

# Food Safety for Community Care Services in NSW



NSW  
**Meals on Wheels**  
Association Inc.

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# Section 1: Food Safety Laws

# Introduction

Centre Based Day Care and Meals on wheels serve vulnerable people including older people, and people who are Immuno-compromised. These people are more susceptible to food-borne illness than the general population. Improving food safety controls and having documented food safety procedures and monitoring will help assist centre based day care and meals on wheels services provide safe food to clients.

For the purpose of this manual vulnerable persons are defined by whether they are in care in any of the identified facilities (e.g. hospital, aged care, overnight respite service etc.) or are clients of a Delivered Meal Organisation (DMO). A person is considered to be in the care of a facility if they receive any services provided by that facility.

Facilities that are defined by the Australian Food Standards Code Food Service as providing food service to vulnerable persons include Meals on wheels services that prepare, process or alter six or more meals (e.g. reheat, thaw, freeze) and centre based day cares that provide rehabilitative or therapeutic services or overnight respite care for clients. Social day care is excluded from this legislation.

Standard 3.3.1 – Food Safety Programs for Food Service to Vulnerable Persons, gazetted on 5 October 2006, was developed to protect vulnerable people in our community, including older persons and people who have weakened immune systems.

This manual is designed to explain the requirements of the NSW regulation for this, the Food Service to Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme under the Food Regulation 2004 (the Regulation). The following standards apply to food services that are subject to the Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme under the Food Regulation 2004:

***Standard 3.3.1: Food Safety Programs for Food Service to Vulnerable Persons***

***Standard 3.2.1: Food Safety Programs***

***Standard 3.2.2: Food Safety Practices***

***Standard 3.2.3: Premises and Equipment***

This manual should be seen as a guide to best practice for all services, those who require a license with the NSW Food Authority and those who do not. By following the procedures in this manual your service can demonstrate best practice and effectively manage the risks associated with the production, preparation and service of food to vulnerable clients.

The NSW Food Authority has issued a guide for organisations serving food to vulnerable persons; Food Safety Programs for Food Service to Vulnerable Persons Scheme Manual. A copy of this manual as well as the standards is available online at:  
[www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au).

## About Standard 3.3.1: Food Safety Programs for Food Service to Vulnerable Persons

### **Standard 3.3.1:**

#### ***What does this Standard mean for your service?***

If your organisation is required to comply with Standard 3.3.1 your organisation must:-

- Be licensed with the NSW Food Authority;
- Have a documented food safety program in place;
- Have the food safety program audited at least once every year or according to the audit schedule determined by the NSW Food Authority.

#### ***If you don't have to comply with Standard 3.3.1 what do you have to do?***

Organisations such as social same aged day care centres and meals on wheels that do not prepare process or alter six or more meals do not have to comply with Standard 3.3.1 and therefore do not need to implement a documented Food Safety Program.

However, even if your organisation does not have to be licensed with the NSW Food Authority and will not be audited by the Authority, your service still has to comply with the following requirements:

- Demonstrate duty of care in food service;
- Comply with the Australian Food Standards Code – *Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and Standard 3.2.3 Premises and Equipment*;
- Comply with food business notification requirements to the local council. Your service can register by going to this web site: [www.foodnotify.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodnotify.nsw.gov.au).; and comply with council based inspections and council requirements

Following the guidelines contained in this manual will assist your organisation to comply with food safety standards and requirements as well as demonstrating best practice.

# Section 2: Developing a Food Safety Plan

## What is a Food Safety Plan?

A Food Safety Plan is a documented system that sets out how an organisation identifies, controls and monitors food safety risks. This includes documented procedures for controlling hazards through good hygiene practices, policies and procedures as well as monitoring forms for proving that the policies and procedures are being implemented to control food safety risks.

A food safety program must satisfy the requirements of Clause 5 of Standard 3.2.1 – *Food Safety Programs of the Food Standards Code*. According to Standard 3.2.1, a food safety program must –

- (a) systematically identify the potential hazards that may be reasonably expected to occur in all food handling operations of the food business;
- (b) identify where, in a food handling operation, each hazard identified under paragraph “a” can be controlled and the means of control;
- (c) provide for the systematic monitoring of those controls;
- (d) provide for appropriate corrective action when that hazard, or each of those hazards, is found not to be under control;
- (e) provide for the regular review of the program by the food business to ensure its adequacy; and
- (f) provide for appropriate records to be made and kept by the food business demonstrating action taken in relation to, or in compliance with, the food safety program.



# Policies

The following sections detail procedures for each stage of the food process for both centre based day care and meals on wheels services. These procedures are based upon the application of the Australian Food Standards Codes and the information contained in the Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme Manual.

The policies are followed by templates of forms and checklists that can be used as part of your food safety program.

The forms and checklists can be implemented by your facility to meet the food safety standards. The use of the forms and checklists is voluntary if your service does not require a NSW Food Authority license.

## Safe Menu Planning

### ***About Safe Menu Planning***

Choose foods that can be safely consumed by vulnerable people

Substitute high risk foods for foods with less risk

Avoid specific high risk foods where the risk is too high for vulnerable people

### ***Records***

Recipes

Menu Plans, Lists

### ***How do we do it?***

High risk foods are foods which have an increased potential to cause illness.

*Listeria monocytogenes* is an organism of particular concern which can grow at chilled food storage temperatures and can be fatal to a vulnerable person.

