



Edition 4

Food Safety Insights Newsletter

Welcome!

Welcome to the fourth edition of the City's *Food Safety Insights* newsletter.

The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate food safety matters to food businesses and food handlers. In this edition, we focus on key food safety topics including: food safety during rising costs, date marking 101, how to correctly check temperatures, and cooling cooked food safely.

If you have any questions or feedback, contact Health Services at the City of Armadale on 9394 5000 or info@armadale.wa.gov.au

Future Newsletters

If your food business would like to receive future *Food Safety Insights* newsletter electronically please email info@armadale.wa.gov.au

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

Food safety during rising costs

The City has recently observed an increase in food safety issues during routine inspections and complaint investigations. While every business is different, this trend appears to coincide with increases in operating costs across the food industry.

Rising expenses such as food, utilities, rent and wages can place significant pressure on businesses. In some cases, this may lead to practices such as reducing staffing levels, delaying maintenance, keeping stock longer than intended or reducing the resources available for cleaning and food safety management.

While the City acknowledges the operational pressures faced by food businesses, compliance with food safety requirements must be maintained at all times. Poor food handling, inadequate cleaning and sanitising, incorrect storage or extended storage times can significantly increase the risk of foodborne illness.

Failure to comply with these requirements may also result in enforcement action, including the issuing of infringement notices or prosecution, which can have far greater financial and operational consequences.

Simple measures such as effective date marking, regular cleaning, maintaining temperature control and ensuring adequate staffing and supervision can make a significant difference in reducing food safety risks.



Tip:

It is better to operate a smaller, well-managed food business that can consistently maintain safe food handling, storage and cleaning practices, rather than operating beyond the capacity of available staff or food safety systems.

Date marking 101

Date marking helps food businesses identify how long food can be stored safely and supports the maintenance of food quality and safety.

Food that is prepared onsite, opened, or repackaged should be clearly labelled with a preparation date or opened date and a discard date.

Clear date marking helps staff identify which food should be used first and prevents food being kept for too long increasing the risk of food spoilage and foodborne illness.

Always follow manufacturer's storage instructions and as a general guide, unpackaged potentially hazardous RTE foods should not be kept for more than five days. Foods made with raw or lightly cooked eggs should be used within 24 hours.

Regardless of the manufacturer's storage instructions or date marking, you must always assess the condition of the food before preparing or selling it. If the food shows signs of deterioration, spoilage or contamination, it must not be used or sold, even if it is within its recommended storage period, best before date or use-by date.



Tip:

Use labels, stickers or colour-coded systems so staff can quickly identify the correct dates.

What should be labelled



Cooked/prepared ready-to-eat (RTE) foods stored for later use



Any opened food products in storage (this includes dry food storage and cold food storage)



Prepared salads, sauces or cooked meats



Know the safe zone, check before you serve

Many food businesses rely on the digital display on fridges, bain-maries or display warmers.

However, these displays only show the temperature of the unit and the air circulating, not the actual temperature of the food inside the unit.

To ensure food is being stored and/or displayed at the correct temperatures, you must use a probe thermometer to measure the temperature of the food itself.

When taking a temperature:



1. Clean and sanitise the probe before use



2. Insert the probe into the centre or thickest part of the food



3. Wait for the reading to stabilise



4. Record the temperature on your temperature records sheet



5. Clean and sanitise the probe before testing other food

Food businesses that handle potentially hazardous food must have a probe thermometer accurate to ± 1 °C. The thermometer must be calibrated on a regular basis to ensure it is accurate.



Tip:

Always have more than one probe thermometer available, just in case!

Have you changed your food business?

Did you know that when you change the name of your food business, its location or the food handling activities being undertaken, you are required, under the Food Standards Code, to notify the City?

Changes to your phone number, email, or any of your personal details, also need to be provided to the City in writing.

Cooling cooked food safely

Improper cooling is a common cause of foodborne illness.

Cooked potentially hazardous food must be cooled using the two-stage cooling process.



60°C - 21°C

within 2 hours

21°C - 5°C

within a further 4 hours

If food is not cooled within the required timeframes, it must be discarded.

Reheating is only effective as part of a safe cook – cool – reheat process where food has been cooled and stored correctly.

Improperly cooled food cannot be made safe by reheating, as harmful bacteria may already have formed and are not destroyed by heat.

Tips for faster cooling:

- ✓ Divide food into smaller portions
- ✓ The cooling process starts at 60°C
- ✓ Use shallow containers
- ✓ Use metal containers instead of plastic
- ✓ Stir soups, sauces or gravies regularly
- ✓ Use blast chillers if available

Always check cooling temperatures with a probe thermometer.

It's that time of the year again!

Annual invoices have been issued for the 26/27 financial year. Please pay your annual food business fee by the due date indicated on the invoice, to ensure your registration remains valid.

We recommend making payment on the City's website. Visit www.armadale.wa.gov.au/payments and keep your reference number handy.