



A pocket book guide to assist charities and community organisations with food safety management.

Food safety for fundraising events

The Food Act 2006



**Queensland
Government**



Organising events for charity and non-profit community groups

Foreword

Charities and non-profit community groups play an important role in our community and fundraising events are a major contribution to the work of the community. However, no one wants people to get sick from the food they eat at these events.

In Australia, food laws place many responsibilities on the proprietor of a food business. A charity or a non-profit community group that is selling or handling food is considered to be a food business for the purposes of current regulation. Depending on the activities conducted by the group, a food business licence may or may not be required. However the requirements of Queensland's food laws apply to all food businesses.

If you are the organiser of an event or an official of a charitable or community group that is selling food, you need to be aware of these requirements.

If you understand your legal responsibilities and plan your events properly, in good time, complying with the law will be straightforward.

This pocket book guide has been developed to assist you with that task.

Environmental Health Branch

Queensland Health

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Definitions

Here are some definitions taken from the **Queensland *Food Act 2006*** and the national **Food Safety Standards** to help you:

food business means a business, enterprise or activity that involves –

- (A) the handling of food intended for sale; or
- (B) the sale of food;

regardless of whether the business, enterprise or activity concerned is of a commercial, charitable or community nature and whether it involves the handling or sale of food on one occasion only.

Food handler means a person who directly engages in the handling of food, or who handles surfaces likely to come into contact with food, for a food business.

Handling of food includes the making, manufacturing, producing, collecting, extracting, processing, storing, transporting, delivering, preparing, treating, preserving, packing, cooking, thawing, serving or displaying of food.

Non-profit organisation is an organisation that

- (a) is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members; and
- (b) is engaged in activities for a charitable, cultural, educational, political, social welfare, sporting or recreational purpose.

Potentially hazardous food means food that must be kept at a particular temperature-

- (a) to minimise the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms that may be in the food; or
- (b) to stop the formation of toxins in the food.

Potentially hazardous foods include:

- ▶ Raw meats, cooked meats and food containing them such as casseroles, curries, lasagne and meat pies

- ▶ Dairy products and foods containing them such as milk, cream, custard and dairy based desserts
- ▶ Seafood (excluding live seafood) and food containing seafood, such as prawns, crab and marinara mix
- ▶ Cut or otherwise processed fruits and vegetables such as prepared salads and ready to use vegetable packs
- ▶ Cooked rice and pasta
- ▶ Foods that contain any of the above foods such as sandwiches, quiche, rice salads and pasta salads.

Queensland's food safety laws

The food legislation in Queensland is made up of the *Food Act 2006* (the Act) and the *Food Regulation 2006*. The Act requires certain food businesses to be licensed and outlines specific requirements for food businesses and offences for non-compliance.

In accordance with the definition of food business under the Act, any non-profit organisation selling or handling food, is a 'food business' if it involves the handling or sale of food on at least one occasion.

The only situation in relation to non-profit organisations, when compliance with the Act is NOT required, is when:

- A person handles food at their own home, which is intended to be given away to a non-profit organisation for sale (includes giving away), by the organisation.



The Food Standards Code

From 1 July 2001 the national Food Standards Code (the Code), which incorporates the Food Safety Standards 3.1.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, was adopted by Queensland's food legislation. Non-compliance with any part of the Code is an offence under the Act.

The Code was developed to:

- Provide more effective and consistent food safety regulation across Australia
- Provide nationally uniform food safety standards so businesses operating across Australia has only one set of requirements to follow
- Reduce the level of food-borne illness across Australia.

The Code includes requirements for the labelling and composition of food. The Code also includes the Food Safety Standards, which have requirements for food safety practices and structural requirements of food premises.

There are three Food Safety Standards that food businesses must comply with:

- Standard 3.1.1 Interpretation and Application;
- Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and General Requirements; and
- Standard 3.2.3 Food Premises and Equipment.

