

FOOD SAFETY NEWSLETTER

IN FOCUS THIS EDITION:

- **New legislation** – single-use plastics
- **Food Recalls**
- **Meet Campylobacter** – food borne illness
- **Refrigeration** – operation considerations and checklist



Food Recalls

A comprehensive list is available via www.foodstandards.gov.au be aware and take action as needed. It is the responsibility of a food business to ensure safe and suitable food is used. If you are a manufacturing food business you must have a recall plan that meets the recall protocol. SA Health provide a guide for writing a plan at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au on the Food recall plan web page.

Food born illness – Have you met Campylobacter?

SA Health advise Campylobacter infection (campylobacteriosis) is a bacterial infection which most commonly causes gastroenteritis (also known as 'gastro') but may also cause illness affecting the entire body and is a mandatory notifiable disease. Infection is most commonly via contaminated food but can also be by other pathways such as person to person. Food businesses must ensure all food handlers have adequate food safety skills and knowledge of the requirements in Chapter 3 of the Australian New Zealand Food Standards applicable to the food activity being undertaken. Local infections rates have increased, and it is recommended a review of processes is undertaken if preparing/cooking poultry within food business. Further information is available on Council's food safety web page or at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

A quick reference bacteria poster is available as a free tool to promote awareness of why food safety is critical within your food business and is attached for your convenience.

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC RESTRICTIONS KEY FACTS:

- This legislation has progressed, and the South Australian state government has introduced laws to prohibit or restrict some single-use plastic products being sold, supplied, or distributed in the state.
- From 1 March 2021 restrictions will apply to single-use plastic straws, cutlery, and stirrers.
- There will be exemptions for single-use plastic straws.
- Brochures of retail and hospitality industries is attached for your convenience.

Refrigeration – Operation considerations

Is your Fridge Summer Safe? – Hume City Council Food News, Summer 2020-2021

During warm and hot days, refrigeration and freezer units have to work harder to ensure that your food and drink stays cold. Fridges and cool rooms need to keep food below 5°C and freezers need to keep food frozen solid. If the units are not properly maintained, they are more likely to fail. Ensure that these appliances are maintained and serviced regularly, are kept clean and are free of dust and ice build-up and are not overloaded with products. It is also important not to leave the doors open for extended periods, as this could cause the temperature to rise to an unsafe level. Replace your fridge seals if they are broken as they will allow cold air to escape – meaning the motor must work harder as well as costing you more money. Consider the following in your refrigeration operations.



Cleaning – Frequent cleaning of door seals, door handles, floor, walls, shelving, and ceiling is needed. Often the area in front of the fans in a cool room will build up with dirt and grime which will be blown around and can cross contaminate uncovered food and surfaces. A regular clean of hard to reach areas is needed in addition to the daily cleaning.



Handwashing – Do your staff wash their hands after touching food and equipment? Is anyone responsible for monitoring this simple action which is critical in preventing cross contamination? Officers watch food handlers during an inspection and watch the contact points from the food handler to food and food equipment and surfaces. Why not try this too and do a health check on the handwashing culture within your food business.

Lights - There must be adequate light to allow food handlers to easily determine if surfaces are clean. The light must have a cover or be shatterproof to prevent cross contamination if it breaks. Surprisingly inspectors come across blown light bulbs in cool rooms and staff tell officers these have not been working for a while. This is a non-compliance as food handlers must be able to easily observe hygiene standards, maintenance issues, food quality and stock rotation or use by dates. It is recommended the food business has a spare light bulb on hand in the event the light blows.

Next time someone is handling raw food and they go to the cool room to get another ingredient – did they wash their hands BEFORE they touch the door handle? Did they spread what ever was on their hands or did they keep their colleagues and customers safe?

Maintenance – Door seals, sliding door tracks, condition of surfaces (shelving, floor, ceiling, walls (etc), light fittings - main areas noted by inspectors which need regular attention.

Pest Control - What is behind, under or on top of your unit? Do you have a maintenance plan or cleaning plan for those annual or biannual jobs? This might include checking and replacing perished seals or cleaning air vents. Both these areas provide warmth, food and great “real estate” for cockroaches. If the areas around the equipment attract vermin and they find paradise, why would they leave? Pest control and planned maintenance for prevention is often easier and less costly than reactive actions due to infestations and customers complaints which may damage the food business reputation. If self-managing pest control a written plan and site map of measures is expected. If a pest contractor is used, then it is expected that the food business reads the reports and take the required actions to prevent pest attraction and harbourage.

Power Outage – What is your emergency plan for your cold PHF during a power outage? Is this documented for staff in the event you are on holidays? Plan what is needed to ensure food safety, business continuity and any insurance requirements. Waste management for bulk disposal to be considered so not to add pest issues to an already stressful situation.