## Examples of foods to avoid that are at higher risk of Listeria contamination\*

Cold meats	Unpackaged ready-to-eat from delicatessen counters etc. Packaged sliced, ready to eat
Cold cooked chicken	Purchased (whole, portions, or diced) ready-to-eat
Pate	Refrigerated pate or meat spreads
Salads (fruit and vegetables)	Pre-prepared or pre-packaged salads e.g. from salad bars, smorgasbords, etc
Chilled seafood	Raw (e.g. oysters, sashimi or sushi) Smoked ready-to-eat • Ready-to-eat peeled prawns (cooked e.g. in prawn cocktails, sandwich fillings, and prawn salads)
Cheese	Soft, semi-soft and surface ripened cheeses (prepackaged and delicatessen) e.g. brie, camembert, ricotta, feta and blue
Ice cream	Soft serve
Other dairy products	Unpasteurised dairy products e.g. raw goat's milk

## Examples of foods to avoid that are at higher risk of Salmonella contamination\*

Food containing raw eggs, intending to be consumed raw	Raw egg mayonnaise, egg-nog
Lightly cooked egg products	Runny or lightly cooked eggs, mousse, hollandaise sauce, meringue, tiramisu, trifle
Seed sprouts	All raw or lightly cooked seeded sprouts and beans, such as alfalfa sprouts, Mung bean sprouts, clover sprouts, snow pea sprouts etc.

\* SOURCE: NSW/FA/CP005/0805, Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme Manual

### Safe alternatives to these high risk foods include:

In many instances the high risk foods listed on page 11 can be replaced with a safer alternative food.

Safe alternatives to these high risk foods include:-

**Seafood** – Freshly cooked seafood, all seafood products such as oysters must be cooked (e.g. mornay), canned seafood etc.;

**Cold meats** – Meat freshly cooked and sliced on the premises and pre-packaged whole products which have been cooked in the bag (e.g. whole ham);

**Cheese** – Hard cheeses such as cheddar and tasty, processed cheese, cheese spreads and plain cottage cheeses;

**Fruit and vegetables** – Only use fruit and vegetables which can be thoroughly washed and sanitised, avoid using sprouts and melons, canned and pickled fruits and vegetables. Washed and sanitised salads and fruit should be used with 24 hours of washing or sanitising. Ideally fresh fruit and vegetables should be consumed within 2 hours of preparation.

**Eggs** – Cooked eggs, boiled eggs should be used with 24 hours of cooking

### ***Good Practice Safe Menu Planning***

- When menu planning avoid the foods on these tables
- Ensure that any high risk foods you do use are from a good supplier
- Make sure that high risk products that you do use are cooked and used within a single day. For example, if you make a fresh salad or fruit salad, make the salad a few hours before you serve it.
- If you serve boiled eggs, cook and cool them the same day of service
- Substitute high risk fruits such as strawberries, raspberries and melons with lower risk fruits that have smooth skin and can be washed and sanitised. For example, blueberries, apples, bananas, oranges

## Temperature Control

### ***About safe food temperatures***

Safe temperatures must be maintained for hazardous and high risk foods at all times

A hazardous food is a food that must be stored under temperature control to prevent bacterial growth

### ***Records***

Time and Temperature Controls

### ***How do we do it?***

- All hazardous foods must be kept under temperature control at all times.
- Food should be maintained below 5°C and above 60°C at all times unless it is being prepared, cooked, reheated or cooled.
- Temperatures should be monitored and recorded for each meal service.

**Limits for temperatures of potentially hazardous food and its frequency of monitoring must comply with the following requirements from the NSW Food Authority:**

### *Receipt*

Cold food  $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ; hot food  $\geq 60^{\circ}\text{C}$ ; frozen food hard frozen (Food Standards Code 3.2.2 clause 5). Temperature monitored upon each delivery of potentially hazardous food.

### *Storage*

Cold food stored at  $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ; hot food  $\geq 60^{\circ}\text{C}$ ; frozen food hard frozen. Storage temperatures of potentially hazardous food must be monitored a minimum of once a day, it is advisable to check in the morning and afternoon.

### *Cooking/Reheating*

Product core temperature  $\geq 75^{\circ}\text{C}$  (instant) or equivalent validated process. Temperature must be monitored each batch.

### *Cooling*

Product core temperature cooled from  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $21^{\circ}\text{C}$  within 2 hours and  $21^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $5^{\circ}\text{C}$  within a further 4 hours (*Food Standards Code 3.2.2 clause 7*). Temperature must be monitored each batch.

### *Plating/Service*

Core temperature plating hot food  $\geq 60^{\circ}\text{C}$ , plating cold food  $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$  or equivalent validated process. Temperature to be monitored each batch or during meal service.

### *Hot/Cold-Holding*

Core temperature hot food  $\geq 60^{\circ}\text{C}$ , cold food  $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$  (Food Standards Code 3.2.2 clause 8). Temperature must be monitored a minimum of once per meal time and should be taken from different areas (*Food Standards Code 3.2.2 clause 8*).

### *Delivery/Transport*

Core temperature hot food  $\geq 60^{\circ}\text{C}$ , cold food  $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ; frozen food hard frozen. Temperature must be monitored at last meal delivered.

**SOURCE: NSW/FA/CP005/0805, Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme Manual**

## Shopping: Buying and Receiving Food

### **About safe food shopping**

Buy fresh food

Control time and temperature

Store chilled food below 5°C, hot food above 60°C and frozen foods must be hard frozen

Choose good suppliers and shops

Keep records on-site about your suppliers

### **Records**

Approved Supplier Letter

Supplier List

Incoming Goods Record

### **How do we do it?**

- Shop on the day or the day before cooking.
- Shop for non-perishables first and perishables last.
- If buying cooked, hot food, shop for this last and keep them separated from frozen and chilled food.
- Buy only fresh products. This is most important for ingredients used for sandwiches and salads or anything that is not cooked.
- Check the date marked on perishables.
- Store immediately in the organisation's kitchen.

### **Do not buy**

- Swollen, dented cans.
- Leaking cartons, cans, bottles or containers.
- Cracked eggs.
- Unrefrigerated hazardous or high risk foods
- Packages with broken seals.
- Food products which are out-of-date or have less than 24 hours shelf life or use-by-date

### **Buying Dry Goods**

- Store dry goods in airtight containers.
- In hot weather, store dry goods in the refrigerator.