The following information gives an outline of the requirements of non-profit organisations under the Act and the Code as well as providing practical assistance in how to meet these requirements.

Step 1: Licensing

It is important to note that even if a food business is not required to have a licence, they must still comply with the requirements of the Act. This involves ensuring all food handled, sold or given away is safe and suitable for consumption and is compliant with the provisions of the Act and the Food Standards Code. Significant penalties apply under the Act for any person that sells unsafe or unsuitable food or contravenes a provision of the Food Standards Code.

Non-profit organisations **must apply for a licence** to carry on a food business when:

- Meals are prepared by the organisation at a particular place, and is sold (includes giving away food or bartering) on at least 12 days of the year.

However, non-profit organisations **do not need a licence** when:

- Selling meals that were pre-prepared by another organisation located at another premises then stored and heated or otherwise prepared by the non-profit organisation by following the manufacturer's instructions. For example, microwave heating a frozen meal purchased at a supermarket in accordance with the directions on the package
- Selling meals that consist only of fruit, cereal, toast, or similar food
- The consumer of the meal helps to prepare it; or
- Selling meals prepared as part of an education or training program that the organisation conducts, which involves food preparation, hospitality or catering, for example a cooking class.

Further exemptions from licensing are in place for all food businesses that sell or give away only unpackaged snack food, whole (uncut) fruit or vegetables, seeds, dried herbs, spices, tea leaves, coffee beans or ground coffee, drinks (other than fruit or vegetable drinks processed at the place of sale), or flavoured or unflavoured ice.



If you are a licensed food business, local government environmental health officers will conduct regular inspections of your food business, so they can ascertain whether the food laws are being complied with. For those food businesses that are required to be licensed under the Act, significant penalties apply for the proprietor of the food business for failing to be licensed.

Even if an organisation is not required to be licensed, local government environmental health officers in the area the food premises is located, may still conduct an inspection of your premises.

Check with your local government if you are unsure as to whether you require a licence to carry on your food business.

The good news

Some local governments have reduced fees for non-profit organisations. Advice on how to produce safe food is free.

Representatives of your organisation should contact the local government environmental health officer to discuss specific requirements for your event. Then you can be confident that you are doing everything you can to produce safe food and ensure that you are conducting the event within the law.

Action 1

(When planning a fundraising event)

Representatives from your organisation should contact the local government environmental health officer to discuss specific requirements for your event. Then you can be confident that you are doing everything you can to produce safe food and ensure that you are conducting the event within the law.

Step 2: Skills and knowledge

What event organisers need to know

A proprietor of a food business (which includes the organisers of an event that involves the selling or handling of food for sale) must ensure that their food handlers and their supervisors have a level of skill and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene appropriate to their food handling activities.

Charities and other non-profit community groups are exempt from this requirement if:

- There is no personal financial gain, ie. all the money raised from the sale of food is used for charitable or community causes; **and**
- 1. The food sold is shelf stable ie. not potentially hazardous food (eg. biscuits, cakes without cream, jams, chutneys)

or

- 2. The food is consumed immediately after thorough cooking (eg. meat sold straight from the barbecue).

From 22 February 2008, if a food business is required to have a licence (as described in 'Step 1: Licensing'), then the licensee must have a food safety supervisor for the food business who has specific qualifications in relation to that food business.

If a non-profit organisation is not required to have a licence, then they are not required to have a qualified food safety supervisor, but must ensure that their food handlers and supervisors have a level of skill and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene appropriate to their food handling activities (unless they are exempt from the skills and knowledge requirement, as outlined in 'Step 1. Licensing'). This will help ensure that the food being sold is safe and suitable.



What kinds of charitable and community events require food handlers to have skills and knowledge?

- Handling or selling uncooked potentially hazardous foods, (see page 4: 'Definitions')
- Handling or selling potentially hazardous foods that are not served immediately after cooking – this is likely to occur where food is being pre-cooked and then re-heated for sale, eg. lasagne, roast meat rolls, curries, stews.

