

# TRADING AS A FOOD BUSINESS

Environmental Health Services

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**Welcome** to the new venture of starting or taking over a food business! This information package is designed to help you be aware of the legal requirements associated with running a food business, as well as introducing you to the Council's Environmental Health Section.

In Tasmania, there are two main components to our food legislation. These are the *Food Act 2003* and the Food Standards Code. The *Food Act 2003* sets out things such as registration requirements, inspection powers of authorised officers, as well as penalties and offences. The Food Standards Code is the practical standard written in the *Food Act 2003* that applies to the structural side of the premises, hygiene of food handlers, food handling skills, and cleanliness of premises. Together, the Act and the Code help ensure that food businesses sell the safest food possible.

Once you have read through the information in this package, please feel free to contact an Environmental Health Officer at the Council on 6429 8900 to discuss it further, or to arrange an on-site inspection of your premises.

# Requirements and advice to trade as a Food Premises

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This information package has been designed to inform new business owners of their legal requirements for running a food business in Tasmania, and how this is practically applied within the Central Coast Council.

This package contains:

- 1 Setting up a new food business
- 2 Purchasing an existing business
- 3 Role of the Environmental Health Officer
- 4 Design and construction requirements
- 5 Food safety training
- 6 Frequently asked questions
- 7 Temperature monitoring
- 8 Temperature log sheets (cold and hot storage)
- 9 Example cleaning schedules

# Setting up a new food business

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## Contact the Council

If you are thinking about establishing a food business the first point of contact is the Council's Planning Services. This is to ensure that the proposed use is permitted on the property. Planning permission may be required in some instances before you apply for the relevant Health and Building Permits.

## Private Building Surveyor

Before any work can be carried out on a building, a private building surveyor must be employed to ensure all relevant permits are obtained. Your building surveyor will require you to submit full plans and specifications on the proposed work.

A full list of building surveyors can be found in the yellow pages, under 'Building Surveyors'.

## Full plans and specifications

A floor plan and elevation plan must be submitted to the Building Surveyor. These plans need to show the proposed premises and must include the following:

- ✓ the location of all fittings, fixtures and equipment;
- ✓ specifications of all fittings, fixtures and equipment;
- ✓ specifications of the types of materials used;
- ✓ any other information to ensure the premises plans comply with Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code and Tas Part H102 of the Building Code Australia.

All plans submitted to the Building Surveyor will be assessed by the Environmental Health Officer and Plumbing Inspector. If there are any deficiencies they will be noted and a list will be forwarded to the Building Surveyor so that they can be rectified and construction can begin.

Please refer to the Food Premises Design and Construction information sheet on this website for more detailed information.

## Setting up a new food business – *continued*

### Inspection of the proposed site

A site inspection of the proposed site may be undertaken by the Environmental Health Officer, Plumbing Inspector and Building Surveyor on receipt of the required plans.

Once the Council has approved all plans and all problems have been resolved, construction of the premises can begin.

### Final inspection

Once construction of the premises is complete in accordance with the approved plans, the Environmental Health Officer, Plumbing Inspector and Building Surveyor will conduct an inspection. This will occur prior to opening the business to the public. Any areas that require additional works or improvements will be noted and a letter addressing these issues will be sent.

### Registration

Once all building works have been completed and approved, an application for registration under the *Food Act 2003* will be provided and must be completed and returned to the Council, along with the prescribed fee, prior to opening the business.

Registration of your premises is required annually. The registration period is 12 months from the issue date each year. For example, if your registration is issued on 12 January, your registration will come up for renewal on 12 January the next year.

Upon granting registration, you will be issued with a Certificate of Food Business Registration, which must remain displayed on the premises at all times.

NOTE: operating a food business without registration is an offence under the <i>Food Act 2003</i>
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# Purchasing an existing food business

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All businesses that sell food are required to be registered with the Council under the provisions of the *Food Act 2003*.

When purchasing an existing business it is essential to contact the Environmental Health Officer to ensure the business is registered and complies with the provisions of the *Food Act 2003*. This request must be in writing and is normally carried out by your solicitor.

Before you take over the existing food premises, you will need to register the business in your name with the Council. Food business registration application forms are included with this information pack.

Upon receipt of your application form and prescribed fee, the Council will issue a Certificate of Registration in the name of the purchaser.

An inspection of the premises will be carried out by the Environmental Health Officer a few weeks after you have been operating the business. This is to ensure compliance with the *Food Act 2003* and Food Standards Code.