### **Buying Perishable Foods**

- Perishable foods must be received and stored below 5°C
- Put raw meats, even if packaged, into plastic bags in the shopping trolley to prevent meat juices from leaking onto other foods.
- Take a cooler bag to store cold perishable items.
- Ask the checkout operator to pack raw meats in a separate bag.
- During transport place perishables in an esky with ice bricks.
- Cover all food in the refrigerator, dry store (airtight) and freezer.
- Label all goods with the use-by date if not already labelled.
- Any food that is removed from its original packaging needs the use-by date or date of refrigeration/freezing to be marked on the packaging so that the freshness of the food is known.

Do not buy or receive perishable foods that are below 5°C under any circumstances or your clients could get food poisoning.

### **Buying Frozen Food**

- Place frozen food, or food to be frozen, into the freezer immediately.
- Frozen foods must be hard frozen with no visible signs of defrosting.
- When freezing food you have just bought, leave it in the store rewrap and place it in a freezer bag to maintain quality.
- Tie the bag after squeezing out as much air as possible.
- Be sure there is a label with the name of the food and date.

Do not buy or receive frozen foods that are not hard frozen or show signs of thawing (e.g. ice crystals, soft or wet packaging)

### **Buying Hot Foods (e.g. hot chickens, take away etc.)**

- Hot foods must be purchased and stored above 60°C.
- Take a hot box with a hot gel pack in it to safely store hot foods above 60°C.
- Place hot food into a hot box immediately.
- Check the temperature of food when you collect it.
- If the food is below 60°C discuss the issue with the supplier to ensure that all future food deliveries are above 60°C.

Do not buy or receive hot foods that are below 60°C under any circumstances or your clients could get food poisoning.



### ***Good Practice Choosing Food Suppliers***

- Check for cleanliness in the food shop where you buy food - Unclean premises and staff in soiled uniforms in public areas may be a clue that things are worse behind the scenes.
- Avoid shops where cooked or ready-to-eat foods are stored next to raw products or are served with the same utensils as used for raw foods.
- Note the black line in fridges and freezers in grocery stores with the words "Load limit" written above it. Don't buy food if it is above this limit as it may not be at the required temperature.
- If you find some evidence of tampering or package damage when you get food to the kitchen, return the product to the store or contact the manufacturer.
- Keep a list of all your suppliers on-site.
- All meals on wheels that prepare food, seafood, meat, poultry and dairy suppliers must be licensed with the NSW Food Authority.
- Ask your supplier for a copy of their NSW Food Authority License, HACCP Certificate if they have one.

## Storage in Refrigerator

### **About Safe Food Storage**

Correct product labelling

Control of time and temperature

All fridges must hold food below 5°C

### **Records**

Storage Temperature Record

### **How do we do it?**

- Know your fridge. If it is warm on the outside, it could be struggling and may need to be turned up.
- Buy a fridge thermometer and leave it in the fridge or use it on the day you are using the kitchen.
- The temperature should be 5°C or less. Record the temperature.
- Be sure to check the refrigerator temperature on warm days.
- Store raw meats, fish and poultry near the bottom of the fridge to be sure the juices don't drip onto other foods.
- Transfer unused canned foods to a glass or plastic container and cover before refrigerating.
- Cover any cooked or ready-to-eat foods stored in the fridge.
- Label cooked or ready-to-eat foods stored in the fridge with the product name and production date and use-by-date.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate in the fridge.
- All fridges must be regularly calibrated.

### **Good Practice Storage**

- Check the air temperature of your refrigerator.
- Buy a fridge thermometer and leave it in the fridge or bring when you are using the kitchen.
- The temperature should be 5°C or less. Record the fridge temperature.
- Be sure to check the refrigerator temperature on warm days.

## Thawing Frozen Foods

### **About Safe Thawing of Food**

Follow time and temperature controls

Clean and sanitised containers to prevent contamination of other foods

### **Records**

Thawing labels on food items in the fridge

### **How do we do it?**

- If foods need to be defrosted, thaw in the refrigerator. Allow at least 24 hours.
- All frozen foods being defrosted must be defrosted at 5°C or less in a refrigerated unit or in the microwave following the correct settings.
- If a frozen product has been received frozen and is stored under refrigeration the item must be labelled with a new date code to ensure that it is used within 3 days of defrosting unless manufacturers' instructions state otherwise is acceptable.
- All foods being defrosted must be defrosted where they cannot contaminate other food items with thaw water (e.g. by placing them in a container/ tub etc.).
- Thawed food or meals must not be refrozen.

## Cooking and Reheating Hot Meals

### **About Safe Cooking of Hot Food**

Freshly prepared food made on the same day of service

Follow time and temperature controls

Cook/reheat hot food to an internal core temperature of 75°C

Clean and sanitised utensils and cooking equipment

### **Records**

Daily Cooking/Reheating Temperature Log

### **How do we do it?**

- If foods need to be defrosted, thaw in the refrigerator. Allow at least 24 hours.
- Cook/reheat meals, soups and desserts on the same day of service wherever possible.
- Check cooked meat to see if the meat juices run clear.
- Discard all leftovers.

### **Good Practice Cooking and Reheating**

- Check the food temperature at the end of cooking/reheating.
- The temperature should be 75°C
- Record the temperature each meal service.
- Food may only be reheated once

## Cooling Food

### **About Safe Cooling of Hot Food**

Follow time and temperature controls

Clean and sanitised utensils and cooling equipment

### **Records**

Daily Cooking/ Cooling Temperature Log

### **How do we do it?**

- Cool hot food to a temperature of 21°C within the first two hours and then to 5°C within the next four hours.
- Only reheat cooled foods once.
- Cool in shallow containers with a wide surface area to speed up cooling.
- Avoid chilling large amounts at one time.
- Separate into smaller amounts in separate containers and cover before placing in the coldest part of the fridge.
- Foods can be cooled for a short time on the bench before placing them in the refrigerator.
- Leave on the bench only until steam stops escaping. Then cover and place in the refrigerator.