What food handlers need to know

Food handlers need to have skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene matters that relate to their work activities. This means that they need to know how to safely perform the tasks they undertake. For example, if you are responsible for storing and handling ingredients of meat and salad rolls or cooling/re-heating pre-prepared meat dishes, you must know how to do this safely.

Before your event, talk to all volunteers about skills and knowledge. It may also be a good time to do Action 6 (p23). Use the following quick skills and knowledge test (Note: there may be more questions to cover other areas of food handling that you need to ask).

The quick skills and knowledge test

- What temperature should hot food be kept at? (p 19)
- What temperature should cold food be kept at? (p 19)
- When should you wash your hands? (p 23)
- What are the health and hygiene obligations of a food handler? (p 21)
- What are potentially hazardous foods? (p 4)
- How do you know when chicken, sausages and hamburgers are cooked properly? (p 25)
- Why should raw and cooked foods be separated? (p 25)

Action 2

- Nominate someone to be responsible for overseeing food safety.
- List food handlers who have been briefed about skills and knowledge in food safety.
- Do food handlers have the appropriate skills and knowledge in food safety in relation to the type of work they do?



Step 3: Purchasing food

When purchasing food you will be preparing for sale, you must ensure that it is in a wholesome condition and under temperature control, if necessary. If it is a packaged food product, ensure that it is fully enclosed and labelled, when you accept it.

Food must be transported safely, under temperature control, if necessary (see page 19) and protected from contamination. If you have food delivered to your premises, you should ensure that the transporter is also following these rules.

Step 4: Transporting food

There are three main food safety rules you should follow when transporting food:

- Keep the food protected from contamination (in sealed containers, keep the vehicle clean, no animals etc.);
- Keep the food colder than 5°C; or
- Keep the food hotter than 60°C.

Protecting food from contamination

When transporting foods it is important to protect them from contamination by keeping them covered at all times. This can be achieved by applying plastic film over containers or using containers with lids.

Unless they are damaged, wrapped products should not need additional covering if they are already packaged. Any open food should be placed in a clean container and covered.

Materials used to cover food should be suitable for food contact, to ensure they do not contain any chemicals that could contaminate the food. Aluminium foil, plastic film and clean paper may be used but food should be completely covered. Previously used materials and newspaper may contaminate food so these materials should not be used in direct contact with any food.

Temperature control

When potentially hazardous foods are transported they should be maintained at a temperature that is colder than 5°C or hotter than 60°C during the journey. Alternatively you could use time, rather than temperature, to keep the food safe while it is transported. For more information see temperature control (page 19).

If the journey is short, insulated containers eg. eskies with ice bricks may keep the food cold. If the journey is long or on a hot day, a portable refrigerator may be required. Hot food may be maintained hot in insulated containers or with heat packs for short periods, but portable ovens may be required to keep food hot over longer trips.

Food must be pre-heated (for hot foods) or pre-cooled (for cold foods) before placing in an insulated container. The container must have a close-fitting lid to help maintain a safe temperature. The container must be in good condition, kept clean at all times and used only for food.

Make sure that there are an adequate number of insulated containers or eskies to transport food at correct temperatures.

Other transport considerations

- Keep the journey as short as possible
- Make it your first job to unload any hot or cold food and place it into on-site temperature control
- Vehicles must be clean. If pets or dirty equipment have been previously carried, the intended food storage area must be thoroughly cleansed or lined to minimise the likelihood of contamination
- Containers for cold food should be placed in the coolest part of the vehicle. If the vehicle is air-conditioned, store cold food inside the vehicle, rather than in the boot
- Make packing potentially hazardous foods into insulated containers your last job before leaving to begin your journey.



Step 5: Labelling food

Packaged food sold at events that raise money solely for charitable or community causes and not for personal financial gain, does not have to be fully labelled like food bought elsewhere. However, some labelling information is still required.

