Food safety programs

From 1 July 2008, the requirement for on-site caterers, off-site caterers and private hospitals to have a food safety program (FSP), will be enforceable. This means that caterers and private hospitals must develop and implement a food safety program for their food business, by this date. The food safety program must be submitted to the Local Government with which their food business licence is held, for accreditation of the program.

Audits must be regularly undertaken to ensure the food business is complying with their accredited food safety program. The first ‘compliance audit’ must be undertaken within 6 months of the accreditation of the food safety program and thereafter, at a frequency determined by the Local Government.

Compliance audits must be undertaken by a food safety auditor approved under the Food Act 2006 (the Act). Queensland Health is responsible for assessment of applications for auditor approvals and will maintain a register of approved auditors which will include the name and contact details of the auditor, the conditions of the auditor’s approval and the term of the approval. The register will be accessible via the ‘Auditing’ section of the ‘Food Safety’ page at the Queensland Health website: www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety shortly.

Queensland Health have developed templates for retail and catering facilities and private hospitals to assist in developing a food safety program for their food business, which are also available from the ‘Food Safety’ webpage, at the above address.

It should also be noted that food safety programs will become mandatory in Queensland for food businesses providing a food service to vulnerable populations, such as nursing homes, health facilities and child care centres. These requirements will commence on 5 October 2008. Queensland Health are currently developing templates to assist those food businesses captured under this requirement.
Becoming an approved auditor under the Food Act 2006

FSPs must be audited by an auditor approved under the Act. Applications for approval as an auditor must be made to the Manager, Food Safety Policy and Regulation, Environmental Health Unit of Queensland Health. Queensland Health has finalised the application package for approval as an auditor under the Act, which is available from www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety.

Obligations of auditors
A Code of Conduct for approved food safety auditors under the Food Act 2006 has been developed by Queensland Health detailing mandatory requirements for approved auditors. The code of conduct describes the principles and procedures to be followed by approved auditors and to ensure auditing services are delivered with integrity, professionalism, accountability and diligence.

Competency standards for auditors
There are minimum competency standards for an auditor and the type of business the applicant may be approved to audit will depend on which competencies have been completed.

Several criteria are taken into consideration when assessing an application for auditor approval, including:

- Qualifications/education;
- Skills/knowledge in food safety, auditing and regulatory system requirements; and
- Food sector work/audit experience and expertise.

Applicants who have completed QLFSA100 – Certificate in Health (Food Safety Programs and Auditing for Authorised Officers) will meet the qualifications/education criteria. However, they must still satisfy the skills/knowledge and food sector work/audit experience and expertise criteria before being approved.

Reminder about food safety supervisors
All licensed food business in Queensland must nominate a food safety supervisor to their Local Government by 1 July 2008. If your food business is not required to be licensed under the Food Act 2006, you are not required to have a food safety supervisor. Food businesses are reminded that applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) must be submitted to a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for assessment.

The retail and hospitality sector should note that the national competency, WRRLP6C - Apply retail food safety practices, will be replaced with competency SIRRFSA001A - Apply retail food safety practices, over the next two years. However, if you have already completed WRRLP6C, you will not be required to complete the new competency.

Information has been provided in Food Industry Fact Sheet 19 Food Safety Supervisor Update, on issues such as what is meant by the requirement for a food safety supervisor to be ‘reasonably available’, who is eligible for automatic accreditation as a food safety supervisor and where to find a RTO. For further information, contact Queensland Health on 13HEALTH (13 432584) or at foodsafety@health.qld.gov.au.

If you are not satisfied with the quality of training delivery and assessment, or with any other matter involving a training provider, you can contact the Complaints Unit of the Department of Education, Training and the Arts for assistance on 1800 600 039 or email complaints@deta.qld.gov.au.
Reminder about food recall requirements for food businesses

Food Safety Standard 3.2.2 (12) of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) requires food manufacturers, wholesalers and importers to have a system in place to ensure the recall of unsafe food.

A recall system is the procedure that a food business uses to ensure that food that has been manufactured, imported or distributed in Australia can be retrieved from the food supply chain if that food is found to be unsafe.

There are two types of food recalls:

1. Trade Recall – A trade recall involves recovery of product from hospitals, restaurants and other major catering establishment, and outlets that sell food manufactured for immediate consumption or food that is prepared on the premises;

2. Consumer Recall – A consumer recall is more extensive and involves recovery of the product from all points in the distribution network including stock on the shelves at retail level and product in the possession of consumers.

In any case, if a food retailer is required to remove recalled stock from sale, the business must follow the ‘food for disposal’ requirements that are shown in clause 11 of Standard 3.2.2 of the Food Standards Code.

The primary objectives of food recalls are to:

- stop the distribution and sale of the affected product;
- inform the statutory authorities (all recalls) and the public (consumer recalls only) of the problem; and
- effectively and efficiently remove from the marketplace any product, which is potentially unsafe.

Reasons for the recall could include contamination by pathogenic bacteria or the presence of chemicals or foreign matter that could cause physical harm to a person consuming the food.

Queensland Health co-ordinates all food recalls in Queensland and if food businesses are in doubt as to whether a recall is necessary, they should contact the Principal Environmental Health Officer (PEHO) and/or Manager, Food Safety Policy and Regulation (FSPR), Queensland Health.

The PEHO is the nominated Food Recall Coordinator for Queensland and must be made aware of all food recalls in Queensland so that Queensland Health can liaise with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and the company to ensure co-ordination of the recall, in accordance with the agreed recall protocol. Contact details for the FSPR are located on page 8 of this newsletter.

FSANZ has developed a protocol to assist food businesses in developing a food recall system. The 'Food Industry Recall Protocol' can be found at:
Hot topics

Proposed changes to the Food Standards Code

Public comment has being sought from Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) on a number of proposed changes to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code).

Among the items being considered are possible labelling of alcoholic beverages with a pregnancy health statement, revised residue limits in food, the addition of calcium to some chewing gum, food from genetically modified cotton and corn, and food safety programs for catering operations to the general public.

While Queensland and Victorian legislation requires food safety programs for catering operations to the general public, FSANZ is also proposing to include a similar standard in the Code.

FSANZ welcomes public comment on all applications and proposals to change the Code from industry, public health professionals, government agencies and consumers. Details of all applications can be found at www.food standards.gov.au.

New health claims standard

In December 2003, the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council agreed to a new Policy Guideline for the regulation of Nutrition, Health and Related Claims. This policy is guiding FSANZ in the development of the new health claims standard that may become part of the Code.

Currently, nutrient content claims are allowed (e.g. ‘This food is high in fibre’) and some function maintenance claims (e.g. ‘Calcium is good for healthy bones and teeth’). However, there is a prohibition on all health claims, other than the claim regarding the benefit of mothers consuming folate and reducing the risk of neural tube defects in unborn babies.

The new policy recommends an important change to the regulation of nutrition, health and related claims that will mean a wider range of claims will be allowed.

Odd spot

American Food Technologist and musician Carl Winter PhD has developed an unusual and effective method of food safety education. He develops and performs parodies of popular songs by re-writing the lyrics to incorporate educational messages about food safety. He has developed a number of songs, with some examples including:

- ‘Who Left the Food Out’ based on the Baha Men’s ‘Who Let the Dogs Out’; and
- ‘You Better Wash Your Hands’ based on the Beatles’ ‘I Wanna Hold Your Hand’.

Dr Winter has been performing for the past eight years and undertakes around 25-30 live performances annually and has distributed nearly 20,000 audio CDs to a variety of audiences worldwide. Audio and video clips as well as song lists are available on the website: http://foodsafe.ucdavis.edu/music.html.
The Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) which is responsible for drawing up internationally-agreed standards and codes of practice, will be held in Ottawa, Canada, from 28 April – 2 May 2008.

The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of internationally adopted standards, codes of practice, guidelines and recommendations, which a number of countries, including Australia and New Zealand, align their standards, following World Health Organization (WHO) agreements that say Codex standards are favoured in international trade disputes.

A secure website for Local Government employees has been developed for Local Government authorised persons to access enforcement information and resources relating to the Public Health Act 2005. Shortly, this website will also contain Food Act 2006 enforcement tools, including Local Government resource manual documents such as forms and templates for use by Local Government authorised persons.

The website is located at www.health.qld.gov.au/eholocalgov and includes a registration form to obtain access to the site and contact details to submit the form. Only Local Government, Population Health Unit environmental health officers and other persons approved by the Senior Director of the Queensland Health Environmental Health Unit who have a reasonable need to access information on the site will be approved access to the site.
### Food reforms at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The requirement</th>
<th>Where we are at</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Standards Code</strong></td>
<td><strong>Food Safety Programs</strong></td>
<td>Standard 3.2.1 has been incorporated into the <em>Food Act 2006</em> for the food safety program requirements for high risk areas. Public comment is sought on a number of proposals to make changes to the Food Standards Code (see page 4).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Proposed changes to the Code</strong></td>
<td><strong>Standard 3.3.1 Standard for Food Safety Programs for food service to vulnerable populations</strong></td>
<td>Standard 3.3.1 commence in Queensland’s <em>Food Act 2006</em> on 5 October 2008. The Code, fact sheets, user guides and nutritional panel calculator are available from <a href="http://www.foodstandards.gov.au">www.foodstandards.gov.au</a>.</td>
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### Food Act 2006

