

Guidelines for **Mobile Food Businesses**



About this guide

Food prepared or sold from markets or outdoor events must comply with food safety laws. There are certain minimum requirements that need to be met. This is to ensure Tasmanians are eating food that has been safely stored, prepared, cooked and served.

The introduction of state wide registration of mobile food businesses means that there are now two types of food businesses operating within the state. Food businesses that are fixed in location (eg café's, restaurants, supermarkets, take away shops), and mobile food businesses (eg food vans and temporary food stalls).

This guideline is intended to cover mobile food businesses that operate from a mobile structure. A mobile structure includes: a vehicle, trailer, cart, tent, stall, booth, pontoon, table, barbeque, pizza oven, or other mobile structure.

This guide was developed for individuals, businesses, charities and community organisations that operate mobile food businesses. It is also intended as a tool for councils, who manage the registration, inspection and enforcement of food laws in Tasmania. It sets out many of the things needed to comply with the *Food Act 2003* and the relevant provisions of the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*.

The document is intended as a guide. Some councils may have stricter requirements for particular events, eg festivals. It is important to contact the council to discuss your intended operation. They will be able to help you meet the required standard for the events you plan to participate in.



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Registration Requirements

If you intend to operate a mobile food business, you will need to notify your local council before you commence operation. You may also need to apply for a registration if you intend to sell potentially hazardous foods. See explanation below.



Potentially hazardous foods

Foods are potentially hazardous if they have to be kept at certain temperatures to minimise the growth of bacteria that may be present in the food, or to prevent toxins forming. That is, foods that need to be kept hot (60°C or above), or foods that need to be kept cold (5°C or below).

Foods that are potentially hazardous include:

- raw and ready-to-eat meat and fish and any foods made of these items, such as ham, pies, fish fingers
- milks and food containing milk such as cream, custard, dairy-based desserts
- ready-to-eat foods such as salads, cut fruit and vegetables
- cooked rice and pasta
- ready-to-eat food such as lasagne, curry, sushi and salad sandwiches.



Single Certificate of Registration

Tasmanian food laws allow for a mobile food business to operate throughout the state on a single registration. It is important to consider which markets, shows, festivals you plan to visit, and/or which other council areas you intend to operate in.

Your home council will manage the registration process, fees, and associated conditions of registration.

For mobile food businesses, this means that there is only one registration process.

Note: The home council is the council area where the equipment and materials for the food business are stored when not in use, or the garage address for a food van.

Duration of Registration

Registration for a mobile food business is valid for up to 12 months. There is usually an annual renewal process. You can apply for a once off registration for fundraising events (eg a fundraiser BBQ for a charity), or place limits on the duration of the registration.

Council will issue you with a Certificate of Registration that you must show to a EHO on request or a copy thereof. Councils have authority to inspect a food business operating in their council area. If the business does not comply with food safety laws they can also issue a warning, a notice, or any other penalty that may apply.

In some situations an event organiser will have their own process for approval for mobile businesses at an event. This is separate to the registration of mobile food businesses and is not covered by these guidelines.

Businesses should check with both council and the event organiser if unsure about operating at these events.

Example: A food business wants to run a booth selling cheese at an annual festival that only runs for five days. The home council may issue a single-event registration or a statewide registration.

If a food business operates without first notifying or registering with council, penalties may apply.

If you are unsure if you need to register, contact your council environmental health officer (EHO).

Design, Construction and Location

Mobile food businesses can vary noticeably in their set-up and operation. In general, it is important that the design and construction of the mobile structure allows all activities to occur safely. An overarching principle is to prevent food and food contact surfaces becoming contaminated.

Adequate space

Give adequate space for all equipment, food, food contact surfaces and the activities conducted on site. For both mobile food vans and food stalls, space is limited, and careful consideration is required for the layout. Requirements will vary depending on the types of foods being handled, cooking facilities (if required), food display areas, food storage and the number of people operating the business.

Example: A mobile food van sells hamburgers. They have separate spaces for cooking meat, assembling the burgers and display. Salad ingredients and raw meat are stored in separate chilled sealed containers.