This information may be displayed on the food or in connection with the food. The required information relates to:

- Mandatory warnings and declarations (eg. for allergens)
- Directions for use and storage (eg. ‘Keep refrigerated’)
- Nutritional information – only if nutrition claims are made in relation to the food (eg. ‘Low fat’)
- Characterising ingredients (percentage labelling eg. ‘10% Strawberries’). This may be declared in the ingredient listing
- Country of origin – only for packaged food, fruit, vegetables, nuts, fish/fish products and pork/pork products
- Certain declarations in regard to meat and meat products and egg and egg products.

For further information about the above labelling requirements, see the Queensland Health publication ‘*Label Buster*’, available from your local Queensland Health Public Health Unit, or at www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/ehu/28009.pdf.

Action 3

Write in any foods produced with allergens and keep on hand at your event.

You must provide this information verbally or in writing upon request by a customer.

Allergen food you produce

- gluten** (found in wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt, hence present in foods made from these grains such as flour)
- fish** and fish products
- crustaceans** (shellfish) and products
- egg** and egg products
- milk** and milk products
- soy** beans and products
- peanuts** and products
- sesame** seeds and products and other nuts and products
- sulphites** (a preservative)
- royal jelly** (secretion from the salivary glands of honey bees)
- bee pollen** (pollen collected from the legs of bees)
- propolis** (substance collected by bees)

As you are required under the *Trade Measurement Act 1990* to label all pre-packaged goods with your full name and complete address (as well as the net weight of the food), it is recommended that the following information is also included on the label:

- Description of the food eg. Lemon butter
- List of ingredients
- A date mark, eg. 'Best Before' date. Note: a 'Best Before' date indicates how long the food will maintain its good quality, whereas a 'Use By' date indicates the last day after which the food should not be consumed because of health and safety reasons.

Step 6: Food handling

Tips for safely preparing food

Where facilities will be limited, prepare your food in a suitable kitchen before the event if possible (eg. Slicing the raw meat ready for cooking). Using a communal kitchen facility, approved for that purpose by the local government, is preferred to home preparation of potentially hazardous foods.

Food that is freshly cooked at the event and served straight away, such as occurs with barbecues, has less chance of becoming unsafe than food that is pre-cooked and then taken to the event.

Never use the same utensils for raw meats and foods that are ready to eat such as cooked meats unless they have been thoroughly cleaned, sanitised and dried. Cooked food and other food that is ready to eat such as salads should always be placed on separate, clean, dry serving dishes.

Use tongs and other implements when preparing food that will not be cooked before it is eaten, such as salads and sandwiches. Gloves can be used but remember that they should be used for one task only. When you start the next task, make sure you wear a new pair of gloves.

Remember: Never wash gloves! Always throw them out before handling a different food product.

Cooking

Always cook food thoroughly. Do not partially cook food and then warm it up later. Cook chicken, sausages and hamburgers until juices run clear – steaks can be cooked to preference.

Thorough cooking will reduce dangerous bacteria to safe levels. But remember that some food poisoning bacteria can protect themselves from cooking, so while they will not be present in enough numbers to make someone sick just after the food is cooked, they can start growing again if the cooked food is left at temperatures between



5°C–60°C for too long. This is why minimising time at unsafe temperatures is so important.

Wherever possible, try to cook food as close to the time that you will be serving or selling it. If possible, take the food to the event and cook it there. This reduces the chance of the food becoming contaminated after it has been cooked and does not give food germs enough time to grow to dangerous levels on the cooked food before it is eaten.

Making sandwiches

Sandwiches are a popular product at community and fundraising events. Sandwiches require a lot of handling which increases the contact time with the person making them. Because of this it is very important that people who are ill do not make the sandwiches and that all food handlers maintain good personal hygiene and safe food handling.

Sandwiches are often filled with potentially hazardous food and should be handled and stored like any other chilled high-risk food (kept colder than 5°C).

