Food businesses must ensure that equipment, which includes shopping trolleys, baskets and checkout conveyors, are adequately and hygienically maintained.

The hygiene of shopping trolleys, baskets and check-out conveyors has been questioned in several public forums with concerns mainly directed at shopping trolleys. Concerns relate to the potential of disease transmission caused by environmental contamination, contact by multiple handlers and placing young children into seats and the trolley itself.

While Queensland Health is not aware of any evidence proving an epidemiological link between shopping trolleys and the transmission of disease, it is important to clarify the requirements for maintaining and cleaning these items.

Shopping trolleys, baskets and conveyors are considered to be equipment under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code). Standard 3.1.1 of the Code defines ‘equipment’ as:

- a machine, instrument, apparatus, utensil or appliance, other than a single-use item, used or intended to be used on or in connection with food handling and includes any equipment used or intended to be used to clean food premises or equipment.

As trolleys, baskets and conveyors are used for the collection and transportation of food prior to sale, by definition, they are used for the handling of food. Most food placed into a trolley, basket or on a conveyor will already be packaged or wrapped. However, some items, such as fruits and vegetables, may not be bagged or wrapped prior to being placed on, or in, such equipment.

Under the Code, all food businesses have a responsibility to:

- maintain equipment to a standard of cleanliness where there is no accumulation of food waste, dirt, grease, or other visible matter
- maintain equipment in a good state of repair and working order.

Physical items such as receipts, bags and lettuce leaves should be removed during collection of the trolleys. While it is the responsibility of the food businesses that provide trolleys and baskets to customers to regularly clean these items, this service may be outsourced to others. The frequency of this cleaning would need to be sufficient to prevent the accumulation of dirt, grease and other visible matter.

Where trolleys are used to transfer food (e.g. meat) from a loading dock or preparation area to a food business or to a different area within the food business, these trolleys must be used solely for that purpose.

For further information

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

Contact your local government if you have any further questions. Contact details can be found at [www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory.html](http://www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory.html) or your local White Pages.