Layout

A floor plan or layout may be requested with your registration application. It should show all benches, cooking equipment, storage and washing facilities. For businesses planning to operate in more than one council area, the layout that you initially submit to your home council for state wide registration is the layout that you will adopt in all council areas. The intent is to be consistent during operation and to allow councils to accurately assess the application. Keep a copy of your layout with you when operating. If you are unsure, please contact your council EHO.

Site selection

Select a site which is level, dry under foot and in an area where the wind is not able to blow dust or other contaminants onto food or food contact surfaces. A suitable place for a mobile food van may differ to that for a food stall. Council can advise if the proposed design is appropriate for the location.

Equipment, fixtures and fittings

Use equipment, fixtures and fittings constructed of smooth and impervious material to aid easy and effective cleaning. Use appropriate materials for construction to an appropriate standard.

Floors, walls and ceilings

If outdoors, temporary food stalls should have three sides and a ceiling designed to maintain adequate ventilation and to protect food. Where possible, all wall, floor and ceiling joints should be seamless to aid effective cleaning. You can set up outdoor on existing surfaces provided it does not pose a risk to food safety. If you plan to use a floor covering, ensure it does not pose a potential food safety risk, use a smooth and impervious floor covering, such as a ground sheet or sealed timber. Council may specify which ground surface or covering is adequate.

Weather conditions may change (eg rain) that influences the appropriateness of flooring used and over time the condition of unsealed ground cover may deteriorate with increased traffic.

For mobile food vans, the construction and design of the internal fittings and fixtures must be appropriate.

Approaches used for selecting appropriate internal fixtures and fittings for fixed food premises also apply for mobile food vans. Floors should be durable, impervious to dirt and grease and can be readily cleaned. The ceiling and walls must allow for adequate ventilation. If cooking within the food van, an exhaust system or similar may be necessary to minimise the build-up of steam, mould, grease and fumes. If installed, the exhaust system needs to be constructed in a way that prevents entry or harbourage of pests.

Some outside stalls may not need side walls. But it must:

- have a roof
- be located in an area protected from dust, fumes, etc
- be selling low risk pre-packaged foods, or be a fundraising barbecue.

Some stalls may require a temporary occupancy permit, however, you will not need a permit if your structure meets one of the exemptions as outlined in the *Building Act* and relevant *Building Regulations*.

If you are unsure, please contact a building surveyor.

Ventilation

Provide adequate ventilation to prevent the build-up of steam, mould, grease and fumes.

Other considerations

Other requirements relating to fire, structural, electrical and gas safety may apply. For more information, contact a building surveyor.

Washing Facilities

An adequate supply of water needs to be available for the activities of the mobile food business. The amount of water required will vary based on the type of activities performed. There needs to be sufficient water to clean, wash hands, clean equipment and wash food, plus any other water use during the day. The water must be potable. If non-potable water is available, it is the responsibility of the business to demonstrate that using non-potable water will not pose a food safety hazard.

Hand washing facilities

Provide a hand washing facility within the stall, with warm running potable water from a single spout. You must also have sufficient liquid soap and single use paper towel.

A mobile food van must have a permanent hand washing facility.

Info: The water should not be so hot that it scalds and not so cold that people are reluctant to use it.

For temporary food stalls, the facility can be simple. As a minimum, you must have 20-litre water container with a tap, a bucket to collect wastewater, liquid soap and paper towel. Portable hand washing and equipment washing stations can be hired (eg from businesses that hire out portable toilets).

The water must be warm. In exceptional circumstances, cold water may be permitted. But this must be discussed and pre-arranged with a council EHO.

Hand sanitisers

Hand sanitiser is not a replacement for liquid soap. Hand sanitiser does not replace hand washing. However, it can be used in conjunction with liquid soap and water for hand washing. The use of hand sanitisers cannot replace liquid soap and water as they perform different functions:

- Soap breaks down fat, grease and dirt, allowing bacteria to be washed off.
- Hand sanitisers kill bacteria on the surface of hands but not under grease and dirt.

Equipment washing facilities

A separate facility must be provided to wash equipment. To collect waste water, you must at least have a bucket. For basic equipment washing, a bucket or dish large enough to effectively wash the largest piece of equipment is required. The facility must be supplied with warm water to allow adequate cleaning of all equipment.