Because of this they should be made fresh as close to the start of the event as possible. If this is not practical they will need to be properly refrigerated to ensure they are kept cold. Make sure that you have enough refrigerator space to store them safely – they will take up plenty of room.

Sandwiches should be kept under temperature control when they are transported and displayed for sale. Alternatively, you may use time, rather than temperature, to keep the sandwiches safe. For more information see temperature control (page 19).

Temperature control

Food handling on the day

To prevent food poisoning, food must be kept at safe storage temperatures of 5°C or colder or 60°C or hotter.

Bacteria that cause food-borne illness can grow at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C, which is known as the temperature danger zone. The fastest rate of growth is at around 37°C, which is human body temperature.

The Food Safety Standards also require you to have a thermometer if you prepare, handle or sell potentially hazardous food. This will enable you to check that safe temperatures are being maintained.

Action 4

Do you have an accurate probe thermometer (accurate to +/-1°C) for measuring the temperature of potentially hazardous foods?

Yes No

Keeping food cold

When you are preparing food make sure that you have enough refrigerator space or insulated boxes with ice bricks available to store the food. It is important to remember that refrigerators do not work properly when food is packed tightly into them because the cold air cannot circulate properly.

If you are running out of room in your refrigerator, remove foods that are not potentially hazardous such as soft drinks. The temperature of these foods is not critical and they can be kept cool in insulated containers with ice or ice bricks.



Cooling foods

The temperature of cooked foods for cooling must fall from 60°C (or higher) to 21°C (or lower) in less than two hours and be further reduced to below 5°C within the next four hours. This is known as the two hour/four hour rule. Putting food into shallow containers and not overfilling them will help to cool it more rapidly.

Time limit between 5°C and 60°C

The two hour/four hour rule applies to ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food. It provides the absolute maximum periods this food can be held safely at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C and what should happen to it after certain times. The times refer to the life of the food ie. it includes preparation and cooling, not just display times.

Action 5	
Check your food temperatures	
Food	Temp (°C) Time

Thermometer tips

- Thermometers should not contain glass as this could shatter and contaminate food.
 1. Clean the probe of the thermometer with a sterile wipe before inserting into food
 2. Insert probe and wait for temperature to settle on thermometer
 3. Test a number of areas of the food to ensure that the temperature is distributed evenly throughout the food
 4. Note and record temperature
 5. Clean probe in hot running water (and detergent if necessary to remove grease)
 6. Allow probe to air dry (wipe probe with sterile wipe before re-use)
 7. Take appropriate action to ensure the food is maintained at the correct temperature/ brought to the correct temperature, as necessary.

Reheating food

Cold food (which is to be served hot) will need to be quickly and thoroughly heated until it is steaming hot at the event and then kept hot until it is served. It is best to re-heat the food to a temperature of 70°C and hold the food at this temperature for at least two minutes. Use your probe thermometer to check that the internal temperature of all of the food reaches this temperature or higher, throughout the entire food.

Hygiene requirements

Food borne illness prevention

Food-borne illness is a hazard that must be effectively managed by the event organisers to avoid its occurrence and possible litigation against the organisation.

Inform food handlers that:

A person must not handle food if they are ill or have an infection, as they can easily transfer harmful bacteria or viruses to food, particularly if:

- They are vomiting or ill with diarrhoea, fever or sore throat with fever; or
- Their doctor has diagnosed them as having or carrying a food borne illness.

A person handling food must inform the event organiser that they cannot work as a food handler, if they have one of the above conditions or symptoms.

Food handlers can be held personally liable for contaminating food.

What to do

If a food handler tells you they are ill:

- Direct the food handler to immediately cease work that involves handling food; and/or
- Reallocate duties, so that the person is assigned non-food handling jobs, for as long as the condition persists ie. they can assist the running of the event, but cannot handle or be near any food.



