Home-based food business

If you're a home-based food business, you need to meet the same food safety requirements as other food businesses—regardless of the size of your business or how often you sell food.

Am I a home-based food business?

Home-based food businesses use their home (or someone else's) to handle food for sale. This includes preparing food for local markets or school canteens, catering for events, B&Bs, farm-stay or childcare businesses and online food sales from home.

What are the requirements?

Home-based businesses must comply with relevant parts of the Food Standards Code, including:

- Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements
- Standard 3.2.3 Food Premises and Equipment
- Part 1.2 - Labelling and Other Information Requirements

Food safety officers can inspect home businesses to make sure these requirements are being met.

Getting started

- before you start your business, you must notify your local council
- if you change your business's name, location or food activities you need to tell your local council before these changes are made

Food safety skills & knowledge

- everyone in your business who handles food must know how to keep it safe to eat
- you or someone in your business may need formal training e.g. a certified food safety supervisor – check with your local council

Premises design

Your premises should be designed and fitted out to handle food safely and avoid contamination.

Make sure you have:

- a layout and enough space for people to work without contaminating food (e.g. to keep raw and cooked foods separate and to keep waste away from food)
- convenient hand wash basin/s with warm running water, soap and single-use towels – if you use this sink for other things (e.g. washing dishes or a laundry sink) you will need written approval from your local council
- fridges that are big enough and powerful enough to keep food at 5°C or colder (and frozen food frozen hard)
- enough storage to protect food and packaging
- floors, walls and benches that can be easily cleaned
- a supply of drinking-quality water and good light and ventilation
- a system to safely store and dispose of waste.

Check with your local council for advice and to make sure you are set up correctly.

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Top food safety tips for home-based businesses:

Prevent contamination

- protect food at all times during storage, processing, transport and display

- thoroughly wash and dry hands before handling food: use warm running water and soap – scrub wrists, palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under nails, and then dry hands using single-use towels

- do not handle food if you are ill

- keep raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods – e.g. use different cutting boards, store raw food below ready-to-eat food

- protect food from pets, children and visitors, sick people, waste, chemicals, pests and dirt

Cleaning and sanitising

- keep the premises clear of rubbish, food waste, dirt and grease

- keep food contact surfaces like benches, utensils and containers clean and sanitary

- clean before you sanitise

- sanitise using bleach, a commercial food-safe sanitiser or a dishwasher on longest hottest cycle

Food traceability

- keep records of your ingredients and suppliers, and businesses you've sold to

- if you are a food manufacturer, wholesale supplier or importer, have a written recall plan and follow it if a recall is needed

Safe food temperatures & processing

- potentially hazardous foods (like those containing meat, egg and dairy) need to be kept cold (at 5°C or colder) or kept hot (at 60°C or hotter) during receipt, storage, display (or hot holding) and transport

- prepare food quickly to minimise time out of the fridge (e.g. when making sandwiches)

- cook food to safe temperatures (e.g. 75°C for poultry and minced meat)

- cool cooked food quickly to store in the fridge (e.g. by dividing into smaller portions in the fridge) – within required timeframes

- check temperatures with a food thermometer

- know the critical limits for safety (e.g. acidity, water activity) for processes you use

More information

Safe Food Australia is a guide to the food safety standards in Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code. Home-based businesses are covered in Appendix 10.

Copies of the guide, some translated fact sheets and a full set of infoBite fact sheets is available at www.foodstandards.gov.au/safefood or by emailing information@foodstandards.gov.au.