Alternatively, equipment may be taken off site and washed and sanitised in a suitably sized double bowl sink or suitable dishwasher. This is provided that the storage of dirty equipment in the stall does not pose a risk to food or food contact surfaces. There must be enough clean equipment available for the duration of operation of the mobile food business.

All equipment and utensils must be cleaned and sanitised before being stored. They must also be stored in a way that protects them from contamination.



Waste Management

Provide an adequately sized refuse container with a fitted lid and bin liner for the disposal of waste. It must be stored in a location that does not allow contamination of food or food contact surfaces.

Waste oil must be stored in a container labelled 'Waste Oil Only' and disposed of at an approved waste transfer station.

Wastewater

You must have provision to collect and dispose of wastewater. If you need to store the wastewater during an event, the container must be clearly labelled 'Wastewater Only'. For a small-scale event this may be as simple as an appropriately labelled bucket. However, for events where large amounts of wastewater are generated, a holding tank or similar may be required.

These provisions may differ across the state, for different events and locations, so be sure to contact your council EHO for more information.

Operational Requirements

Protection of food

Use disposable gloves or clean utensils to serve ready-to-eat food. Food must not be touched with bare hands. Provide clean tongs or spoons for salads and other ready-to-eat foods.

Provide single-use eating/drinking utensils and keep them adequately protected from contamination. Provide sauce, mustard and other condiments in squeeze-type dispensers or individual sealed packets.

It is good practice to separate duties for staff, such as ensuring one food handler handles money and another prepares food.

Food samples

Food given away as samples is still deemed to be sold under the provision of the *Food Act 2003* and must be:

- adequately supervised by a staff member
- covered with a protective barrier to minimise the likelihood of contamination
- labelled with signage to indicate 'no double dipping' or 'single serve only'.

Single-use sampling utensils, such as toothpicks or spoons, must be stored in a container that is separate from used sampling utensils. The container must be labelled to clearly indicate this to the customer.

Food displays

All food on display must be either:

- wrapped or packaged
- enclosed in a suitable display cabinet
- protected by a physical barrier such as a sneeze guard
- located so as not to be openly accessible to the public.

Tea, coffee, cordial and other beverages must be dispensed from an enclosed or lidded receptacle equipped with a tap or spout.

Food supply

- Source foods from licensed and reputable companies.
- Purchase food as close to the event as possible to avoid need for storage and reduce transportation times. It may be appropriate to source food on the way to an event.

