not contaminate food.

- **Cleaning, sanitising and maintenance**

- Food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitised to keep microorganisms at safe levels. This applies to food serving equipment such as plates and cutlery, and to any equipment or surfaces that may come into contact with food.
- Food premises, fittings and equipment within the premises must be clean and in a good state of repair and working order.
- Chipped, cracked or broken utensils must not be used.

- **Thermometers**

Food business handling potentially hazardous food must have a probe thermometer accurate to +/- 1° C so they can measure the temperature of food.

- **Animals and pests**

Premises must be kept free of animals and pests.

What are the key provisions in this standard, for food handlers?

- Food handlers must tell their supervisor if they may have contaminated food.
- Food handlers must tell their supervisor if they have, or are carrying a disease that might be transmitted through food. Hepatitis A and illnesses caused by giardia, salmonella and campylobacter are examples of diseases that can be passed on through food.
- Food handlers must tell their supervisor if they are suffering from diarrhoea, vomiting, a sore throat with fever, fever or jaundice unless they know their symptom or symptoms do not relate to a food-borne illness.
- Food handlers must tell their supervisor if they have any infected skin lesions or discharges from their ears, nose or eyes as these could contaminate food.
- Food handlers must do everything they can to make sure they do not contaminate food.
- Food handlers must wash their hands with soap and warm running water in the hand washing facilities provided and dry them thoroughly whenever there is any risk that they might contaminate food.
- Food handlers must not behave in ways that could cause food contamination. For example, they must not eat over unprotected food or smoke in food handling areas.

What are the new national requirements in this standard?

Standard 3.2.2 *Food Safety Practices and General Requirements* is based on requirements that were included in previous State and Territory hygiene regulations. This means that most of the requirements in this standard are consistent with the earlier regulations.

However, there are some requirements that are completely new for all food businesses in Australia. These requirements are summarised in the table below.

Summary of new requirements for food businesses

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| Skills and knowledge | Ensure that food handlers and supervisors have skills and knowledge in food safety that equate with their responsibilities within the business. |
| Notification | Supply contact details and information on the nature and location of their food business to their local enforcement agency, if not already registered as a food business with an enforcement agency. |
| Food receipt | Take steps to ensure that food received into the premises is safe and suitable. |
| Food processing | Where a process step is needed to ensure the safety of a food, businesses must use a process step that achieves this outcome. |
| Food recall | Food businesses engaged in the wholesale supply, manufacture or importation of food must have a written recall system. |
| Health and hygiene | Food handlers must be told about their health and hygiene obligations. |
| Temperature control & thermometers | Businesses handling potentially hazardous food must have a thermometer accurate to $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$ to measure the temperature of the food. |

- **Using time as a control to keep food safe**

Standard 3.2.2 *Food Safety Practices and General Requirements* also introduces a flexible way of meeting the temperature control requirements while still keeping food safe.

Under the previous State and Territory food hygiene regulations, businesses had to keep potentially hazardous food at certain temperatures. However, under Standard 3.2.2 *Food Safety Practices and General Requirements*, businesses can have potentially hazardous food at other than the specified temperatures (below 5° C or above 60° C) provided they are able to prove that this will not affect the safety of the food. For example, they can use time to control the safety of the food by keeping records of the time that the food is not refrigerated, provided the time out of refrigeration does not exceed safe limits.

When will this standard come into force?

This standard applies from 24 February 2001. The skills and knowledge and notification requirements will not apply before 24 February 2002.

However, the standards do not come fully into force until State and Territory food laws and regulations are amended to enact the standards in each jurisdiction. A separate fact sheet *State and Territory enforcement of the Food Safety Standards* sets out the situation in each State and Territory.

Need more information?

Copies of the standards, the guides to these and other fact sheets and supporting material can be found on the FSANZ website (<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au>).

As the standards come into force in each State and Territory, food businesses will also be able to seek advice directly from the Environmental Health Officers at their local council, or from their State or Territory health or health services department and Public Health Units.

Contact details for State and Territory health departments and local councils are included in a separate fact sheet *Food Safety Standards - Sources of information & advice*.

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