

Proprietor Responsibility

It is important that the proprietor of a food business takes all reasonable precautions to fulfil their responsibility of providing safe food to the public.

The proprietor is required to regularly review their staff's skills and knowledge for the daily tasks they do in the workplace. Ultimately all proprietors and employees are responsible for making sure that the food they serve is safe for the public to eat. It is a legal requirement and part of the Food Safety Program for the business.

The following outlines the key areas where the proprietor of the business must take action. Many of these actions can be carried out by the Food Safety Supervisor. The proprietor and the Food Safety Supervisor need to discuss and agree on each person's roles and responsibilities.

Control of food safety hazards

Food safety hazards must be controlled at all stages of processing and handling from incoming goods to point of sale.

Registered and reputable suppliers

All food products must be purchased from registered and reputable suppliers.

Integrity of incoming stock

All incoming products must be assessed (visually for quality, labelling and condition of the packaging), temperature monitored and documented prior to acceptance, to ensure the safety of all stock.

Premises design and construction

The structural condition of the premises and equipment must be maintained so as not to compromise food safety.

Correct temperature storage

Potentially hazardous foods must be stored in safe conditions at specified temperatures to protect food safety.

Storage temperatures must be monitored and documented as part of the Food Safety Program.

Good food and personal hygiene practices

Staff must follow and monitor specified food and personal hygiene standards.

Compliance with the Food Standards Code

All food products sold must conform to the labeling and date coding requirements of the Food Standards Code.

Competent staff

All staff must be regularly assessed to ensure they are competent and have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their work role and food safety responsibilities.

Product recalls

Product recall procedures must be in accordance with the FSANZ (Food Standards Australia New Zealand) requirements and they must be instituted as appropriate.

Effective cleaning and sanitation

The premises and equipment must be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition through the implementation of a suitable cleaning regime or schedule.

Pest management

An effective pest control program must be implemented and maintained.

Protecting and responding to customers

The needs and expectations of customers must be responded to by promoting food safety and having in place effective complaint management procedures.

Program monitoring and continuous improvement

Continuous monitoring, review and evaluation of the Food Safety Program will ensure that the requirements and standards are met, and opportunities for improvement are identified.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Food Safety Supervisor

Every Class 1 and 2 food business needs to have a Food Safety Supervisor. This person must have the food safety skills and knowledge appropriate to the processes of your food business.

Sometimes the proprietor of a food business can also be the Food Safety Supervisor for that business. It can be any person from the business, providing they are able to meet the requirements as prescribed in the Food Act 1984.

The Food Safety Supervisor must have the ability and the authority to supervise all staff who handle food. They must also ensure that each employee who handles food has the skills and knowledge appropriate to the job they do.

Food Safety Program

The Food Safety Program is a document that describes each food process within your business and the steps required to ensure that the food that is sold is safe to eat. Potential problems for each process can be identified and sufficient controls can then be put in place in order to reduce, eliminate or prevent food safety risks.

It is the proprietor's responsibility to have a Food Safety Program and submit it to council prior to applying for Food Act 1984 registration.

The proprietor must ensure that the business operates in accordance with their Food Safety Program.

A Food Safety Program must be kept on the premises at all times. Adequate record keeping must be carried out as part of the Food Safety Program.

The Food Safety Program must be reviewed to ensure that it adequately reflects the operations of the business.

Council must be notified of any changes to the Food Safety Program or Food Safety Supervisor.

Failure to comply with these points is grounds to refuse or revoke registration.

Council regularly inspects premises to ensure they are meeting the above requirements.

Food Safety Program Records

As part of the Food Safety Program every business needs to keep some records. These are part of a good business practice.

They are to be shown to the Environmental Health Officer when they visit the premises and can also be used in court if there are food handling or food poisoning issues in the business.

Food Safety Program records also identify any problems with equipment in the business. They need to be kept on the premises for a period of two years.

Food Handler Training

Proprietors of a food business must ensure that all staff undertaking or supervising food handling operations have the skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene for the work they do. The skills and knowledge can be gained through various means of training including:

- on the job training/on site supervision
- formal training courses
- in-house training, hiring a consultant
- following basic food safety practices – as outlined in the Food Safety Program
- distributing food safety information to employees
- putting procedures in place that clarify responsibilities of food handlers

For more information about proprietor responsibility in a food business please contact your Environmental Health Officer at the Health and Wellbeing Branch on 9658 8831.