Transporting food

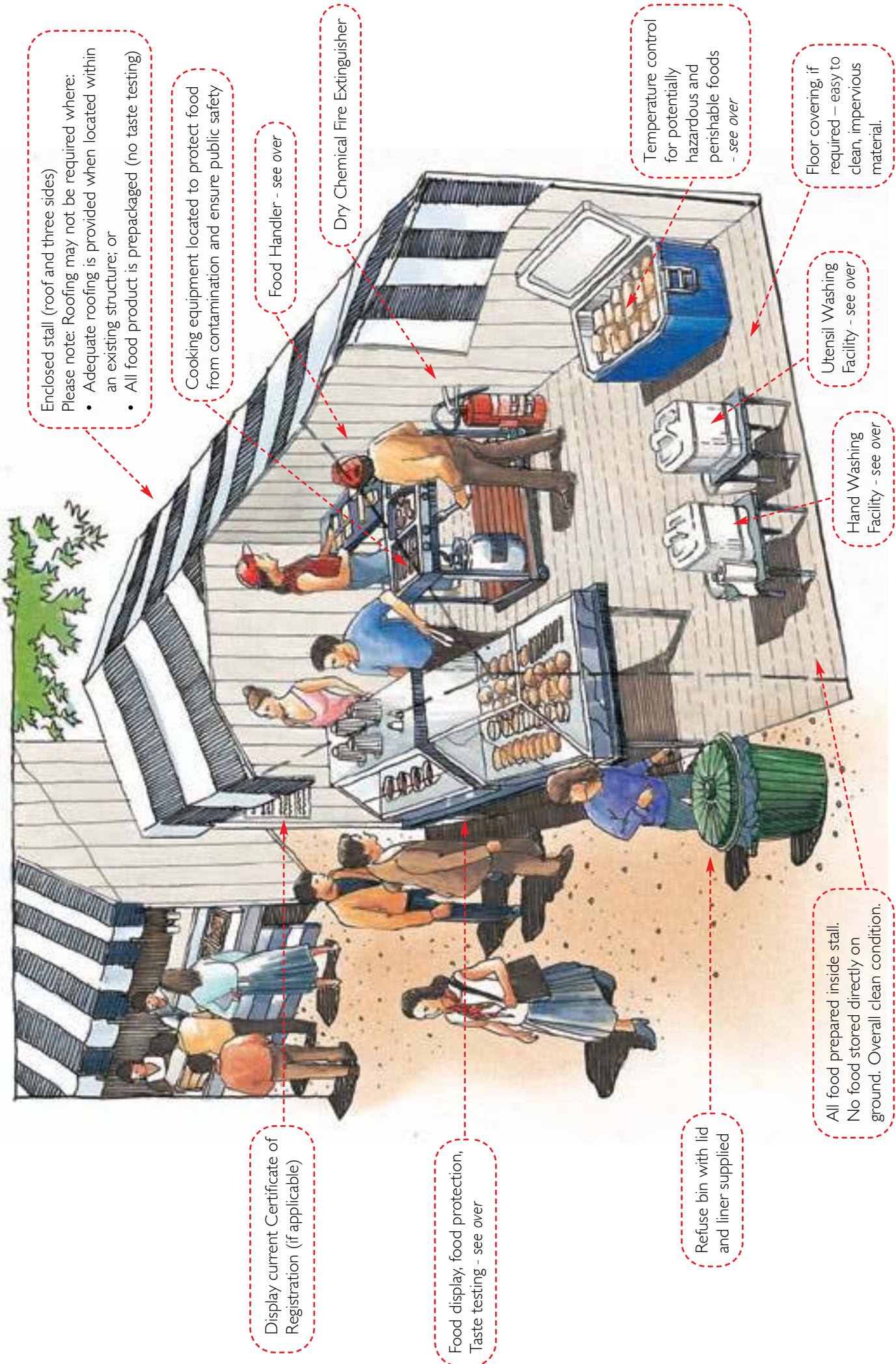
- All food must be transported so that it is protected from contamination.
- Potentially hazardous foods must be transported under temperature control. For example, in an esky with sufficient ice to keep the food below 5°C.
- All containers, portable coolers and parts of vehicles used to transport food must be washed and sanitised before and after use.
- Transport raw meats in separate containers from ready-to-eat products such as salads and bread.
- Pets are not allowed in food preparation or storage areas.

Food storage

- No food is to be stored directly on the ground. It must be wrapped, packaged or kept in enclosed containers.
- All stored food must be covered or in sealed containers.
- Raw and ready-to-eat foods must be separated to prevent cross-contamination.
- If food needs to be kept under refrigeration, ensure there is adequate cold storage space. For large events hiring a mobile cool room may be necessary.



Minimum Standards for the Operation of Temporary Food Stall



Enclosed stall (roof and three sides)

Please note: Roofing may not be required where:

- Adequate roofing is provided when located within an existing structure; or
- All food product is prepackaged (no taste testing)

Cooking equipment located to protect food from contamination and ensure public safety

Food Handler - see over

Dry Chemical Fire Extinguisher

Temperature control for potentially hazardous and perishable foods - see over

Floor covering, if required - easy to clean, impervious material.

Utensil Washing Facility - see over

Hand Washing Facility - see over

Display current Certificate of Registration (if applicable)