If a food handler has:

- Infected sores on their hands, arm or face; and/or
- Any discharges from their ears, nose or eyes (such as a cold or conjunctivitis);

they must take extra precautions to prevent food being contaminated. For example, cover the skin sore or take medication to dry up the discharge. They can continue to work with food for sale if the appropriate precautions are taken.

General hygiene

Each food handler must take all reasonable precautions to ensure that food or food contact surfaces are not contaminated from their body or anything they are wearing. This includes hair, saliva, mucus, sweat, blood, fingernails, clothes, jewellery or bandages.

A food handler must:

- Avoid contact with ready-to-eat food, such as salads and cooked food. Always use clean tongs or other implements to handle the food
- Not taste test food with the same utensil that is being used to prepare the food, unless the utensil is thoroughly cleaned and sanitised between each contact with their mouth and the food. Hands and fingers must not be used for taste testing
- Wear clean clothing and change it when it becomes dirty or soiled
- Make sure bandages and dressings on exposed parts of their body such as the hands, arms or face are enclosed with a waterproof covering
- Not eat over uncovered food or equipment (includes utensils and any other food contact surface)
- Not sneeze, blow or cough over uncovered food or equipment and utensils
- Not spit, smoke or chew tobacco where food is handled; and importantly-
- Wash their hands whenever it is necessary or required.

Hand washing

The most important measure to protect food from contamination is proper hand washing, because clean and dry hands prevent the transfer of harmful germs. All food handlers must wash their hands:

- Before handling food
- In between handling raw food and food that is cooked or ready-to-eat eg. raw meat then salads
- After using the toilet
- After smoking, coughing, sneezing, blowing nose, eating, drinking
- After touching their hair, scalp, mouth, nose or ear canal or other body opening
- After handling money (preferably, food handlers should not also be involved in cash handling)
- After touching another person, including shaking hands
- After handling garbage, other waste or non-food substances not known to be clean and sanitary.

There are five steps that should be followed when washing hands:



Step 1: **WET** hands

Step 2: **SOAP** hands

Step 3: **RUB** thoroughly - wrists, forearms, between fingers

Step 4: **RINSE** in clean water

Step 5: **DRY** on paper towel

Courtesy Cormorant Technical Services P/l.

Action 6

Have all food handlers been made aware of their health and hygiene obligations?

Yes No

Be aware that cloth towels require frequent replacement (and sanitising during laundering), to ensure that they do not act as a vehicle for the transfer of germs.



Step 7: Cleaning and sanitising

There are three steps needed to effectively clean and sanitise equipment:

- **Washing;**
- **Sanitising; and**
- **Drying.**

Equipment such as cutting boards, bowls and utensils need to be thoroughly washed in hot soapy water. After washing, the equipment should look clean and there should be no food or anything else visible. Effective cleaning will remove most of the dangerous bacteria present. Sanitising will then kill any bacteria that remain.

A dishwasher is very effective at sanitising if it has a hot wash and drying cycle. If using chemical sanitisers, make sure that they are suitable for using with food contact surfaces and follow the instructions on the container as all sanitisers work differently. If you are using very hot water, take extra care to avoid being burnt or scalded.

All equipment must be thoroughly dried before it is reused. Air-drying is best but tea towels can be used if they are clean and replaced when they are wet or dirty.

If you are washing up at an event being held outdoors, make sure you have access to plenty of hot water. If hot water is not available, disposable eating and drinking utensils should be used and enough cooking utensils provided to last the duration of the event so that washing up is not necessary.

Action 7

Make sure that everything (utensils and food contact surfaces) used in preparing food is clean and germ free.

Specific events

Sausage sizzles and barbecues

Sausage sizzles and barbecues are a popular way to raise money for charities and community groups.

If you take some simple food safety precautions and sell freshly cooked food straight from the barbecue, the food should be safe.