Quarantine – Food recalls are a regular occurrence and may include Potentially Hazardous Food (PHF). Any food that is not safe or suitable must be removed in a manner that no-one can accidentally consume. If the food cannot be disposed of safely immediately a safe quarantine procedure and area must be in place to prevent harm and injury. This may mean a labelled quarantine area within a refrigeration unit. All staff must be aware of the procedure so accidents can not occur.

Receipt of PHF – A food business is responsible for receiving safe and suitable food. Procedures which check temperature on delivery, condition of item (eg package not damaged) and use by dates is an important critical control point.

Storage – How, where, when eg raw vs ready-to-eat (RTE), temperature control & monitoring, packed dates, use by dates for repacking, lids/covers on food and stock rotation. Raw food should be stored below RTE food. This includes but not limited to meat, seafood, eggs as spills, leaks and breakage of products can cross contaminate food that does not have any further kill steps e.g. salads. Boxes or containers must not be stored on the floor of a cool room or walk in freezer. These items are easily picked up and placed onto food preparation benches and can be a source for cross contamination. The floor should also be easily accessed for cleaning.



Suitability (Domestic equipment) –

Domestic units are not designed for commercial use. If using domestic equipment in a food business, monitoring of suitability is required. Monitoring is required as domestic units may not cope with frequent opening and closing over service periods, higher volumes of stock, cooling of hot food for example. Commercial grade equipment maybe needed for the food activity you are undertaking.



Temperature Control – A probe thermometer must be used to gain an accurate core temperature of potentially hazardous food (PHF). Digital displays are a guide of the air temperature within the unit. The core temperature of PHF can fluctuate due to various factors such as frequent door opening / closing, length of time food is in refrigeration, stock levels within the unit, air flow capabilities just to name a few.

Does your temperature control system include the use of a probe thermometer? Is it accurate? Do relevant staff know how to use it correctly to gain core temperature of food (not air temp)? Does your procedure include the written record of the temperature recorded? If your answer is no to any of these questions, please review your procedure and discuss with your local Environmental Health Officer if further information is needed.

Training in food safety – Do you or your food handlers (including wait staff) have adequate food safety skills and knowledge for your food business? Have they completed any training or would a refresher in requirements be helpful? See your Council's website for training information. Also if you don't already have a copy, print or request a printed copy of the City of Mount Gambier Food Business Information Guide for one stop shop information at www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au

The following tables are **examples** of information that could be included in the maintenance / operation work plan.

Refrigeration Item / Action	Who Responsible for procedure / monitoring?
Cleaning	
Handwashing	
Lights	
Maintenance / Suitability	
Pest Control	
Power Outage Emergency Plan	
Quarantine	
Receipt of potentially hazardous food (PHF)	
Storage	
Temperature Control	
Training in food safety	

Cool Room Check List

Item	Maintenance	Cleaning
Light - working		
Door Seal – no cracks or deterioration		
Shelving – smooth and impervious (in good repair)		
Floor – in good repair?		
Wall and any joins – smooth and impervious (in good repair)		
Ceiling & fan area – smooth and impervious (in good repair)		
Food must be covered		
Stock control including date system		
Storage order – raw food (including eggs) below ready to eat food		
Quarantine area – labelled / staff awareness		
No items to be stored on floor		
Cooling area		
Is cool room on maintenance plan?		
Is cool room on cleaning roster?		
Door handles (clean touch points)		

Fridge Check List

Item	Maintenance	Cleaning
Light - working		
Door Seals– clean with no cracks or deterioration		
Sliding door tracks – clean from food debris		
Shelving – smooth and impervious in good repair (no cracking or rust)		
Internal surfaces – smooth and impervious (in good repair)		
Fan area – In good repair?		
Food must be covered		
Stock control including date system		
Storage order – containers of raw food (including eggs) below ready to eat food		
Quarantine area		
Is fridge on maintenance plan?		
Is fridge on cleaning roster?		
Door handles (clean touch points)		

Freezer Check List

Item	Maintenance	Cleaning
Door/Lid Seals– clean with no cracks or deterioration		
Sliding door tracks (if applicable) – clean from food debris		
Shelving/baskets – smooth and impervious in good repair (no cracked plastic or rust)		
Internal surfaces – clean, smooth and impervious and in good repair		
Fan area (if applicable) – In good repair?		
Food must be covered and labelled		
Stock control including date system		
Is freezer on maintenance plan?		
Is freezer on cleaning roster?		
Handles (clean touch points daily)		

Further information

City of Mount Gambier has published two guides to assist food businesses:

- Food Business Construction Guide
- Food business Information Guide

An electronic version is available at www.mountgambier.sa.gov.au on the food safety web page or a printed copy can be collected from 10 Watson Drive, Mount Gambier. In addition each Council has forms and resources on their website or State information at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

All current COVID requirements must be followed and are outlined at www.sa.gov.au

