

DECEMBER 2021

FOOD SAFETY NEWSLETTER



COVID-19 and Your Workplace

With borders opening and the movement of people increasing, it is a timely reminder that COVID-19 is not spread through food however, this doesn't mean your food business hasn't already or may in the future be, impacted by COVID-19 cases.

The 'COVID-19 and Your Workplace' guidelines have been developed to provide general assistance to food businesses. It provides guidance around planning and mitigating risks in your workplace for your employees, your business and supply chain. A copy can be downloaded from the Food South Australia website;

www.foodsouthaustralia.com.au/covid-19/covid-19-and-your-workplace/

For other general COVID-19 questions, contact the SA COVID-19 Information Line on 1800 253 787 and stay up to date by visiting www.covid-19.sa.gov.au



TRAINING REMINDER

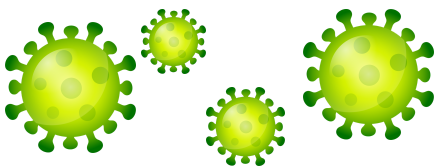
Free online food safety training available via;

'I'm Alert'

mountgambier.imalert.com.au

'Do Food Safely'

dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au



Common Wear & Tear to Look Out For

There are common pieces of equipment in food premises which are touched hundreds of times a week, often without thought for the ongoing wear and tear or required maintenance and repairs. Here are just a few which are frequently seen by Environmental Health Officers during routine food safety inspection:

Split and rusty refrigeration racks

Inside many refrigeration and freezer units are plastic coated metal racks. Wear and tear over time often leads to the plastic becoming worn and the coating can crack and lead to rust forming. Cracked and rusty racks cannot be effectively cleaned and can pose a contamination risk. This includes the risk of rust and plastic falling into stored food products.



Monitoring of racks should be listed on your maintenance schedule and speak with your food service or refrigeration equipment supplier once wear and tear is observed.



Cracked and rusty racks cannot be effectively cleaned and can pose a contamination risk.

Probe thermometers – damaged or flat batteries

If you store, transport, prepare, cook or sell potentially hazardous food, you MUST have a working thermometer available at all times. Therefore, batteries must be maintained and replaced when they become flat. Nothing tells the inspection officer that your thermometer is not being used as it should, than finding a thermometer with flat batteries!

Thermometers can also become damaged over time, such as cracked from being dropped or damaged wiring. Damaged thermometers become difficult to clean and sanitise, posing a contamination risk and should be replaced.



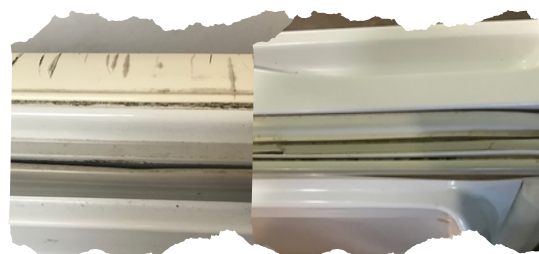
Split refrigerator/freezer door and lid seals

One of the most touched pieces of equipment in a kitchen would have to be the refrigerator and freezer, resulting in doors and lids being opened and closed hundreds of times throughout a week. Common wear and tear on these items are the splitting or cracking of the seals or as equipment ages, seals become stiff.

Once seals become damaged or aged, they become difficult to adequately clean and can impact on the efficiency of the equipment. Dirty seals are a contamination risk to food handlers' clean hands and inefficient equipment can be additional running costs or loss of food due to incorrect storage temperatures. Once identified, seals must be replaced in a timely manner.



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Worn and damaged chopping boards

Given that the intended use for chopping boards is direct contact with food during preparation, once the board becomes stained or has a rough surface which cannot be effectively cleaned or sanitised, the board must be disposed of and replaced. A tell-tale sign that it's time to upgrade will be when the board remains discoloured after cleaning and sanitising or maybe it has been accidentally melted by something hot.



Once the board becomes stained or has a rough surface which cannot be effectively cleaned or sanitised, the board must be disposed of and replaced.

Damaged fly screens



As the weather heats up and the flies come out, it's a good time to review the condition of fly screen doors and windows of your premises. The screen can become loose from the frame or large holes may present, allowing easy access into your kitchen for flies and other pests.



It is recommended that the monitoring of the condition of fly screen doors and windows should be included in your pest management plan for the business. The cleanliness of these items is also often overlooked.



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Planning a New Kitchen or Renovation?

If you are considering altering your premises, extending the layout or designing a new premise, where food is prepared or stored, these changes must comply with relevant legislation and food safety standards.

Environmental Health Officers at your local council are available to talk with and can review plans early in the planning stages. This could also involve a meeting on-site to talk through ideas.

If advice is not sought prior to work being undertaken and the work is not compliant, you may be required to rectify this resulting in additional costs to your business.

