

FOOD SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Topics:

1. **Role of an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) in food safety**
2. **What happens during a food inspection**
3. **Food licence renewals – new information requested and why**
4. **Food recalls**
5. **Food inspections.**



Council's role in food safety

In Queensland, all food businesses are required to comply with the *Food Act 2006* and the *Food Safety Standards*.

Council's responsibility is to license the region's food premises, in accordance with the *Food Act 2006* and the *Food Safety Standards*. The primary purpose of the *Food Act 2006* is to ensure food for sale is safe and suitable for human consumption. The *Food Safety Standards* outline requirements for food premises and equipment that, if complied with, will facilitate food businesses and their compliance.

It is this legislation that requires Council to license and monitor the standard of operations in fixed, mobile and temporary food premises, to ensure customers are provided with safe food.

Role of an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) in food safety:

The role of an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) is primarily to ensure public health is protected from both the natural and built environment by investigating and preventing public health risks including providing education and advice.

Additionally, an EHO:

- Administers and enforces legislation
- Ensures that food businesses meet their legislative obligations in accordance with the *Food Act 2006* and the food safety standards
- Educates and provides advice to ensure businesses are following correct food handling processes
- Ensures the requirements set out in the food safety standards regarding walls, floors, ceilings, fixtures, fittings and equipment are followed, including assistance with the structural design of a kitchen when a food business is opening or renovating
- Checks the temperature control measures of the food business and the actual temperatures of fridges, freezers, bain-maries, cold rooms and food
- Keeps food businesses advised of updated food safety requirements and most importantly provides information about food recalls
- Investigates allegations of foodborne illness.

During a food inspection, an EHO will:

✓	Check the temperatures of fridges, freezers, bain-maries, cold rooms and food
✓	Check the storage of food in fridges, freezers, and dry storage areas to ensure they are being held under the correct temperature and areas are clean, tidy and well maintained
✓	Check temperature logs
✓	Check equipment to ensure it is clean and there is no accumulation of food particles, dust, grease or dirt
✓	Check food processing procedures
✓	Observe food handlers
✓	Check and ask questions relating to cleaning, sanitising and maintenance
✓	Ensure pest control is regularly conducted
✓	Generally look at the state of the kitchen's structures and ensure there are no areas that could accumulate dirt, dust, food particles and grease or harbour pests.
✓	Ensure no areas of the food business pose a risk to the public's health.



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Food licence renewals - new information requested and why

The 2018/19 renewals were sent out at the end of August and were due back by 30 September. You will have noticed these forms have changed and request more information from food businesses. The following additional areas to the application form have been explained below:

- **Activity and detailed food menu** – it is important for Council to know exactly what services your food business is providing to the community to ensure the correct licence is issued. Each category of licensing covers a different level of risk to the public i.e. low risk (home based food business), medium risk (café/restaurant), high risk (any business offering offsite or onsite catering).
- **List of potentially hazardous foods** – Queensland Health requires local governments to provide a report on food businesses each financial year. This survey requires Council to provide information such as:
 - Number of licensed food businesses that handle ready-to-eat food containing raw or partly cooked eggs or egg products
 - Number of licensed food businesses that use pasteurised eggs when preparing ready-to-eat foods that contain raw or partly cooked eggs or egg products
 - For food businesses using pasteurised eggs, those also using raw eggs as an ingredient
- **Hours of operation** – this assists with food business inspections. At times Council has the authority to arrive at a food premises and conduct an impromptu inspection. Business hours helps us determine suitable inspection times.
- **How food temperature is monitored** – Although this is checked in a food inspection, it also provides evidence that food businesses are conducting the required temperature checks and have the appropriate tools to do so.
- **Details of food grade sanitiser**
- **Public liability** – if a business provides outdoor dining, it is a requirement that they are insured and licensed.

Food recalls

Food Standards Australia & New Zealand defines a food recall as: 'Action taken to remove from sale, distribution and consumption foods which may pose a safety risk to consumers'.

Food recalls are sent out to food businesses to notify operators that a particular food has been recalled as it might cause illness or other harm to an individual consuming the food. If a food has been recalled, a food business must not serve this food to the public.

Please keep us up to date with any changes to your email address to ensure we can quickly provide you with notification of any food recalls and other important food licence information. Details of your new e-mail address can be forwarded to: customer.service@maranoa.qld.gov.au