

FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISOR

Food Act 2006

WHAT IS A FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISOR?

A food safety supervisor takes a lead role in supervising food safety in a food business. A food safety supervisor must be 'reasonably available' at all times the business is operating and:

- » know how to recognise, prevent and alleviate food safety hazards of the food business
- » have skills and knowledge in matters relating to food safety relevant to the food business
- » have the authority to supervise and give directions about matters relating to food safety to persons who handle food in the food business.

IMPORTANCE OF FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISORS

A food safety supervisor adds an on-site level of protection for day-to-day food safety, as they are required to have experience and expertise relevant to the licensable food business, and be able to supervise and give directions about food safety to persons in the food business. Additionally, the presence of a food safety supervisor at the food business is an important point of contact for both the local government and persons who handle food in the food business.

DO I NEED A FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISOR?

Under the *Food Act 2006* (the Act), all licensable food businesses in Queensland must have a food safety supervisor. If a food business does not require a licence, it does not require a food safety supervisor. This includes the majority of non-profit organisations and other food businesses only selling packaged food, or low risk foods such as soft drinks or not potentially hazardous biscuits or cakes. The local government for the area where a food business is located can provide guidance on licensing requirements.

FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISOR TRAINING

It is recommended that a person successfully completes formal training to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge required. It is important to note that this level of training is a step above 'food handler training'.

A statement of attainment from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) may be issued to a person following successful completion of a training course, or successful demonstration to the RTO that the person has existing skills, experience or training to meet the national competencies. To find an RTO visit training.gov.au.

PREVIOUS TRAINING OR WORK EXPERIENCE

A person with a bachelor degree or food industry trade qualification that included food safety and hygiene subjects could be considered to meet the requirements for a food safety supervisor. Evidence of the subjects completed and course content may be required.

A person with substantial experience in the food industry who has acquired extensive skills and knowledge in matters relating to food safety and knows how to recognise, prevent and alleviate food safety hazards, may not need to complete the recommended competencies.

If concerned, the person or the food business licensee should contact their local government to discuss their situation.

MEANING OF 'REASONABLY AVAILABLE'

The Act requires a food safety supervisor to be 'reasonably available' to be contacted by both the local government and food handlers at the food business at all times that the food business is being carried on.

A food safety supervisor should be located on the premises or should be able to be contacted whenever food handling is being undertaken. There is no specific requirement to have one food safety supervisor for every store location, but a food safety supervisor must be reasonably available for each store.

When the premises is open and not preparing food, a food safety supervisor is not required. For example, a sporting club kitchen closes at 9pm but the club remains open until 11pm for entertainment activities. A food safety supervisor is not required for the period after 9pm even though the business is open.

NOMINATING A FOOD SAFETY SUPERVISOR

A food business licensee must notify Council of the name and contact details of their food safety supervisor using the *Food Safety Supervisor-new, amend, remove* form (no fee charged).

A new food business **must** notify Council of the food safety supervisor's details within 30 days of the issue of their licence.

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A licensee for an existing food business must, within 14 days, notify the local government:

- » of a change in a food safety supervisor's contact details
- » if a person stops being a food safety supervisor
- » of the name and contact details of a new food safety supervisor.

Failure to notify Council of this information may result in a fine being issued.

OTHER PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR FOOD SAFETY

The Act places obligations on food business licensees and food handlers in relation to the safe handling of food. Additionally, the food safety standards in Chapter 3 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code is available at foodstandards.gov.au/code) set out health and hygiene requirements for food businesses and food handlers.

A food business is required to ensure that all persons undertaking or supervising food handling have skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activities. For example, a chef that prepares and processes food will need high level skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene; however, a waiter or shop assistant who only handles packaged or ready-to-eat food may require a lower level of skills and knowledge. The skills and knowledge requirement is in addition to the requirement for a food business to have a food safety supervisor.

Townsville City Council has subscribed to an online **I'M ALERT Food Safety program** which enables food handlers to complete training for FREE, in their own time and at a location of their choosing, thereby reducing costs for the food business and improving productivity. It will also help protect your business as food handlers will have improved skills to help reduce food poisoning. This training does not provide the detailed knowledge required of a food safety supervisor.

MORE INFORMATION

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