Do not put hot foods immediately in the fridge as this will increase the temperature of all foods

### **Good Practice Cooling**

- Check the food temperature at the end of cooking and record the final cooking time and temperature.
- Measure the temperature of hot food after it has been cooked, and begin monitoring the time and temperature after it reaches 60°C
- Record the time and temperature the food begins cooling at 60°C and then again after two hours of cooling to ensure that it has reached 21°C / again after a further four hours to ensure it has reached 5°C
- If food has not reached 21°C after 2 hours and 5°C after a further 4 hours throw out the food – do not reheat or use as it may not be safe to eat.
- Record the temperature each time you cool food.

## Pureeing Meals

### **About Safe Pureeing of Hot Food**

Freshly prepared pureed food made on the same day as service

Follow time and temperature controls

Clean and sanitised utensils and cooking equipment

### **Records**

Daily Cooking/ Pureeing Temperature Log

### **How do we do it?**

- The maximum time for processing hot or cold foods out of temperature control is 30 minutes.
- The product being modified must be at a minimum temperature of 60°C when processed as the blending process will reheat the product above 5°C.
- Ensure equipment and utensils are clean and sanitised.
- All food handlers must wear gloves when pureeing or handling food or meals which have been cooked.
- The cooking temperatures of all high risk food items and meals being pureed must be checked using a clean and sanitised probe/ infra red thermometer to ensure that it remains above a temperature of at least 60°C.
- Keep pureeing and dicing equipment clean and sanitised in a sealed container to protect it from dust.
- Post cooking modification procedures are to be monitored visually and recorded daily.

## Preparing a Cold Lunch

### **About Safe Preparation of Cold Food**

Make freshly prepared food on the same day of service

Follow time and temperature controls

Only take as much food out of refrigeration as can be prepared within 30 minutes

Prepare chilled foods as quickly as possible – within 30 minutes of taking them out of the fridge

Use clean and sanitised utensils and food handling cooking equipment

### **Records**

Time and Temperature Records

Fruit and Vegetable Sanitising Records

### **How do we do it?**

- Prepare all salads, sandwiches and sweets on the day of service.
- Wash all fresh vegetables and fruit prior to cutting and service to the customer. This includes whole fruits such as apples, oranges and melons prior to cutting.
- When washing lettuce, first remove outer leaves, wash in clean water and drain.
- Re sanitise any washed and sanitised fresh cut fruit and vegetables if they are not used within 24 hours.
- If salads, sandwiches and desserts are out of refrigeration for more than two hours, including preparation time, discard.
- Discard all leftovers.

### ***Good Practice*** ***Washing fruit and vegetables***

- Use separate sinks for hand washing, cleaning/sanitising fruit and vegetables, and washing up.
- If it is not possible to use separate sinks, then the sink should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised before using for food preparation tasks.
- Speak to your chemical supplier to obtain a special sanitiser for washing lettuce.
- Sanitiser solution is only valid for 24 hours – after that you have to re-sanitise produce.
- The supplier can provide the chemicals and instructions for use to obtain the required strength (100 ppm chlorine).
- Monitor the Chlorine or pH levels with test strips and record daily.



## Plating and Packing Meals

### **About Safe Plating and Packing of Meals**

Follow time and temperature controls

Clean and sanitise utensils, containers, serving utensils and plates

### **Records**

Daily Plating/ Packing Temperature Log (recommended for Meals on Wheels services)

### **How do we do it?**

- During plating or packing, food must be kept above 5°C or lower than 60°C for no longer than 30 minutes.
- Only plate or serve as many meals as can be kept hot or cold for up to 30 minutes.
- Food must only be handled using tongs or by food handlers wearing gloves.
- Only clean and sanitised equipment, utensils, food contact surfaces and containers must be used for food preparation and packing / plating.
- A correct label must be placed on meal, checked against the client list for allergens and all meals of clients with allergens must be clearly marked on the label and distribution list or the plate/ container.

### **Good Practice Packing**

- Check the food temperature at the commencement and completion of plating / packing.
- Leave cold boxes in the fridge or cool room until you are ready to pack.
- Place layers of ice sheeting or ice packs at the base, middle and top layers of the cold boxes.
- The temperature for cold meals should be 5°C at the end of plating or packing.
- Record the time and temperature that plating or packing begins.

## Outings – Barbecues and Picnics

### **About Safe BBQ's and Picnics**

Use fresh food

Control of time and temperature

Clean equipment and utensils

Cleaning kit for cleaning and sanitising cooking equipment

### **Records**

Incoming Goods Record

Storage Temperature Record

### **How do we do it?**

- Packing and Transporting BBQ and Picnic Packs
- Store uncooked food and ready-to-eat foods in separate sealed containers and keep them cold during transport to the BBQ or picnic. Make sure cold boxes are packed with enough ice/coolant to keep foods chilled throughout the journey and BBQ/ picnic.
- Do not open the cold box until you are ready to put them on the BBQ or prepare the picnic.
- Wherever possible prepare the picnic so that minimal handling is required once you arrive.
- If the BBQ pack is not being held at less than 5°C, cook or use the BBQ or picnic items within 2 hours of transporting them.
- If cold box space is limited, use items that do not require refrigeration as an alternative. For example; UHT products such as milk and custard.
- Have all salads ingredients washed and sanitised prior to leaving the facility to reduce the need to handle food when hand washing is not available at a picnic site.
- Sausages can be precooked to prevent burning and ensure they are well cooked. Precook them in boiling water or the microwave oven.
- Always cook chicken, stuffed meats, sausages and minced meat so that the juices run clear. There should be no blood in the juices.
- Use a clean plate and utensils for cooked meat.

