A food business is any activity involving the sale of food or the handling of food intended for sale. If the handling of food occurs at a domestic premises, there are a number of special considerations involving approval and food safety which need to be considered.

**Licensable home-based food businesses**

The *Food Act 2006* (the Act) requires certain food businesses to hold a licence and some high risk food businesses to also have an accredited food safety program. Home-based food businesses that may require a licence include:

- preparation of food for sale at a market or fete
- bed and breakfast accommodation
- home-based catering
- motel kitchens that also serve as kitchens for owners/on-site managers.

Examples of food that is prepared in the home on a commercial basis that is not required to hold a licence under the Act include family day care operations, student boarding accommodation or facilities providing in home support services for an individual.

For further information on determining if you require a licence or food safety program under the Act, contact your local government.

**Obligations of a home-based food business**

Food businesses that operate from home, whether or not they are required to hold a licence under the Act, must comply with the other requirements of the Act and the provisions of the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code). This excludes the handling, at a person’s home, of food intended to be given away to a non-profit organisation for sale by the organisation.

Licensable food businesses are required to nominate a food safety supervisor and an accredited food safety program is required if the food business involves catering. For further information on food safety supervisors and food safety programs, refer to the fact sheets available on the Queensland Health website at [www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety).

However, before a food business can commence operating, approval from the local government is required. Prior to commencing any business activities, it is recommended that you speak with town planning, building, plumbing and environmental health staff to obtain the correct approvals and information. Some local governments may not permit particular food businesses to operate from a domestic kitchen or premises.
Premises design and construction

All food businesses are required to comply with Food Safety Standard 3.2.3 - *Food Premises and Equipment* of the Code. In determining if your premises complies with the Standard, it is recommended that you contact your relevant local government, as many have design and fit-out guides available, as well as information on zoning restrictions, planning considerations, waste disposal requirements such as trade waste permits, environmental controls and other local government regulations.


All food premises, regardless of their location, must:

- be able to be easily and effectively cleaned and maintained
- have sufficient space, facilities and suitable equipment to produce safe food
- be provided with services such as potable water, effective sewerage disposal and sufficient light and ventilation for the food handling activities
- prevent the entry or harbourage of pests
- provide adequate facilities for personal hygiene and equipment cleanliness e.g. provision and access to appropriate hand washing facilities.

Food storage

Food and items used in the preparation of food for sale should be stored separately from food items intended for domestic use. The food and food handling equipment must be stored so it is protected from contamination in an appropriate storage area. It is not recommended that foods for commercial purposes be stored in a garage or shed unless these areas are appropriately sealed and vermin proof.

Temperature control

Good temperature control of potentially hazardous foods is essential in ensuring the safety of food in your food business. There are a number of aspects of temperature control that need to be complied with.

Food receipt

If you collect products from a supplier, ensure the food is protected from contamination during transport to your premises. If you are collecting cold potentially hazardous foods, it is recommended that a chilled esky is used to maintain the food at 5°C or below for the duration of the trip. If suppliers deliver the food to your home, it is important to check the temperature and condition of the product upon receipt.

Refrigerated storage

All cold potentially hazardous foods must be stored at 5°C or below. It is important to ensure that you have adequate refrigerated storage space for the maximum amount of food that you may have on the premises at any one time. Remember that a domestic refrigerator is not designed for commercial purposes and may struggle to cool food to, or maintain food at, 5°C or below if it is overloaded or the door is opened frequently.
Frozen storage
Frozen foods must be frozen to the touch. Ensure you have adequate frozen storage room for the food you require to keep frozen. Your freezer should be capable of maintaining the food you have, at the manufacturer’s recommended temperature.

Cooking food thoroughly
Ensure that you have adequate cooking equipment to cook all food that is required thoroughly without overloading ovens, grills and other cooking appliances. It may be beneficial to ensure that your electricity supply is adequate to provide the necessary power you need if you are running a number of cooking appliances at the one time to ensure that your safety switches are not activated.

Cooling
If foods are going to be cooked in bulk then cooled for future use, ensure you have adequate refrigerated storage space to ensure foods are cooled from 60°C to 21°C in two hours, then from 21°C to 5°C in a further four hours. It is recommended that foods are placed in small, shallow containers and are not stacked in the refrigerator, to allow the food to cool as quickly as possible.

Transportation
When transporting potentially hazardous foods from your home to another location, ensure they can be appropriately transported protected from contamination and at the correct temperature (either at or below 5°C for cold foods or at or above 60°C for hot foods).

Temperature measurement
A working probe thermometer accurate to +/-1°C is required in your kitchen at all times to be used to check temperatures of potentially hazardous foods. It is important that the probe is appropriately cleaned and sanitised between uses and calibrated on a regular basis.

Cleaning
It is important to ensure that all food contact surfaces can be effectively cleaned and sanitised. This will involve the use of a chemical sanitiser for dishes and utensils, unless you have a domestic dishwasher which is capable of running a final rinse cycle that is hot enough and long enough to be an effective sanitiser. If not, chemical sanitisation processes must be utilised.

For a domestic dishwasher to be considered as an appropriate cleaning and sanitising device, it must:
- have a properly functioning temperature activated sanitising cycle that must sense 65.6°C or higher before the machine advances to the next step; or
- if it does not have a sanitising cycle or time-controlled sanitising cycle and forced airflow drying– be operated with inlet water temperature above 68°C.

It is recommended that cleaning products and cloths are used solely for your food business and not in other areas of the house such as bathrooms or toilets, to minimise the risk of contamination.
Good food handling practices

It is important to ensure that your kitchen has adequate storage capacity, space and handling equipment to keep ready-to-eat and raw foods or ingredients separate. This includes food contact surfaces, utensils, containers and cleaning equipment.

Food handlers should also have access to a dedicated hand wash basin equipped with warm running water from a single spout, soap and disposable paper towel. The hand wash basin should be located in the food preparation area and not in a neighbouring toilet, bathroom or laundry and must not be used for any other purposes.

Young children, pets and people who are sick should also be able to be excluded from the food preparation areas that are used for commercial purposes.

Labelling

Foods manufactured and packaged for retail sale, such as cakes, jams, pickles and chutneys, are required to be fully labelled.

Exemptions from full labelling requirements exist for unpackaged food and in certain other circumstances, however some information must still be provided to the consumer.


For further information

Queensland Health has a variety of fact sheets with detailed information on food safety. These fact sheets can be accessed at [www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety).