

foodmatters

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in Bassendean

Town of Bassendean food safety newsletter

Fresh cut fruit and vegetables

Whole fruit and vegetables are safe and nutritious, however, when cut, there is a risk of contamination from harmful bacteria present on the surface of the fruit, to be transferred onto the flesh of the fruit.

When handling fruit and vegetables that are to be eaten raw, such as fruit platters, fruit salad, vegetable sticks platters and salads, it is important to ensure that:

- fruit and vegetables are kept separate from other raw foods (such as meat, chicken, fish and eggs) to avoid cross contamination
- a clean and sanitised chopping board and knife are used (a colour-coded chopping board may also be appropriate)
- fruit, vegetables and salad ingredients are thoroughly washed in clean water
- the skin, peel or outer leaves of the fruit and vegetables are removed (where possible)
- any bruised or damaged parts are removed
- the cut fruit and vegetables are served on the day they are prepared and stored covered in the fridge until serving.



Managing food allergen risk

Food allergies can be life threatening, which is why systems are used to protect allergic consumers from food allergens.

Allergen risks can be managed by:

- ensuring all staff understand food allergen risk management and communication
- implementing an effective allergen management strategy
- checking and identifying allergens that are present in packaged and/or processed products, such as sauces, dressings, sausages, marinades etc. Allergens are listed in **bold print** in the ingredients list on the label, so they stand out easily.
- listening to customers and taking their requests seriously
- accurately communicating allergen requests between front and back of house staff
- providing clear and accurate allergen information to consumers.



Pest control in food businesses

Common pests that may be encountered in a food premises include rats, mice, cockroaches, flies and ants. These pests can carry bacteria and viruses and may contaminate food and food contact surfaces.



Like all living things, pests need food and water to survive. As many pests are most active at night, they are able to hide during the day and come out for food once the food premises closes.

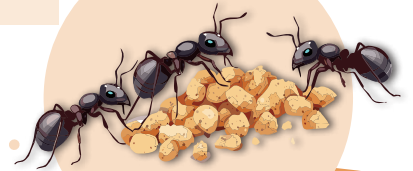
Places where pests may hide include:

- under and behind electrical, heating and cooking appliances
- under washing and hand washing facilities
- under and in boxes, packaging and food storage containers
- inside wall cavities
- in cracks and crevices
- behind equipment
- in any disused equipment being stored in the premises.

The *Food Standards Code* requires food businesses to take all practicable measures to prevent pests entering the food premises and to eradicate and prevent the harborage of pests on the food premises.

Practicable measures to achieve this requirement include:

- sealing all holes, gaps and cracks in walls and ceilings
- installing and maintaining flyscreens to windows and door openings
- keeping doors closed when not in use
- installing weather strips at the base of doors
- regularly checks for signs of pests
- maintaining the food premises and equipment in a clean condition
- keeping food covered in sealed containers
- storing food, equipment and food containers above the floor
- removing rubbish regularly and making sure bin storage areas are clean and tidy
- removing unused equipment and fixtures from the premises
- implementing a suitable pest control program which may also include the services of a licensed pest controller.



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Reminder!

Food Standards Code 3.2.2A requirements

Recent changes to the Food Standards Code included the introduction of three mandatory safety management tools for those food businesses that handle and serve unpackaged, ready-to-eat food which require temperature control.

These management tools came into effect on 8 December 2023, and include:

- appointing a Food Safety Supervisor
- Food Handler training
- being able to show food is safe or keeping records.

Standard 3.2.2A classifies food businesses into two categories and specifies which safety management tools each category must implement.

- **Category one** (higher risk) are required to implement **all three** management tools.
- **Category two** must have a Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) and trained food handlers.

Category one

Food business that is a caterer or food service that processes unpackaged potentially hazardous food into a food that is a potentially hazardous food and ready-to-eat.



restaurants and cafes



bakeries



fast food outlets



mobile food vans



hospitals and aged care



childcare and school canteens

Category two

Food business that offers for retail sale potentially hazardous food that is ready-to-eat, where that food:

- was received unpackaged or was unpackaged after receipt; and
- was not made or processed (other than slicing, weighing, repacking, reheating or hot-holding) by the food business.



delis



some service stations



some market stalls



seafood retailers



some supermarkets



some butchers

Food Safety Supervisor (FSS)

BOTH CATEGORY ONE AND TWO BUSINESSES must appoint a certified Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) before handling unpackaged potentially hazardous foods that are ready to eat. The FSS should oversee food handling and be involved in the day-to-day food handling operations of the food business. They must be 'reasonably available' as a point of contact for food handlers and authorised officers. It is not considered reasonable for a business to appoint someone as a FSS who does not regularly handle food as part of their normal duties or is never onsite at a food business.

Please note that enforcement action will be taken against any food businesses that has not appointed a Food Safety Supervisor.