### **Personal Health and Hygiene**

- If any person preparing/ cooking the BBQ or picnic are not feeling well (symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat with fever, fever or jaundice and infectious skin conditions) they must avoid handling food.

### **Getting Ready to BBQ**

- Make sure that food handlers who are handling foods wash their hands,
- One of the most common sources of food poisoning at BBQ's putting cooked chicken or meat back on the same plate that contains raw juices so be sure you have plenty of clean utensils and platters.

Do NOT pour liquid that has been used to marinade raw meat or poultry on to cooked meats.

### **Leftovers**

- Throw away all leftovers. After 2 hours, bacteria will start to grow on hazardous foods such as meat, dairy products and salads.
- Chilled foods that have not been removed from the cold box may be taken back to the kitchen and reused IF they have been held at a temperature of below 5°C from the time they left the kitchen and throughout the picnic. This food must be consumed within 24 hours.

### **Good Practice Picnic Hygiene Kit**

Use a large lidded container or cleaners bucket to create your own Outdoor Food Hygiene Kit that contains the following:-

- Sanitiser spray
- Detergent
- Washing up equipment
- Disposable cleaning wipes
- Disposable paper toweling
- 2 clean chopping boards
- Probe thermometer to check temperatures of food being prepared/ served
- Sanitiser wipes for cleaning thermometer
- Sanitiser gel for cleaning hands
- Disposable crockery and cutlery
- Serving equipment (tongs, long handled spoons)
- Waste bags/ bin liners

### ***Good Practice***

### ***Eating Out – Choosing Local Restaurants***

- Check for cleanliness in the restaurant before taking clients – Check for unclean premises and staff in soiled uniforms in public areas - These may be a clue that things are worse behind the scenes.
- Avoid bistros, cafes, restaurants where cooked or ready-to-eat foods are stored next to raw products or are served with the same utensils as used for raw foods.
- Keep a list of all approved restaurants on your Supplier List.
- Ask the restaurant for a copy of their recent Council Inspection by the local Environmental Health Officer.
- Check that the restaurant is not on the NSW Food Authority Name and Shame List at: [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)

## Personal Hygiene

### **About Personal Hygiene**

Follow good personal hygiene

### **Records**

Staff training records

### **How do we do it?**

When do we need to wash hands?

- Before starting food preparation or handling food.
- Immediately before working with ready-to-eat food such as salads and sandwiches.
- After handling raw food.
- Immediately after using the toilet.
- Immediately after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or tissue, eating, drinking or touching your face, scalp or body.
- After handling garbage.
- After cleaning activities such as mopping.
- After handling animals.

### **What is the best way to wash hands?**

- Use the hand wash sink – not the wash up or sanitising sink
- Do not use food preparation sinks. Hand washing may contaminate the sink or the sink may contaminate your hands.
- Thoroughly wash using soap under running warm water.
- Thoroughly dry using paper hand towel
- Drying your hands thoroughly is very important, as wet hands are dirty hands

### **What do you need for a hand sink?**

You need a separate sink with:

- A single tap
- Warm water
- Soap
- Disposable towels

### Do we need to use gloves?

- The law states that food handlers must avoid contact with ready to eat foods such as salads, sandwiches, cakes and during tasks such as cutting, dicing, pureeing and plating.
- It is best to wear gloves when you handle ready to eat foods to prevent contamination. If gloves are worn they need to be:
  - Put on clean hands
  - Changed between activities
  - Changed regularly
  - Thrown away when contaminated

### ***Good Practice In the Kitchen***

- Wash and dry hands thoroughly whenever you change activities in the kitchen.
- Use utensils such as tongs and forks - Never fingers or bare hands.
- If you use gloves, change the gloves as often as you would wash your hands.
- Wear hairnets in the kitchen whenever food is exposed. Keep fingernails short.
- Do not wear nail polish or artificial nails.
- Avoid jewellery when handling food.
- Wear a clean apron every day.
- Wash your hands.

### What is Good Personal Hygiene?

- Wear clean clothing. An apron is ideal as it may be easily changed when soiled.
- Avoid handling ready-to-eat foods such as salads, sandwiches and desserts.
- It is good practice to tie hair back or wear a hair net.
- Use coloured waterproof bandages and dressings to cover any wounds.
- Blue-coloured bandages are the best as they show up easily in food.
- Cover the bandage with a glove or finger glove.
- Do not eat over food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food.
- Wash hands regularly.
- Change gloves as regularly as you would wash your hands.

Do not sneeze, blow or cough over food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food.

Do not spit or smoke in food areas.

### **What happens if a food handler is sick?**

The Australian Food Standards Code states that a food handler must not work with food if he or she is sick or is suffering from symptoms that could contaminate food and food contact surfaces. This means that staff must notify the Coordinator if they suspect they are sick or may have contaminated food.

You must notify the Coordinator if they are suffering from one of the following food-borne disease symptoms:-

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Skin infection, boils, infected cuts etc.
- Fever with stomach ache
- Viruses such as Gastro Enteritis or Hepatitis

## Training Staff and Volunteers

### **About Training Staff and Volunteers**

Follow good personal hygiene procedures  
Maintain signed off training records

### **Records**

Staff training records  
Training log, signed by staff/ volunteers

### **How do we do it?**

People who are preparing, handling or transporting food in a Meals on Wheels service must have skills and knowledge in safe food handling that is relevant to their responsibilities.

Methods of training will include activities such as;

- Formal training off-site (for example at the local TAFE college);
- Formal on-site training by an external training provider;
- Formal on-site training by the Supervisor;
- Distribution of food safety videos, DVDs or handouts to volunteers; or
- Distribution and discussion of Meals on Wheels food safety handouts which is documented in meeting minutes or in the manager's diary (e.g. a short 10 minute hygiene talk as part of a meeting);
- Using resources such as Glitterbug cream and lamps which highlights how easy it is for cross contamination to occur.