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<tr>
<th><strong>Food Act 2006</strong></th>
<th><strong>Food Act 2006 commenced on 1 July 2006.</strong></th>
<th>The <em>Food Act 2006</em> replaces the <em>Food Act 1981</em> as the food legislation in Queensland. Some offences have been included in <em>State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2000</em> allowing PINs to be issued for certain breaches.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Suspected Intentional Contamination of Food commenced 13 July 2006</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Food Safety Supervisors</strong></td>
<td>All food businesses are required to have a food safety supervisor by 22 February 2008. An amnesty period for enforcement of these provisions is in place until 1 July 2008.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- Food Safety Programs</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Approval of Auditors commenced 1 July 2007</strong></td>
<td>Defined food businesses are required to have a food safety program by 22 February 2008. An amnesty period for enforcement of these provisions is in place until 1 July 2008. The application package for approval as an auditor will be available from <a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety">www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety</a>.</td>
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| **Food Regulation 2006** | **Commenced on 1 July 2006** | Requires the display of licence details at mobile premises. Lists prescribed contaminants and prescribed food. |

### Primary Produce

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<tr>
<th><strong>Food Production (Safety) Act 2000</strong></th>
<th><strong>Major provisions became law in Queensland as of 25 October 2000</strong></th>
<th>Legislation that governs primary produce, for which a food safety scheme applies, enforced by Safe Food Production Queensland (SFPQ).</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Food Production (Safety) Regulation 2002</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Meat; Dairy; Eggs</strong></td>
<td>For more information on the Food Safety Schemes, contact SFPQ on 1800 300 815 or visit <a href="http://www.safefood.qld.gov.au">www.safefood.qld.gov.au</a>.</td>
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<td><strong>- Became law 1 Jan 2003</strong></td>
<td><strong>- Became law 1 Jan 2005</strong></td>
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## New articles and publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Safety Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Food Industry Fact Sheet 19 Food Safety Supervisor Update</td>
<td>Food Industry Fact Sheet 19 Food Safety Supervisor Update follows Food Industry Fact Sheet 18 Food Safety Supervisor and is designed to provide further information and to answer some common questions about food safety supervisors. This document can be accessed from: <a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety">www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety for fundraising events</td>
<td>Food Safety for fundraising events is a pocket book guide for nonprofit organisations for assistance in understanding their requirements and responsibilities for food safety management. This is an existing document that has been updated to reflect recent changes to the Food Act 2006, particularly in relation to licensing provisions. This document can be accessed at: <a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety">www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Label Buster</td>
<td>Label Buster is a guide to the Food Standards Code labelling requirements for food businesses. Label Buster contains an easy reference to the labelling standards of the Food Standards Code, a checklist to assist in developing a food label and a comprehensive directory of where to get more information. This is an existing document that has been updated to reflect recent changes to the Food Standards Code. This document can be accessed from: <a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety">www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labelling and compositional standards for the meat, seafood and bakery industries</td>
<td>‘Meat and Meat Products’, ‘Seafood’ and ‘Bread and Bakery’ labelling and compositional standards for industry food industry fact sheets have been produced specifically for the meat, seafood and bakery industries, respectively. These are existing documents that have been updated to reflect recent changes to the Food Standards Code. This document can be accessed from: <a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety">www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Standards News Summer 2007 edition</td>
<td>A quarterly newsletter produced by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) reporting on current food safety issues on the national and international level and the achievements of FSANZ in relation to these issues. This document can be accessed from: <a href="http://www.foodstandards.gov.au">www.foodstandards.gov.au</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety Programs – A guide to Standard 3.2.1 Food Safety Programs (June 2007)</td>
<td>A guide to the Food Standards Code Standard 3.2.1 Food Safety Programs which aims to help enforcement officers understand the general intent of individual clauses contained in Standard 3.2.1. It does this by providing an explanation of the legally defined terms and the individual clauses and includes examples, in general terms. This document can be accessed from: <a href="http://www.foodstandards.gov.au">www.foodstandards.gov.au</a>.</td>
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Fax or post this form to the Food Safety Policy & Regulation Section with the following details: (see contact details below)

- Please provide me with an electronic copy of future newsletters (provide details and email address).
- Please correct my contact details as shown below.
- I no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please remove my contact details, as shown below.

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________
Suburb: ___________________________ Postcode: ______________
Company: _______________________________ Phone No.: _______________________
Email Address: ________________________________

To contact the Food Safety Policy & Regulation Section:
Phone: (07) 3234 0938; Fax: (07) 3234 1480;
Mail: GPO Box 48, Brisbane Qld 4001; or email foodsafety@health.qld.gov.au