

RECEIVING FOOD SAFELY

Food Act 2006

FSANZ Food Safety Standards

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Division 3 Section 5 of the Food Safety Standard 3.2.2 requires food businesses to take all practical measures to ensure they only receive food that is safe and suitable, including:

- » only accepting food that is protected from contamination
- » being able to identify the received food and its supplier
- » ensuring potentially hazardous food is under temperature control.

MAKING SURE FOOD ARRIVES UNCONTAMINATED

While it is not always possible to tell if the food coming into a business is contaminated, the food business must take practical steps to reduce the possibility of contamination.

The food business should take the following steps:

- » Source food from reputable suppliers.
- » Have specific, agreed instructions in place with the supplier to protect food from contamination.
- » Check that the delivery vehicle is clean, and hazardous substances have not been transported with the food, such as chemicals.
- » Check that food is delivered in appropriate packages or containers.
- » Check the 'Best Before' or 'Use By' date – food labelled 'Use By' cannot be sold after that date has passed and must be rejected.
- » Ensure someone from the food business is on hand to inspect the delivery vehicle and food, check the temperature of any potentially hazardous food, and place food directly into appropriate storage area, refrigerator or freezer.

Depending on the type of operation, it might be difficult to check every item of incoming food. An alternative might be that the business could inspect incoming food on a random basis.

If food delivered to a food business is contaminated or is reasonably suspected of being contaminated, it must be rejected and returned to the supplier or, with the agreement of the supplier, destroyed. The incident should then be recorded. For example, the food business receiving the food may suspect contamination if packaging around the food is split, torn, cracked or damaged. Food is contaminated if it contains insects, rodent droppings, glass, metal or other foreign matter, or if it has spoilt.

KNOWING THE FOOD'S SOURCE

A food business must be able to provide an Environmental Health Officer with contact details of all their food suppliers, and the type of food supplied with batch code details. This information is needed if supplied food is found to be unsafe or contaminated and has to be returned to the supplier or destroyed.

Many food items will be supplied labelled with the product name, name and address of the manufacturer, importer or packager of the food, and an identifying batch code.

For food that is supplied unpackaged and therefore unlabelled the food business must be able to prove:

- a) what the food is and
- b) where the food came from.

This can be done by using supplier invoices, or some other record of suppliers. A food business must not accept food unless both the food and the supplier can be identified.

ENSURING FOOD ARRIVES AT THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE

If potentially hazardous food is not kept under strict temperature control it could become unsafe due to the growth of foodborne pathogens or formation of toxins. When receiving potentially hazardous food, food businesses must take practical steps to ensure that it only accepts this potentially hazardous food if it is at a temperature of:

- » 5°C or below
- » 60°C or above
- » frozen and not partly thawed.

Use a probe thermometer to check the temperature of food received. Food delivered to a food business that does not meet these requirements must be rejected.

The only exception is where the food business transporting the food can demonstrate that the temperature of the food, having regard to the time taken to transport the food, will not adversely affect the microbiological safety of the food.

Arrange mutually acceptable compliant delivery temperatures with the business supplying and delivering the food. Formally agree that food will be delivered frozen, cold or hot, or within safe time limits.

Generally, where delivery times exceed two hours, the food must be carried in refrigerated vehicles that can maintain the food at a temperature of 5°C or below, or be kept frozen.

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If food is to be delivered within safe time limits, the food business must check the records of delivery departure and arrival times, to ensure that the delivery took place within the agreed time limit.

MORE INFORMATION

If you require further information, visit Council's website townsville.qld.gov.au, or call Council's Customer Service Centre on 13 48 10.