### **Which staff/ volunteers should receive more training?**

- Food handlers should have knowledge and skills appropriate to the type of food they are preparing, particularly if it is potentially hazardous or is not going to be thoroughly cooked immediately prior to consumption.
- Some staff/ volunteers will only need to receive very basic information on food safety while others will need more extensive training.
- Staff and volunteers, who cook, cool, reheat and plate will require more training than those staff and volunteers who store and distribute meals.



### ***Examples of the types of training required by volunteers***

- A volunteer who is receiving and delivering hot or cold meals will need to be trained in safe food transport and time and temperature controls;
- A volunteer making low risk vegemite sandwiches would not require any formal training but would have to understand how to prevent cross contamination, personal hygiene, cleaning procedures etc.;
- A volunteer making high risk meat or egg based sandwiches would have to be trained in temperature controls, personal hygiene, safe cleaning methods and how to avoid cross contamination; and
- A volunteer who was making a large number of hot meals with numerous ingredients would need to understand temperature controls and how to avoid cross contamination.

### ***Good Practice***

#### ***Food Safety Training for Volunteers and Staff***

Based on their responsibilities, staff/ volunteers might be trained in topics such as:

- Time and temperature controls
- Cleaning / wash up procedures
- Safe transport of food
- Personal hygiene
- Cross contamination
- Safe food storage
- Separation of raw and cooked foods
- Potentially hazardous food types
- Safe handling of cleaning chemicals

### ***How can you document volunteer's skills and knowledge?***

It is important to record each staff/ volunteers training in different areas on the site training record. This can be done in your diary or the volunteer or staff member receiving the training can sign a form to say that they received training. The easiest way to train staff is to have a training skills log which summarises the key skills and knowledge they must have. You then simply sign off each time they have been observed performing each skill. The person also signs off the training log. This way you have a simple work-based training system that you can go through with all staff and volunteers.

# Cleaning and Sanitising

## **About Safe Cleaning**

Use commercial cleaning chemicals and sanitisers

Maintain Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for every chemical used on site

Clean cleaning equipment such as a broom, mop, plastic bucket and disposable cloths

## **Records**

Cleaning Schedule and Cleaning Checklist

Chemical Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

## **How do we do it?**

General Cleaning Procedure

- Collect disposable cleaning cloth.
- Make up detergent/sanitiser solution to correct dilution (ideally in squirt bottle).
- Wash benches with warm water & detergent solution to remove soiling.
- Rinse with warm water.
- Apply sanitiser solution.
- Allow surfaces to air dry. Remove excess water with paper towel.

## **Cleaning Equipment**

- Use a fresh disposable cleaning cloth daily. Unclean cloths will spread bacteria.
- A squirt bottle is recommended because the detergent/sanitiser solution does not become contaminated.
- Mops used to wet clean the food preparation area must not be used in any other area (i.e. must not be used in adjacent bathrooms areas).
- Mops and buckets must be cleaned and air-dried between use (hang mop upside down to dry).

## What are the best cleaning chemicals?

Commercial cleaning products should be used as they are more effective and will be cheaper.

Make fresh solution of sanitiser daily as sanitiser will generally only last up to 48 hours before it loses its effectiveness.

By law you must use both a detergent (to remove the food waste, dirt) followed by a sanitiser. Sanitisers are designed to reduce the amount of bacteria on a surface. After sanitiser is used it must be wiped or rinsed off. The ideal sanitiser is one that you “leave on” so that you don’t have to rinse it off. This saves time.

## Cleaning Rosters

Cleaning rosters may be useful to ensure that all areas of the kitchen are cleaned regularly. This example of a cleaning roster may be changed to suit your operations and the frequency of cleaning will vary between sites.

Cleaning Task	Procedure	Frequency
Bench tops	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Blender	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Crockery / Cutlery	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Drains	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Floors	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Dishwashing Area	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Hand-washing basin	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Hose, Mops & buckets	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Pots and Pans	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Microwave Oven	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Oven & stove top	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Rubbish bins	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Rubbish areas	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Sanitising sink	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Shelving	Detergent/ sanitiser	WEEKLY
Sinks & taps	Detergent/ sanitiser	DAILY
Soap dispenser	Detergent/ sanitiser	WEEKLY
Refrigeration / freezer units	Detergent/ sanitiser	WEEKLY
Doors/ Handles	Detergent/ sanitiser	WEEKLY
Paper towel dispensers	Detergent/ sanitiser	WEEKLY
Ceiling vents/ fans/ lights	Detergent/ sanitiser	3 MONTHLY

### ***Good Practice Sharing a Kitchen***

You need to liaise with the owner of your building or the Committee on:

- Pest control
- You will need to keep a copy of the pest control contract and site visit records
- Maintenance and calibration of equipment
- Cleaning of shared equipment including exhaust filters and fridges
- You will need to clean all food handling surfaces and equipment, including crockery every time you use the shared kitchen in case it has become contaminated

## Pest Control

### ***What is Good Pest Control?***

Having a documented pest control contract in place  
Maintaining a clean and pest free premises

### ***Records***

A pest control contract  
Pest control contract  
MSDS for pesticide chemicals, baits and gels used  
Pest contractor visit records

### ***How do we do it?***

- Liaise with the pest control contractor or the owners of the building if pests are sighted.
- Have a regular pest control contract – visits should be conducted at least once every three months.
- Keep the premises clean – at the end of the shift there should be no evidence of food scraps or waste in the kitchen area.
- Ensure all doors are pest proof.
- Ensure all doors and windows in the production kitchen are kept closed at all times when food production is taking place.
- Report to Coordinator for pest treatment.
- Write the pest sighting in the pest sightings book or register provided by the contractor
- Contact the pest control contractor.

