

Safe food storage and display in food businesses

Information for food premises

Don't let your food turn nasty!

Food poisoning is a serious health problem. It can cause severe illness and even death.

Food poisoning can seriously damage the reputation of a business, damage the reputation of the food industry, and damage the jobs of many workers.

As a person who handles food – whether you are a kitchen hand, a food process worker, a shop assistant or a waiter – you have an important responsibility to handle food safely. So:

- protect other people from getting sick
- protect your reputation in the food industry
- protect your business, and
- protect your job.

Victorian and Australian food safety laws are designed to ensure that food that is sold is safe to eat and free of any contamination.

All Victorian businesses and organisations that make, display, transport or prepare food for sale must, depending on the nature of their activities, register with or notify their local council or, in some cases, be licensed by Primesafe or Dairy Food Safety Victoria.

Every business must also comply with the national Food Standards Code and Victorian food laws. This includes the following requirements that apply to certain classes of food premises:

Class 1 and 2

- Follow the business food safety program.
- Follow the advice given by the food safety supervisor, unless your premises is exempt.

Class 3

- Complete the required basic records about your food handling practices and keep them onsite.

Your council will advise you about the class of your food premises.

Everyone working in a food premises is encouraged to be trained in safe food handling. **Dofoodsafely**, a free online learning program, is a good place to start - go to <http://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au>

Store and display food safely

- ☑ Keep raw foods and ready-to-eat foods separate to avoid cross-contamination.
- ☑ Store food in clean, non-toxic, food storage containers; don't store food in opened cans.
- ☑ Make sure food storage containers have not been used to store things other than food, and wash and sanitise them before use. If the containers are not in good condition, throw them out, and don't re-use containers which are only meant to be used once.
- ☑ Cover food with tight fitting lids, foil or plastic film, to protect it from dust, insects and cross-contamination. Make sure food displayed on counters is wrapped or covered.
- ☑ Store food in areas specially designed for food storage, such as refrigerators, coolrooms, pantries and food storerooms. Never store food on the floor or on pallets.
- ☑ Never store food in areas containing chemicals, cleaning equipment, clothing or personal belongings.
- ☑ Remove and avoid using foods past their "use-by" dates, spoiled foods, or foods in damaged containers or packaging.
- ☑ Make sure food is thoroughly cooked, and that the centre of the cooked food has reached 75°C before being stored in a fridge, freezer or bain-marie.
- ☑ Avoid keeping high-risk food in the Temperature Danger Zone. Keep chilled foods cold at 5°C or colder, and hot food hot at 60°C, or hotter.
- ☑ Be trained in safe food handling.

Cross-contamination

It is very important to keep raw food separate from cooked and ready-to-eat food.

Raw food can contain bacteria, which causes food poisoning.

Cooked or ready-to-eat food in contact with raw food can be contaminated by bacteria from the raw food. This is called cross-contamination.

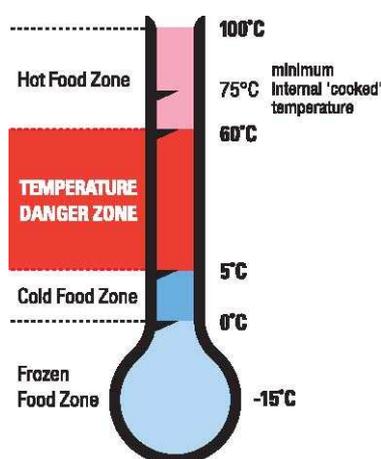
Raw food should always be stored below ready-to-eat or cooked food in refrigerators and display cabinets. This is so that the raw food cannot drip onto cooked food.

Temperature Danger Zone

Bacteria grow quickly in high-risk foods when kept at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C. This is called the Temperature Danger Zone.

Avoid keeping **high-risk food** in the Temperature Danger Zone. Keep chilled foods cold at 5°C or colder, and hot food hot at 60°C or hotter.

It is very important not to keep high-risk food in the Temperature Danger Zone longer than is absolutely necessary.



Cooking food to over 75°C kills most of the bacteria.

Storing and displaying cold food

Cold food must be kept at 5°C or colder. Frozen food must be kept frozen solid at minus 15°C or colder.

Cool rooms, refrigerators and freezers must have proper thermometers, and temperatures should be checked regularly.

Storing and displaying hot food

Bains-marie and other hot food holders are designed to keep hot food hot at 60°C or hotter. They are not intended for heating food. If used for heating food, the food will spend too long in the Temperature Danger Zone.

Make sure food is thoroughly cooked, and that the centre of the cooked food has reached 75°C before being stored in a bain-marie.

Preheat bains-marie before use and operate them on the highest temperature setting. Make sure the temperature of the food does not fall below 60°C.

Use a clean thermometer to check the temperature of the food. Do not over fill trays in bains-marie because the temperature of the food could fall below 60°C.

Tags and labels on food

Tags can carry bacteria. For cooked and ready-to-eat food, use tags or labels on the trays, and not on the food itself.

Do not pierce cooked or ready-to-eat food with tags or labels.

Packing and serving prepared food

Package food in clean, non-toxic, food storage containers which are strong enough for the job.

Wash and sanitise serving containers before using them.

Do not re-use containers that are only meant to be used once.

When serving food, make sure that all cutlery and crockery is clean and undamaged.

Wash any garnish before using it.

More information

A range of resources on safe food handling is available on the Department of Health Food Safety website. Go to www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety or telephone 1300 364 352.

Local councils can also provide advice about safe food handling.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand has resources on food handling standards on its website – go to www.foodstandards.gov.au.

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To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 364 352.

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