

Washing and sanitising produce

If you are a primary processor of leafy vegetables and melons, you must ensure washing and sanitising processes work properly and do not make the food unsafe to eat.



Horticulture
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What does washing and sanitisation mean?

- Washing fresh produce removes any visible material such as dirt.
- Sanitisation is an additional process that reduces microorganisms on the surface of produce to a safe level, usually with a chemical (e.g. food grade bleach). Sanitisation must only be done after washing, because dirt can make sanitisers less effective.

What are the requirements?

Primary processors of leafy vegetables and melons must take all reasonable measures to ensure that washing produce removes all visible material (such as soil), and that the washing or sanitisation process does not make the leafy vegetables or melons unacceptable.

This means you must design and control your washing and sanitisation process so that your produce is effectively cleaned and is not contaminated by harmful bacteria, chemicals or physical hazards.

These requirements are under primary production and processing standards for [leafy vegetables](#) and [melons](#).

Getting it right – reducing your risk

Things you can do to ensure effective washing and sanitisation of produce include:

- Know what the best and most effective way to wash and sanitise your produce is, as it varies depending on the specific plant.
- Where chemical sanitisers are used, ensure you know, apply and maintain the appropriate concentrations and contact times.
- Auto-dosing for chemicals, with regular monitoring of water quality and sanitisers may help with correct washing and sanitising fresh produce.

Need more information?

- Contact your state/territory [food regulatory authority](#)
- [Primary Production and Processing Standards \(Chapter 4\)](#)
- [Fresh Produce Safety Centre – Guidelines for Fresh Produce Food Safety 2022](#)