Do not use insect sprays directly over food preparation benches as this may contaminate food.

# Equipment Maintenance and Calibration

## ***What is Good Maintenance and Calibration?***

Having well maintained equipment

Having a maintenance and calibration program in place for all temperature monitoring equipment

Calibrated probe thermometers

## ***Records***

Building Maintenance Defects Log

A Maintenance and Calibration Contract

Calibration Schedule

## ***How do we do it?***

- All equipment used for food handling must be in good repair and condition.
- All staff/ volunteers must be trained to report defects in relation to kitchen & food equipment.
- Food production must not take place in an area where maintenance work is being carried out.
- The Kitchen staff/ volunteers must supervise all maintenance work that takes place in the kitchen and will ensure that the repaired area is free from any risk of contamination before food production is recommenced.
- Once every month the manager should visually inspect the premises and equipment and all defects recorded.
- All probe and infra-red thermometers should be calibrated at least once every month.
- All fixed gauges should be calibrated at least once every six months.
- All temperature gauges should have a tolerance of up to (+/-) 1°C, Any temperature measuring equipment that has a tolerance of higher than 1°C must be repaired or replaced.

### **How do we do it? Ice Point Check:\***

Make sure that the thermometer has been at ambient room temperature for at least 10 minutes.

Fill a small insulated container (e.g. small foam esky) with crushed ice that has been made from potable water (town drinking water is OK).

Add some water to the container, no more than one third the quantity of ice, to start the ice melting. There should be water between the ice pieces but the ice should not be floating. Pour off the excess water.

Place the thermometer probe in the centre of the container so that the point of the probe is in contact with the ice and water. The point of the probe should not touch the base of the container.

Leave for about 10 minutes to obtain a steady reading and stir.

Read the temperature on the thermometer. If:

The thermometer is accurate it should read 0°C.

The temperature is not at 0°C note the difference in the temperature reading.

For example, if the thermometer is 0.5°C, then the difference is -0.5°C.

The temperature is greater than 1°C or colder than -1°C, it is recommended that thermometers be replaced or returned to the manufacturer for servicing.

When using the thermometer the difference must be used as a correction factor.

For example, if the difference of the thermometer was -0.5°C and the product temperature was 4.0°C, then the correct temperature would be  $4.0 - 0.5 = 3.5^{\circ}\text{C}$

### **How do we do it? Boiling Point Check:\***

Make sure that the thermometer has been at ambient room temperature for at least 10 minutes.

Boil an amount of water in a saucepan/pot.

Place the thermometer probe in the centre of the pot so that point of the probe does not touch the base of the saucepan/pot.

Leave until a steady reading is obtained.

Read the temperature on the thermometer. If:

The thermometer is accurate it should read 100°C.

The temperature is not at 100°C note the difference in the temperature reading.

For example, if the thermometer is 100.5°C, then the difference is -0.5°C.

The temperature is greater than 1°C or colder than -1°C, it is recommended that thermometers be replaced or returned to the manufacturer for servicing.

When using the thermometer the difference must be used as a correction factor.

For example, if the difference of the thermometer was -0.5°C and the product temperature was 90.0°C, then the correct temperature would be  $90.0^{\circ}\text{C} - 0.5^{\circ}\text{C} = 89.5^{\circ}\text{C}$

**\* SOURCE: NSW/FA/CP005/0805, Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme Manual**

# Product Labelling for Meals on Wheels Services\*

Note:

\*This does not apply to the preparation and reheating of hot meals that will be consumed on the same day of service or delivery

\* This does not apply to social day care centres or to Meals on Wheels services that distribute hot meals only.

## **What is Good Labelling?**

Having a clear labelling program in place for all meals on wheels

Records

Product labels

Labelling review schedule

## **Records**

Building Maintenance Defects Log

A Maintenance and Calibration Contract

Calibration Schedule

## **How do we do it?**

What are the labelling requirements for Meals on Wheels services?

Current labelling requirements exempt some food items from carrying a label for meals delivered for immediate consumption. However this only applies to hot meals as chilled meals and frozen meals will be consumed at a later time/ date.

Despite what many services believe, there are currently no specific exemptions which apply to meals supplied by delivered meal organisations. The Australian Food Standards Code requires foods (including meals delivered by meals on wheels organisations) that are delivered packaged at the express order of the purchaser, but are not ready for consumption (i.e. chilled/ frozen) must be fully labelled.

## **All chilled and frozen meals should have the following information on them**

- Product name
- Ingredient list
- Usage/ storage instructions (e.g. reheat to 90°C, store below 5°C)
- Allergen statement
- Name and address of MOW organisation/ supplier
- Date marks (use-by-date, production / made or packed on date)

**Source: NSW Food Authority web site (Food Labels, March 2009)**



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

<p><i>Can I use donated food?</i></p>	<p>All food needs to be assessed for risk. The use of donated food is not recommended, as the history of the food is not always known. For example, it may have been left out of refrigeration.</p> <p>Most organisations no longer donate food due to the potential for legal liability if the food is not safe to eat.</p> <p>Low risk/ non hazardous food may be donated (e.g. cakes, muffins, scones) if they are checked and inspected and found to be safe and in good condition.</p> <p>A more suitable alternative would be to invite volunteers in to the kitchen on-site and cook the items on-site. That way, hygiene standards can be monitored.</p> <p>It is recommended that a record is kept of any donations.</p>
<p><i>How do we handle food brought in by clients such as hostel clients who bring their own lunch?</i></p>	<p>If the meal is hot, hold above 60°C in the oven. If it is cold place it in the refrigerator away from other food items owned/ prepared by the service.</p> <p>It is a good idea to keep a register of food that is brought in.</p>
<p><i>Is it OK to reheat in a microwave oven?</i></p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>But a microwave oven does not heat evenly. Care needs to be taken to ensure the product is thoroughly heated.</p> <p>This applies to pies which may be placed in a pie warmer. These only maintain heat, they do not completely reheat.</p>
<p><i>Can I freeze meats?</i></p>	<p>Raw meat that has not been frozen before may be refrozen, but only if the meat is fresh and was purchased fresh within the previous 24 hours. If the meat is packaged and has a best-before-date of at least five days remaining.</p> <p>Label the package with the product name and the date of freezing. Record this on a frozen foods register.</p> <p>Thaw frozen meat in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours. This means that the menu planning allows for the thawing of frozen items.</p>

