Edition 3

Food Safety Insights
Newsletter

Welcome!

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

In this edition, we focus on key food safety topics including: food storage essentials, proving food is safe, pets in the business and E.coli risks.

The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate food safety matters to food businesses and food handlers. 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

Would you prefer to receive future editions of the *Food Safety Insights* newsletter by email?

If yes, please email **info@armadale.wa.gov.au** and let Health Services know.

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

Food storage essentials

Effective food storage is critical to food safety, freshness, and regulatory compliance.

BASIC STORAGE

Temperature control	✔ **Keep cold food cold (<5°C)** With warmer weather, fridges and cool rooms can struggle. Check temperatures regularly. ✔ **Keep frozen food frozen (-18°C or below)** ✔ **Keep hot food hot (≥60°C)**
Separation	✔ Store raw and ready-to-eat foods separately, with raw meats covered and stored below other foods to prevent contamination.
Dry storage	✔ Keep dry goods in cool, dry areas away from heat and direct sunlight.
After opening	✔ Follow manufacturer instructions for shelf life and storage once opened.
Stock rotation	✔ Use a FIFO (First In, First Out) system to ensure older stock is used first.

USE-BY-DATE vs BEST-BEFORE-DATE

Use-by date	✔ This indicates when food must be consumed for safety reasons. After this date, food should not be eaten. Common on perishable foods like dairy, meat, and pre-packaged salads.
Best-before date	✔ This refers to quality rather than safety. Food may still be safe to eat after the best-before date but might have diminished taste or texture. It is found on long-life products such as pasta, canned goods, and snacks.

Pets and food businesses

Food businesses must follow strict guidelines to ensure animals do not compromise food safety.

Which animals are allowed?

✓ Assistance animals (such as guide dogs) must be allowed in customer-accessible areas but are not permitted in kitchens or food preparation spaces.

✓ Pet dogs may be permitted in outdoor dining areas, but only if the space is not enclosed. Business owners can set their own rules, such as requiring dogs to remain on a leash.

✓ Live seafood, fish, and shellfish are the only animals allowed in food handling areas.

Rules for home-based food businesses

The same regulations apply to home-based food businesses. Pets (except fish) must not enter food handling areas such as kitchens or storage spaces. Businesses can prevent contamination by:

✓ Installing physical barriers (e.g., self-closing doors or child safety gates).

✓ Storing food in secure cupboards or rooms.

✓ Ensuring pets are not present in vehicles used for food transport.

Under the microscope – E.coli

E.coli (Escherichia coli) is a common bacterium. Some strains are harmless, while others such as STEC (Shigatoxigenic E.coli), can contaminate food and cause serious illness.

STEC can spread via animal faeces and can contaminating soil, water, and food. It causes gastroenteritis (diarrhoea, abdominal cramps, nausea, and vomiting) with symptoms typically start 2-10 days after exposure and lasting up to 10 days. About 10% of cases may develop serious, life-threatening kidney complications.

Avoid this nasty pathogen, stay vigilant with your risky STEC foods: ground meat (especially beef mince), salami, unpasteurised milk/juice, leafy greens and sprouts.

Reduce the risk:

✓ **Practice hygiene** – Wash hands with soap and dry them before preparing or eating food.

✓ **Store smartly** – Keep raw meat in covered containers below other foods to prevent drips.

✓ **Cook thoroughly** – especially beef mince, internal temp must get ≥75°C.

✓ **Wash fresh produce** – rinse under running water.

✓ **Choose pasteurised products** – dairy must be pasteurised in WA, but juice does not – beware the risk of unpasteurised juice.

✓ **Use separate utensils** – Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw and ready-to-eat foods separate.

Record Keeping

Category 1 food businesses handling unpackaged, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods must be able to show that food is safe.

This can be demonstrated through practices such as temperature monitoring, cleaning schedules, and staff training.

Keeping accurate and accessible records provides evidence that food safety risks are effectively managed.

Record templates for food businesses are available from - my.armadale.wa.gov.au/service/public-health/food-business-and-safe-food/food-handler-requirements-and-training/

Examples of useful records include:

TEMPERATURE LOGS

Regularly record fridge and freezer temperatures to ensure food is stored under temperature control.

CLEANING SCHEDULES

Document cleaning routines for food preparation areas and equipment. Include hard to reach e.g. under benches, wheels of equipments, pipework behind equipment, coving etc.

FOOD HANDLING RECORDS

Food deliveries, cooling of cooked foods, food preparation logs etc.

STAFF TRAINING RECORDS

Maintain evidence of food handler training and food safety supervisor certification.

CITY OF Armadale