Preparing and cooking food safely at sausage sizzles and barbecues

The following precautions should be taken to ensure the food is kept safe:

- Slice and marinate raw meat in a suitable kitchen or licensed food premises before leaving for the site
- Pack raw meat in insulated boxes with enough ice bricks for the length of the trip
- Handle food with tongs or other equipment. Separate equipment must be used to handle raw and cooked meats (or other ready-to-eat food). Hands should not contact food unless absolutely necessary and then handwashing facilities must be available. Hands must always be washed after handling raw meat. If gloves are used they should be single use only
- Keep cooked meat and salads separate from raw meat at all times to prevent contamination – never place cooked meat back on the trays that held the raw meat
- Cover food to protect it from contamination;
- Use clean and dry equipment for serving the food
- Cook chicken, sausages and hamburgers until juices run clear – beef steaks can be cooked to preference
- Throw left-over food away unless refrigeration equipment (or other means) is available to rapidly cool the food.



Disposable utensils

Wherever possible, single-use (disposable) utensils such as knives, forks, plates and cups should be used and thrown away after use. These items should be kept covered until required and should be handled carefully to minimise any risk of contamination. Re-useable items such as mugs should not be used unless there are facilities available on site to wash and sanitise them.

Water

Water is needed for hand washing or for washing up equipment. A water supply, adequate to last the duration of the event, needs to be provided. The water must be of drinkable quality. If using containers to transport water to an event, make sure that they are clean and have not been used to store chemicals or food products.

If you do not have access to hot water for washing up, take enough equipment so that there will always be separate equipment available for use with all raw and cooked food handled on the day.

Hand washing facilities

Hand washing facilities should have hot running water, which is discharged to a sewer or other approved waste-water disposal system.

However these facilities are not available at some sites. Suitable temporary hand-washing facilities that provide running water can be set up using a large water container with a tap at its base. Another container such as a bucket should be provided for waste-water to keep the site dry and clean.

An adequate supply of soap and paper towels must be provided and a bin should be supplied for used towels. This helps keep the site tidy and prevents contamination from used towels.

Camps

Preparing food for camps can be very challenging as facilities found in the home or commercial food premises are not generally available at camp sites. There are a number of problems that need careful consideration and proper planning to ensure that the camp is memorable only for the outdoor experience and not for a food poisoning outbreak that occurred.

The four main areas to be considered are:

- Temperature control of food
- Water supply
- Hand-washing facilities
- Protecting food from contamination.

In addition, the disposal of both liquid and solid wastes can present difficulties, which can lead to the contamination of food.

Temperature control

The use of potentially hazardous foods when camping should be kept to a minimum unless the food can be kept colder than 5°C. Potentially hazardous foods support the growth of bacteria that can cause illness, if bacteria are present in sufficient numbers. For a list of potentially hazardous foods see definitions (page 4).

If your camp is catering for a large number of people, it may be practical to hire gas powered refrigeration equipment or arrange to use appropriate facilities adjacent to the campsite.

If you only have limited equipment to keep food cold, buy potentially hazardous foods fresh daily and throw away any leftover food.

The majority of food purchased for a camp, particularly where access to water and electricity is limited, should be shelf-stable. These are foods that do not need temperature controlled storage until they are opened. Examples include long life milk (heat treated in the carton), canned meats,



fish and dairy products and dried and dehydrated foods.

Water supply

Easy access to a safe water supply when camping is probably the most important requirement because water is necessary for preparing and cooking food, cleaning equipment and to maintain personal hygiene. Your camp must have access to water of drinking quality.

If water at the site is not suitable for drinking, it will need to be treated. The easiest way to treat this water is to boil it, but it has to be protected from contamination during cooling and storage. However, it is also not always practical to boil the amount of water needed for food preparation and personal hygiene.

Chemical sterilisation is another option but always follow the manufacturers instructions when using these chemicals and it must be suitable for contact with food.

If water of drinking quality is not available on site or the above options are not feasible for your camp, a quantity of drinking quality water, which is adequate for all activities it will be required for, will need to be transported to the campsite.