NOTE: operating a food business without registration is an offence under the *Food Act 2003*

# Role of the Environmental Health Officer

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Your local Environmental Health Officer (EHO) plays many roles in food safety and other public health matters. They are an authorised officer under the Food Act and as a result have the right to enter your premises, at any reasonable time, for the purposes of the Food Act.

In regards to food businesses the EHO is responsible for routine inspections of your premises. Usually this will involve one inspection per year when your registration is up for renewal, plus any follow-up inspections to ensure all required works are completed.

Part of the EHO's duties involves food sampling. This occurs at the discretion of the State Department of Health and Human Services, and may involve food being purchased from your premises for microbiological or chemical testing by a laboratory.

Investigating food complaints and food poisoning outbreaks is also a requirement. This involves inspecting, gathering information, and may involve food sampling or seizure.

Food recalls are another area of responsibility. In the event that a food item has been recalled, the EHO may visit your premises to see if you stock that item, and ensure the item is removed from sale or is no longer available for consumption.

Most importantly, the EHO is an information source for food business proprietors. If you are unsure of requirements or practices that should be undertaken, a good place to start is by contacting the EHO to find out what is required.

# Design and construction requirements

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The design and construction of a food premises intended for commercial use must include the following:

- 1 An adequate supply of **potable water**;
- 2 An effective **sewage** and **waste water disposal** system;
- 3 Adequate size facilities for the storage of **garbage** and recyclable matter that keeps the garbage free from pests and animals and can easily be cleaned;
- 4 Sufficient natural or mechanical **ventilation** to effectively remove fumes, smoke, steam and vapours from the premises;
- 5 A **lighting** system that provides sufficient natural or artificial light for the activities conducted on the premises;
- 6 **Floors** must be able to be effectively cleaned, as well as unable to absorb grease, food particles or water. They must be laid so no ponding of water can occur, and be unable to provide harbourage of pests.  
**NOTE:** Concrete is not an impervious surface.
- 7 **Walls** and **ceilings** must be sealed to prevent the entry of dirt, dust and pests, be unable to absorb grease, food particles or water, and able to be easily and effectively cleaned.
- 8 **Hand washing** facilities must be a permanent fixture connected to a supply of warm running potable water, and **clearly designated for the sole purpose of washing hands**. They must be of a size that allows for easy and effective hand washing, and clearly designated for the sole purpose of washing hands, arms and face.
- 9 **Food contact surfaces** must be able to be easily and effectively cleaned and sanitised. They must be unable to absorb grease, food particles and water, and be made of material that will not contaminate food.
- 10 Adequate **storage facilities** for items that have the potential to be a source of contamination, including chemicals, personal belongings and clothing. These items must be located where there is no likelihood of contaminating food or food contact surfaces.

## Design and construction requirements – *continued*

- 11 **Toilets** must be available for the use of food handlers working for the food business.
- 12 **Food transport vehicles** must be designed and constructed to protect food during transport. The parts of the vehicle used to transport food must be constructed of suitable material to allow it to be easily and effectively cleaned.

This is a summary only – for full requirements see Chapter 3 of the  
Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code  
[www.foodstandards.gov.au/thecode/](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/thecode/)



# Food safety training

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It is a requirement under the Food Standards Code that all food businesses must ensure that their employees have adequate skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene matters.

There are two ways the Central Coast Council can assist you in achieving this requirement.

The Council has subscribed to an online Food Safety training program called 'I'm Alert'. This training program is free and can be found on the Central Coast Council website or at [www.centralcoast.imalert.com.au](http://www.centralcoast.imalert.com.au). This course will provide participants with a certificate at the end after completion of all the modules.

The Council also runs free food safety training each year to all food businesses and their staff within the municipal area. Food businesses will be notified when sessions are to be held and bookings are essential as places fill up fast.

For more information on food safety training please contact an Environmental Health Officer at the Council on 6429 8900 during business hours.

# Frequently asked questions

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## **What does the Central Coast Council do to ensure that food premises within the municipal area are safe and hygienic?**

Currently the Central Coast Council's Environmental Health Officers inspect all food premises on a regular basis. The frequencies of inspections are determined by an assessment carried out on each food premises to determine its perceived risk to the health of the public. In addition, the Council promotes the implementation of the I'm Alert food handler-training package to improve the standard of general food hygiene practices within the municipal area. The Council has also begun producing a quarterly Food Safety Newsletter to keep food premises informed of issues within the food industry.

## **Can an Environmental Health Officer inspect a food premises at any particular time?**

The *Food Act 2003* gives Environmental Health Officers the right to enter any food business or food transportation vehicle. In general, the Environmental Health Officer will try to ensure that inspections are carried out at a time that doesn't unreasonably interfere with your business operations. There may be times, however, when these inspections need to be carried out at inconvenient times.