## FAQs

<i>Can I refreeze chilled meals?</i>	<p>Meals can be frozen if they have been made fresh within the past 24 hours and have at least 3 days shelf life remaining.</p> <p>Label the meal with the product name and the date of freezing. The exact labelling details must be transferred to the new label. Record this on a frozen foods register.</p> <p>Thaw frozen meal in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours. This means that the menu planning must allow for the thawing of frozen items.</p>
<i>What if staff or volunteers want to take food home?</i>	<p>The practice of staff taking food home needs to be considered and approved as a policy by the group providing the food service. Ideally, an efficient and economical kitchen would plan the amount of food required for the meal service and there would be few leftovers remaining.</p>
<i>What if clients want to take food home?</i>	<p>This practice is not recommended.</p> <p>As with staff, the practice of clients taking food home needs to be considered and approved as a policy by the group providing the food service.</p> <p>Although clients do not like to see 'good food go to waste', the risk is too great.</p>
<i>Can we reuse foods that have been out on the table for the clients?</i>	<p>Leftovers should never be reused. All leftovers must be discarded.</p>
<i>What if clients or staff bring in foods for presents for each other?</i>	<p>As these foods are not 'for sale' the Food Standards do not apply.</p> <p>As with any situation, we have a duty of care to our clients and staff.</p> <p>Therefore we can advise individuals to bring in low risk items such as fruitcakes, cakes without cream fillings, confectionary and biscuits to share or give as gifts.</p> <p>Low risk items include foods that do not require refrigeration or reheating prior to consumption.</p>

## FAQs

<p><i>We provide meals for a social day care centre, are we required to have a license with the NSW Food Authority?</i></p>	<p>Social day care centres are not required to have a license with the NSW Food Authority as they do not provide personal or patient care. If the primary activity of the day care centre is to provide social activities, even if these are regarded as therapeutic, the day care centre does not require a NSW Food Authority license.</p>
<p><i>Our Meals on Wheels service receives and delivers chilled and frozen meals, are we required to have a license with the NSW Food Authority?</i></p>	<p>If your MOW organisation does not alter the meals in any way (i.e. reheat or refreeze), you are not required to have a NSW Food Authority license.</p>
<p><i>Our Meals on Wheels service reheats 5 meals per day on average, are we required to have a license with the NSW Food Authority?</i></p>	<p>If your MOW organisation only prepares or reheats less than 6 meals per day on average you are not required to have a NSW Food Authority license. However, it would be best to work out the average number of meals prepared per week as while some days you might only prepare less than 6, on average you might actually prepare 6 or more on average and this would require your service to have a license.</p>
<p><i>How should we label meals with allergens? Is this the same as dislikes or intolerances?</i></p>	<p>It is mandatory for a service to clearly label meals containing ingredients which are defined as intolerance or an allergy. If your service has clients with either intolerance or an allergy, this must be clearly noted on their client file, the delivery list and on the client's meal. This information should be separated from "dislikes". This may be done through a colour coding system for allergies (red) and dislikes (yellow) to separate personal food preferences from potentially harmful ingredients that may cause an allergic reaction.</p> <p>The menu list should also be available with information that clearly indicates which meals have which allergenic ingredients in them. Conduct a review of how you handle allergens and ask yourself whether the wrong meal could potentially be delivered. What if volunteers think that Mr. Jones doesn't like egg but think that "a little bit in dessert" won't hurt him. If Mr. Jones has a dislike to egg he probably won't notice it's in the dessert but if he is allergic to egg he could end up in hospital or worse.</p>

<p><i>Which foods are allergenic?</i></p>	<p>Allergens which must be declared on request or in a label on a package are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sources of Gluten – Wheat, Oats, Barley, Rye, Spelt and their hybrids. (But excludes their presence in Beer &amp; Spirits)</li> <li>• Crustacea and their products</li> <li>• Eggs &amp; Egg Products</li> <li>• Fish &amp; Fish products</li> <li>• Milk and Dairy Products</li> <li>• Nuts &amp; sesame seeds and their products</li> <li>• Peanuts &amp; Soybeans and their products</li> <li>• Added Sulphites of a concentration of 10mg/kg in the end product)</li> <li>• Royal Jelly as a food or in a food, Bee Pollen and Propolis</li> </ul> <p>During production procedures need to be in place to prevent cross contamination from allergens such as egg and nut products. Products using these ingredients are prepared separately and items are clearly labelled with Allergen Warning Statements.</p>
<p><i>How can I contact the NSW Food Authority?</i></p>	<p>Phone 1300 552 406, Fax (02) 9647 0026 or Email <a href="mailto:contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au">contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au</a>. Website <a href="http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au">www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
<p><i>Can our service choose to be audited by the NSW Food Authority or use a commercial auditor?</i></p>	<p>Services can choose to be audited by the NSW Food Authority or by a NSWFA approved commercial auditor. Before using a commercial auditor, the business must first have had an audit conducted by the Authority, where an 'A' or 'B' rating must have been achieved. Businesses who have completed this audit and are wishing to use a commercial auditor should contact the NSW Food Authority.</p>