Handwashing

For effective handwashing, clean running water is necessary to ensure that soap can function properly and hands can be rinsed prior to drying. During camping, clean running water is not always readily available so a suitable alternative must be provided to ensure that hands will not contaminate food. You will need to obtain approval to use alternative handwashing methods from your local government. This could include the use of sterile wipes or cleaning and sanitising gels.

If you have access to water of drinking quality, temporary hand washing facilities that provide running water should be erected. This can be achieved by using a large water container with a tap at the base of the container. Another container such as a bucket should be provided for wastewater to keep the site of the stall dry and clean.

A supply of soap and paper towels must be provided at the water container so that handwashing can be undertaken properly. A bin should be supplied for used towels. This helps keep the site tidy and prevents contamination from used towels.

Protecting food from contamination

It is very important to protect food from contamination. Bacteria cannot move from place to place by themselves. They need help and poor food handling practices allow bacteria to be transferred to food. The risk of contamination is often greater when camping because only basic equipment and amenities may be available. Also, food and water is more exposed to environmental contaminants.

To protect food from contamination:

- Wash your hands! (Refer to page 23 for details)
- Keep food in clean, covered containers
- Use separate utensils, chopping boards and other equipment for different foods
- Keep raw meat and raw fruits and vegetables well away from foods that are ready-to-eat such as cooked meat and prepared salads
- Wash and dry eating and drinking utensils thoroughly and store in a clean place.



Other considerations

Rubbish and wastewater attract animals and pests and contaminate food if they are not stored and disposed of properly.

Rubbish should be kept well away from food preparation areas, in leak proof, covered containers. It is best practice to take rubbish receptacles with you when you leave the site, for disposal at an approved council refuse tip. Environmental protection laws prohibit a person dumping waste in non-approved areas.

Drinking water sources such as streams, wells and bores should be protected. Access to the water collection point should be restricted and the area protected from animals and foreign matter. Only clean containers, specifically kept for drinking water, should be used and they should be kept with lids fastened and stored carefully at all times, whether full or empty.

There may be a designated disposal area at your camping site for wastewater. Always use this. Do not dispose of wastewater into or near water sources.

For further information

Action 8

Contact your local government environmental health officer for further information or assistance with:

- Food business licence requirements
- Food Safety Standards

Contact your local Queensland Health Public Health Unit for further information or assistance with:

- Food labelling requirements.

Contact the Dept of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (Office of Fair Trading) for assistance

- Weights and measures requirements.

To download free copies of the Food Standards Code, the guides to these and other fact sheets on the national food requirements, go to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand website: www.foodstandards.gov.au.

Your local Public Health Unit should also have copies of these if you are unable to access the internet.

Licensing requirements and offence provisions are set out in the Queensland *Food Act 2006*, which can be accessed at: www.legislation.qld.gov.au.



Last minute checklist

Action 1

- ▶ You are operating under your local government requirements for licensing of a food business.

Action 2

- ▶ You have nominated someone to be responsible for overseeing food safety (a qualified food safety supervisor if required).
- ▶ You have a list of the food handlers who have been briefed about skills and knowledge.

Action 3

- ▶ Foods produced with known allergens have been listed (in case information is requested by the purchaser).
- ▶ The type of food and the name and address of the person who made it, has been listed and identified on food labels or displayed in connection with the food.

Action 4

- ▶ You have a probe thermometer accurate to $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$ for measuring the temperature of potentially hazardous foods.

Action 5

- ▶ You have a system to check food temperatures.
- ▶ You have adequate storage facilities (refrigeration, coolroom, eskies, bain maries).

Action 6

- ▶ All food handlers have been made aware of their health and hygiene obligations.
- ▶ Food handlers that are ill have been excluded from food handling.

Action 7

- ▶ All the equipment and food contact surfaces that are used in preparing food are kept clean and germ free.