Food display, food protection, Taste testing - see over

Refuse bin with lid and liner supplied

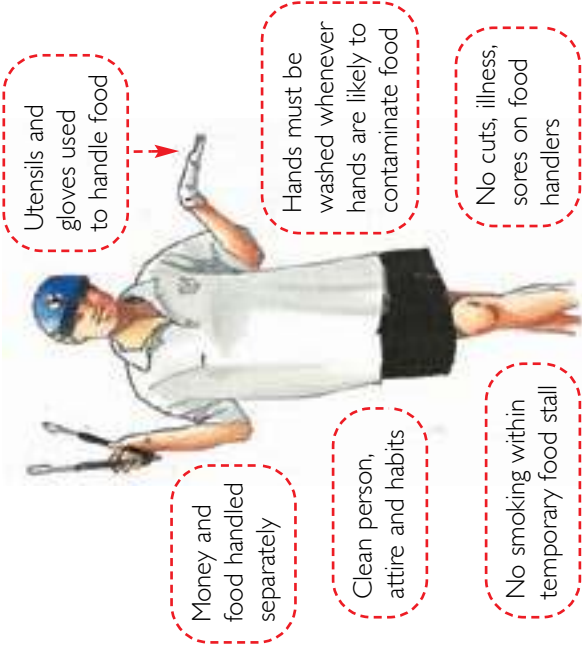
All food prepared inside stall. No food stored directly on ground. Overall clean condition.

Minimum utensil washing facilities



Two containers of sufficient capacity are to also be provided for adequate cleaning of utensils

Food handlers



Sauces, condiments and single serve utensils



Temperature control of potentially hazardous food



20 litre water container with tap labelled 'Hand Washing Only'

Liquid soap and paper towels supplied for staff use

Container to catch waste water labelled 'Waste Water Only' disposed to sewer

Provide appropriate sneeze barrier

Signage must be provided to all taste testing stating 'No double dipping, single serve only'

Food Handling and Hygiene Requirements

Temperature control

- All cold foods (including raw and cooked meats, prepared salads and dairy products) must be stored at or below 5°C.
- All hot foods must be stored at or above 60°C.
- All frozen food must be kept frozen.
- A food grade probe thermometer must be readily available for testing the temperature of food products. The thermometer must be accurate to $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$.
- All takeaway food prepared at the mobile business must be served immediately unless there is a suitable food warmer or cold cabinet display.
- Pre-prepared food products or pre-cooked foods which promote bacterial growth must be stored and displayed at a temperature at or below 5°C
- Ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food can be kept between 5°C and 60°C for a short amount of time using the “two hour/four hour” rule:
 - For a total of less than two hours – refrigerate or use immediately.
 - For a total of between two and four hours – use immediately and do not put in the fridge.
 - For a total of four hours – must be thrown out.

Note: if compliance with the two hour/four hour rule cannot be demonstrated, a council EHO may require you to discard the product. To document compliance you must note the time and date the product was manufactured and at what temperatures and for how long it was stored.

Cooking, reheating and cooling food

- Where cooking is carried out adequate provisions must be made to protect the walls, floors and ceiling from heat, flame and splashing.
- All hot food must be re-heated to an internal temperature of 60°C before serving.
- When cooling cooked potentially hazardous foods, cool the food:
 - within two hours – from 60°C to 21°C
 - within a further four hours – from 21°C to 5°C.

Thermometers

A simple way to check the temperature of food is to use a food grade thermometer. If your stall sells potentially hazardous foods you must have one at-hand. Any probe type thermometer that has an accuracy of $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ is appropriate.

When using the thermometer it can take a few seconds to get a good reading. Be sure to clean and sanitise the probe after each use.

To get a good reading the probe should be close to the centre of the food being checked. It is best to check several different spots. For refrigerated foods, different parts of the fridge may be at different temperatures, so be sure to check more than one spot. For packaged foods place the probe between two packages, it will only be an estimate but this way you will not damage the food for sale.

Labelling

Pre-packaged food sold for commercial purposes must be labelled in accordance with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

A guide for food labelling (including community or charity organisations) can be viewed at: www.foodstandards.gov.au

Even if the food being sold does not need a label, food businesses operators must be able to tell customers what is in the food if asked. This includes possible allergens.

Info: Common allergens in foods include: dairy, eggs, nuts (tree and peanut), gluten, fish, seeds, pollen, and soy.

