

Food Matters in Bassendean

Town of Bassendean food safety newsletter



TOWN OF
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Note from the editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this edition of Food Matters in Bassendean.

In this issue we look at skills and knowledge requirements and the risks associated with food allergens.

If you have any questions that you would like addressed in future newsletters, please call the Town's Health section on (08) 9377 8000 or email: mail@bassendean.wa.gov.au



What are we finding on our inspections?

Skills and knowledge

On a routine inspection, the Town's Health Officers watch how staff work to make sure they are using correct food safety techniques. Officers will also ask questions about processes or tasks to see if the staff member knows how to do it correctly.

The officers are assessing if the staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge required to handle food safely as they carry out their duties.

Training

From time to time, we find some businesses that don't meet this requirement and will recommend a training plan be put in place. Regular training and discussions are important to reinforce these skills and to make sure your staff are aware of the most up to date food safety information.

What do 'skills' and 'knowledge' mean for your business?

Having **skills** means that your staff and their supervisors are able to do their work in ways that ensure that your business produces safe food.

Having **knowledge** means your staff and their supervisors know about issues associated with food safety and safe food handling practices that are relevant to your business and the jobs they do for you.



[continued over >>>](#)

Skills and knowledge (continued)

Case study

Here is an example of a food handling scenario and a list of the skills and knowledge that a staff member requires to undertake the task safely.

A food handler in a shop prepares, stuffs and cooks whole chickens. The staff member who does this work must have appropriate skills and knowledge to make sure that the chicken is prepared safely for sale.

The skills and knowledge are:

- **knowing** that raw chickens are likely to be contaminated with dangerous bacteria and that eating undercooked chicken can cause food poisoning;
- **knowing** the cooking time and temperature needed to make sure the chicken and the stuffing are thoroughly cooked;
- **the skill** needed to check the chicken to make sure it is thoroughly cooked;
- **knowing** the correct storage temperatures for both raw and cooked chickens;
- **the skills** needed to make sure that equipment is set at the right temperature;
- **knowing** that hands, gloves or the equipment used to handle raw chickens can contaminate cooked chickens;
- **the skill** to wash hands and equipment in ways that reduce the potential for contamination;
- **knowing** about other things that could contaminate the cooked chickens, such as dirty clothes or dirty work benches; and
- **the skills** needed to keep the work area clean.



How do I make sure my staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge?

There are many things you can do to ensure that your staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge they require to do their work.

Some examples are:

- 'in house' training by other staff or the owner of the business;
- giving staff food safety and food hygiene information for them to read;
- sending staff to food safety courses run by other people;
- hiring a consultant to run a course for the staff of the business; and
- recruiting staff with formal industry based training qualifications.

Businesses can choose the approach that best suits their business. The Town of Bassendean provides access to a free online food safety training program called I'M ALERT.

The programme is accessible at
www.bassendean.imalert.com.au

www.bassendean.imalert.com.au to conduct the training now.'"/>

Food allergies creating safer food choices

When someone has a food allergy, eating the smallest amount of food can be life-threatening. So, if you serve food to customers who have informed you that they have a food allergy you must ensure that you provide them with accurate information so they can make an informed choice about the level of risk.

Attending to a customer's food allergy request is legally required under the *Food Act 2008 (WA)*. It can help build customer loyalty and be good for business. Consumers have a legal right to receive, on request, written or verbal information on allergen content when buying takeaway foods or eating out.

Standard 1.2.3 of the Code specifies that the presence of certain substances in food (listed below), must be declared when present as an ingredient; or an ingredient of a compound ingredient; or a food additive or component of a food additive; or a processing aid or component of a processing aid.

 More information about the Code is available at
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx>



Remember!

Even the smallest trace amount of certain allergenic foods may trigger a severe reaction in the most sensitive people.

Which foods can cause a problem?

Foods that most frequently cause allergic reactions include those listed below, and more than 90% of serious reactions are caused by these foods. These must be declared. Cereals containing gluten and added sulphites must also be declared.

- **Crustaceans** (shellfish) and their products.
- **Egg** and egg products.
- **Milk** and milk products.
- **Peanuts** and peanut products.
- **Sesame seeds** and sesame seed products.
- **Soybean** and soybean products.
- **Fish** and fish products, except for isinglass derived from swim bladders (clarifying agent in beer and wine).
- **Tree nuts** and tree nut products other than coconut from the fruit of the palm *Cocos nucifera*.
- **Cereals** containing gluten and their products, namely, wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt and their hybridised strains (other than where these substances are present in beer and spirits described in Standards 2.7.2 and 2.7.5 of the Code).
- **Added sulphites** in concentrations of 10 mg/kg or more.

Know which allergens are present in your food

If you prepare food or cook a dish to order, you should be able to identify what has gone into it. Use the recipe, ingredient labels and information provided by your suppliers to understand what allergens are present and what allergens may be present.

Remember even the smallest trace amount of certain allergenic foods may trigger a severe reaction in the most sensitive people. So do what is manageable to reduce the risk of trace amounts being present from cross-contamination from food handlers, food surfaces, contact with other foods, utensils and equipment used for other dishes.



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On the spot fines

Recently, separate food business's within the Town were issued infringement notices.

One premises received a single infringement notice whilst a second received two, totalling \$500 for failing to comply with the *Food Act 2008 (WA)*.

The Town is taking a firmer stance with food premises that demonstrate poor food handling skills and practices. It should be noted that the offences carried a maximum penalty ranging from \$50,000 to \$250 000 via prosecution in the courts.

Infringement Notices are an efficient mechanism for dealing with some offences. The Town will undertake prosecutions for serious offences, where Infringement Notices have previously been issued or after repeated poor performance.

i You can avoid being issued an infringement by ensuring your food business complies with all requirements of the *Food Act 2008 (WA)*.

It is recommended businesses review their past inspection reports to ensure they are adequately addressing any non-compliances.



Recent prosecutions in WA Department of Health website

In September 2014 there were at least two prosecutions of food premises through the courts.

These were:

- A bakery in the City of Swan—Failure to comply with various Standards including those relating to pests, cleaning and provision of hand washing consumables. Fine and costs of \$76,590.
- A food service business in the City of Joondalup—Failure to comply with various Standards including those relating to pests, cleaning and maintaining potentially hazardous foods under temperature control. Fine and costs of \$42,491.



For more information on recent prosecutions visit the list of offenders available at www.public.health.wa.gov.au (can be found under Environmental health, food, water and hazards > Food > Consumers > Publication of names of offenders)