## **Are food handlers required to wear gloves when handling foods?**

Yes, under certain circumstances. Food handlers must exercise care to avoid food becoming contaminated by avoiding unnecessary human contact by the use of:

- a) tongs or other suitable device; or
- b) disposable gloves approved for food handling.

In addition, a food handler must not carry out any of the following actions when handling foods:

- a) handle any food or ingredient or touch any equipment or surface used in the preparation of food without first washing hands;

## Frequently asked questions – *continued*

- b) apply his or her fingers to the mouth, eye, ear or nose during the manufacture of food, whether wearing gloves or not;
- c) use his or her breath to open a bag or wrapper;
- d) handle money, or other unwholesome objects, in a manner which could contaminate food; or
- e) wipe his or her hands upon clothing.

It must be remembered that all of the above items also relate to the wearing of gloves, as gloves can become contaminated like hands if used inappropriately. Accordingly, the Council endorses an approach to food handling whereby the use of gloves and tongs etc are combined with a regime of regular and thorough washing of hands.

### **What temperature should certain foods be stored at?**

Readily perishable foods such as milk or milk products, fish, meat, poultry, shellfish, raw eggs or other foods subject to rapid and progressive deterioration must be stored at a temperature of not more than 5°C or in the case of food sold in a heated state, at a temperature of not less than 60°C to protect that food from deterioration.

### **Do my salad rolls need to be stored in a fridge?**

Yes. Readily perishable foods such as milk and milk products (i.e. cheese), fish, meat, poultry, shellfish, raw eggs or other foods subject to rapid and progressive deterioration must be stored at a temperature of not more than 5°C. Accordingly, all salad rolls that contain one or more of these ingredients must be stored under refrigeration.

### **What type of thermometer should I use for my food business?**

All food businesses must have a temperature monitoring device (thermometer). This needs to be readily accessible and have the ability to accurately measure the temperature of potentially hazardous foods within +/- 1°C.

The Central Coast Council encourages people to buy a thermometer with a narrow temperature range, because these will provide greater accuracy at a cheaper price. This includes thermometers with a range of -50°C to 150°C.

Digital probe thermometers are cheap and easy to use when recording temperatures of refrigerators, freezers and Bain Maries. The Council does not encourage the use of dial/needle thermometers, as they may not be very accurate and could be misleading.

## Frequently asked questions – *continued*

### **Do I have to undertake training to operate a food premises?**

Under Food Safety Standards for Tasmania a food business must ensure that persons undertaking or supervising food handling operations have:

- a) skills in food safety and food hygiene matters; and
- b) knowledge of food safety and food hygiene matters, commensurate with their work activities.

Training is the best way to obtain these skills and knowledge. If you or your staff have not undertaken this kind of training or acquired these skills, the Environmental Health Officer will advise you on how to proceed.

# Temperature monitoring

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All food businesses must have a temperature monitoring device (thermometer). This needs to be readily accessible and have the ability to accurately measure the temperature of potentially hazardous foods within  $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

The Central Coast Council encourages people to buy a thermometer with a narrow temperature range, because these will provide greater accuracy at a cheaper price. This includes thermometers with a range of  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $150^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

Electronic thermometers will generally be required to be calibrated annually to maintain best performance. For more information on thermometer calibration contact the thermometer supplier.

It is recommended that food businesses monitor temperatures of all fridges and freezers on a daily basis. Included with this information pack are examples of temperature log sheets, for hot storage, refrigerated storage and freezer storage that could be used to record temperatures on a regular basis.

For more information on thermometers or recording temperatures please feel free to contact an Environmental Health Officer at the Council on 6429 8900 during office hours.

# Heated Food Temperature Record

Heating Appliance Details (eg. Bain Marie, Pie Heater) .....

Please check twice daily (preferably at the same time each day) and record eg.  
 (All readings are to be in degrees Celsius)

Morning 

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 Afternoon

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**Correct temperature: must be at or above 60 degrees Celsius**

# Food Refrigeration Temperature Record

Refrigeration Appliance Details (eg. Display fridge, coolroom) .....

Please check twice daily (preferably at the same time each day) and record eg.  
(All readings are to be in degrees Celsius)

Morning 

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 Afternoon


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**Correct temperature: must be at or below 5 degrees Celsius**

# Frozen Food Temperature Record

Freezer Appliance Details (eg. Chest freezer, upright freezer) .....

Please check twice daily (preferably at the same time each day) and record eg.  
(All readings are to be in degrees Celsius)

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Correct temperature: must be at or below -18 degrees Celsius