Health and hygiene of food handlers

- Hands must be washed regularly, including but not limited to, after:
 - using the toilet
 - blowing your nose
 - taking breaks
 - handling different types of food products
 - smoking
 - any other activity that has the likelihood to contaminate hands, food or food contact surfaces.
- All food handlers must have good personal hygiene and clean clothing.
- All open wounds must be covered with a coloured waterproof dressing. If the wound is on the hand, the hand must also be covered with a disposable glove.
- Food handlers must not smoke in or around the food stall.
- Keep jewellery to a minimum.
- Disposable gloves should be changed frequently and hands washed with liquid soap and water.
- When unpackaged food is handled aprons should preferably be worn and long hair should be tied back or held in a hair net.
- No person suffering gastro symptoms or has suffered gastro symptoms in the previous 48 hours is permitted to handle food.
- Food handlers with other conditions such as hay-fever, common cold or skin lesions such as sores or abrasions may contaminate food. Measures should be taken to ensure safe production, eg limit staff with these conditions to handle money only.

Gloves

Gloves are an effective way to protect hands from contamination. Clean gloves also protect food and food contact surfaces from being contaminated by hands. However, they may give a false impression of safety. Just like hands they can become dirty or contaminated posing a food safety risk. Because of this, gloves should be changed regularly. There are a few simple things that will help keep food safe:

- If your gloves look dirty, change them.
- Gloved hands should not handle money and serve food.
- Change gloves between handling different types of food (eg raw, cooked, ready to eat).

A useful rule is: the times when you should wash hands are the same times when gloves should be changed.

Skills and knowledge

All food handlers must have appropriate skills and knowledge in food safety and hygiene matters relevant to their work activities. The proprietor of a temporary food stall may be required to demonstrate adequate food safety knowledge to a council EHO as part of the registration process.

Cleaning and sanitising of surfaces

All equipment and food contact surfaces in the food stall must be cleaned and sanitised both before and after use. Walls, floor and ceiling covering must be cleaned daily, or more frequently if they pose a risk of contamination to food or food contact surfaces.

The correct order for cleaning food contact surfaces is as follows:

1. Wipe away any food scraps and rinse with water.
2. Wash with hot water and detergent to remove any grease.
3. Rinse off any loose dirt or detergent foam with clean water.
4. Sanitise using a food grade sanitiser.

Please note: it is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions. All chemicals and cleaning equipment must be stored away from food and food contact surfaces.

Appendix I – Temporary Food Stall Guidelines: Checklist for Businesses

Here is a list of the types of things to consider when setting up a temporary food stall. Not everything applies to all stalls.

Have you notified council?

Do you need to be registered?

Does your food stall have a layout plan?

Is there appropriate ground cover at the site, or do you need your to bring your own?

Is your structure exempt from a temporary occupancy permit?

Have you considered how to clean your food stall, before, during and after the event?

Does your stall have a roof and walls?

Is potable water available at the event?

• If not, how will you handle this?

Have you provided or is there available?

- Warm water for washing hands
- Soap and hand towels
- Water for washing utensils
- Waste disposal for:
 - General waste
 - Waste water
 - Waste oil

How are you protecting the food you sell? Have you got or do you need:

- Disposable gloves
- Utensils for serving/ single use for patrons
- Food display (eg wrapped, cabinets, sneeze guard)?
- Condiment dispenser (eg mustard, sauce)

How is food stored during transport?

- Does it need temperature control?
- Are raw and ready to eat foods separate?
- Are containers clean and ready to use?

Where do you get the food from?

- Cooked onsite
- Bought on way to event
- Pre-prepared before event

How will you store food?

- Before the event
- During the event
- Raw/uncooked food
- Ready to eat

How are drinks served?

What happens to left-over food?

How is temperature control going to be monitored for:

- Hot food
- Cold Food

Do you have or need a probe thermometer?

Are pre-packaged foods labelled properly?

Do your food handlers know what to do?

- Food safety training
- Understand food safety
- Washing hands
- Illness and personal hygiene
- Clean clothes, hair tied back
- Prevent cross-contamination

You may be exempt from one or more parts of the guidelines. If you are unsure about anything contact your local council. They can help you to make sure you get everything right.

More Information

For more information, contact a council EHO or go to:

Department of Health and Human Services
www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/food_safety

Food Act 2003
www.thelaw.tas.gov.au

Food Safety Standards
www.foodstandards.gov.au





Tasmanian
Government

Public Health Services

Department of Health and Human Services

www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/food_safety

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