Food Handler Training

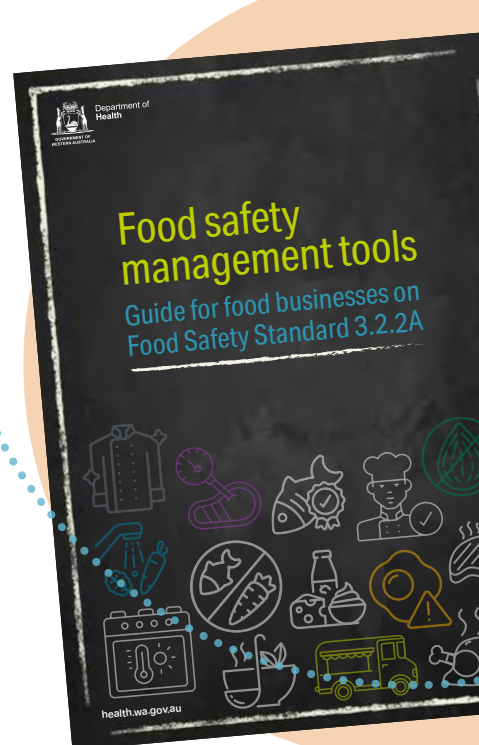
BOTH CATEGORY ONE AND TWO BUSINESSES must ensure their food handlers have appropriate skills and knowledge in food safety and hygiene. This can be achieved by using the I'm ALERT food handler training program which is available on the Town of Bassendean website (<https://www.bassendean.wa.gov.au/your-town/about-bassendean/food-safety.aspx>).

Show food is safe or keeping records

CATEGORY ONE FOOD BUSINESSES that undertake higher risk food handling, need to be able to demonstrate safe food practices by actively monitoring and managing key food safety risks related to temperature control, food processing and cleaning and sanitising.

Keeping records is one way that food businesses can demonstrate they are managing food safety risks. Another method may be to develop written instructions or procedures which all staff need to adhere to. Businesses must be able to show they are monitoring and managing:

- food receipt
- food storage
- food display
- food transport
- pathogen reduction
- food cooling
- food reheating
- processing time
- cleaning and sanitising.



Cleaning and sanitising of blenders and mixers

Several food-borne illness outbreaks, nationally and locally, were historically linked to the inadequate cleaning and sanitising of equipment used to process food. Failure to properly clean food residue off equipment poses a significant food safety risk as it can lead to the growth and proliferation of harmful bacteria and pathogens.

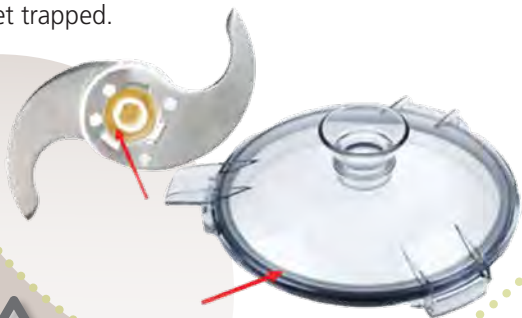
Residue from food can provide a perfect environment for microorganisms like *salmonella*, *listeria* and *E. coli* to thrive. If these bacteria are not effectively removed through proper cleaning and sanitising, they can contaminate subsequent batches of food.

When food equipment and contact surfaces are not cleaned properly, biofilms can develop, leading to persistent contamination and the potential for food-borne illnesses. Biofilms are communities of microorganisms that adhere to surfaces and produce a protective matrix, making them resistant to conventional cleaning and sanitising methods. Therefore, it is important that food equipment and contact surfaces are cleaned and sanitised properly after each use to prevent biofilm formation.

Two components of commercial blenders and mixers require special attention to ensure they are adequately cleaned and sanitised:

1. seals/gaskets; and
2. removable blade and mixer attachments.

These components typically have small crevices and tight spaces where food particles and liquid can get trapped.



Cleaning and sanitising of seals, removable blade and mixer attachments

All equipment that comes in contact with food must be cleaned and sanitised. This is a 4-step process that removes food waste, dirt, grease and destroys food-borne disease pathogens.

Step 1 – Preparation

- Refer to the equipment manual or contact the manufacturer for cleaning and sanitising instructions.
- Some equipment needs to be dismantled to enable proper cleaning and sanitation and **cannot** be effectively cleaned by rinsing and wiping over with cloth without being disassembled first.
- If the equipment design allows for the seals to be removed, and removable blades and mixer attachments to be deconstructed for the ease of cleaning, it is important that this is undertaken.
- Remove loose dirt and food particles.
- Rinse with warm, potable water.

Step 2 – Cleaning

- Wash with hot water (60°C) and detergent.
- Where a heavy build-up of residue is visible, soaking, and scrubbing may be required.
- Rinse with clean potable water.

Step 3 – Sanitising (pathogen kill step)

- Soak in very hot, clean, potable water (75°C) for at least 2 minutes.
- Apply sanitiser as directed on the label.

Step 4 – Air drying

- Leave equipment to air dry. The most hygienic way to dry equipment is on a clean draining rack.

Where a component of the equipment has deteriorated to a condition that it can no longer be adequately cleaned and sanitised, a part replacement will be required.

Poorly designed equipment that does not allow for adequate cleaning and sanitising might not be suitable for use in a commercial food business.

Recent prosecutions in Western Australia

A fruit and vegetable store in the City of Rockingham was fined \$40,000 plus court costs of \$2,600 for non-compliances relating to selling unsuitable food, food past its use-by-date, selling incorrectly labelled food, not storing food under temperature control, not maintaining the premises and equipment to a standard of cleanliness.

A food business in the City of Canning was fined \$160,000 plus court costs of \$2,745 for a number of non-compliances relating to selling food past the use-by-date, handwashing requirements, cleanliness of the premises and equipment, maintenance of equipment, pest control and correct storage of food.

A food business in the Shire of Gingin was fined \$5,700 for failing to appoint a Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) in accordance with Standard 3.2.2A.

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