

Opening a New Food Business – *What You Need To Know*

The Food Safety Standards (FSS), (Chapter 3 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code) contain requirements for all new and existing food businesses to ensure that only safe and suitable food is sold. *Copies of the Standards are available through the website at www.foodstandards.gov.au.*

Home-Based Food Businesses should refer to Council's factsheet on [*Home-Based Food Businesses*](#).

The Fit-Out Process

At the earliest stages of planning and design it is strongly advised that contact be made with Council's Environmental Health Department to discuss your fit-out requirements. Fit-outs are assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the proposed operation of the food business.

Council's Environmental Health Department can offer a free plan assessment service that provides advice prior to construction commencing. This service is useful in helping proprietors avoid making costly alterations once construction has started or have been completed.

Information Required for a Plan Assessment

When submitting your plan assessment it is important to include the following information:

1. **A copy of your floor plan.** Plans must:
 - a. Be of a suitable scale and clearly identify the size of food handling areas depicting the premise layout and all major equipment, including but not limited to, fixtures and fittings i.e. benches, mechanical ventilation; dry food storage, fridges, freezers, ovens, hand wash basins, sinks, dishwashers, door and window openings, staff toilets, location of wastewater disposal, location of the waste area.
 - b. Specify the types of finishes to floors, walls and ceilings; these must be smooth and impervious and be able to be easily and effectively cleaned in accordance with FSS 3.2.3. Clauses 10 and 11.
2. **Other information required:**
 - a. The types of food that will be processed and how these foods will be processed.
 - b. A process flow diagram(s) detailing stages of food handling from the incoming raw materials to the finished product and where each stage of food handling activities will be undertaken.

Designing and constructing your Food Premises

FSS 3.2.3 – Food Premise and Equipment requires food businesses to ensure that premises are designed and constructed to minimise opportunities for food contamination; but please note that it is also important to check with Council's Development Section prior to the commencement of any proposed work, as Planning and /or Building approval may also be required.

Adequate Space (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 3)

The design and construction of food premises must:

- Be appropriate for the activities for which the premises are used.
- Provide adequate space for the activities to be conducted on the premises and for fixtures, fittings and equipment used for those activities.
- Permit the food premises to be effectively cleaned and sanitised.
- To the extent that is practicable, exclude dirt, dust, fumes, pests, other contaminants and not provide for the harbourage for pests.

Water Supply (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 4)

- An adequate supply of water must be made available for all food processing activities.
- The water supply must have adequate capacity, volume and pressure to enable the food business to operate properly, including during peak times.
- Water used must be acceptable for human consumption.

Sewage and Wastewater Disposal (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 5)

- All sewage and waste water must be disposed of to sewer, or where sewer is not available, an approved on-site wastewater disposal system is constructed and located so that there is no likelihood of the sewage and waste water polluting the water supply or contaminating food.
- Dirty cleaning water e.g. mop water, must be disposed of via a cleaner's sink. Disposal into food preparation sinks is not permitted.
- Contact SA Water (Trade Waste Section) for advice on requirements for grease arrestors and other pre-treatment devices on (08) 7424 1336. Grease arrestors must be located away from areas where food, equipment or packaging materials are handled or stored and preferably located outside the building.

Storage of Garbage and Recyclables (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 6)

- Food businesses must have facilities that adequately contain the volume and type of garbage and recyclable matter produced by the business.
- Food waste must be stored in easily cleaned containers which are enclosed to keep pests and animals away and minimise the production of odours.

Ventilation (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 7)

- Sufficient natural or mechanical ventilation is required to effectively remove fumes, smoke steam and vapours.
- Generally, mechanical ventilation will be required to be installed above most cooking, frying and steaming appliances.

Lighting (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 8)

- Sufficient lighting must be provided to enable staff to carry out food handling operations, cleaning and sanitising and other activities.
- All ceiling lighting in food preparation areas should be fitted with suitable plastic covers (diffusers) or be of shatterproof design.

Floors (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 10)

- Finishes must be appropriate for the intended food activity.
- Must be able to be effectively cleaned.
- Must be unable to absorb grease, food particles or water.
- Must not allow for the ponding of water.
- Must not provide harbourage for pests.

Depending on the location and activities undertaken, examples of suitable finishes may include ceramic tiles, seam welded vinyl, or smooth finished concrete render (sealed or coated). Coving should be considered in wet food handling areas or areas requiring flushing with water to clean.

Walls and Ceilings (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 11)

- Must be appropriate for the intended food activity.
- Must be provided where they are necessary to protect food against contamination.
- Must be sealed to prevent entry of dirt, dust and pests.
- Must be unable to absorb grease, food particles or water.
- Must be able to be easily and effectively cleaned.

High maintenance areas (i.e. above sinks, benches and behind cooking equipment) may require durable finishes such as tiles, stainless steel or concrete render (sealed or coated). Ceilings should be of continuous construction i.e. flushed plasterboard (avoid drop-in panels) and walls and ceilings requiring painting should be finished with a washable, durable paint of light colour.

Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 12)

- Generally, must be fit for intended use and adequate for the production of safe and suitable food.

- Must be designed, constructed, located and installed so as to be not likely to cause food contamination, and be able to be easily and effectively cleaned. Particular consideration should be given to finishes and materials for food contact surfaces. Suitable food grade materials may include stainless steel, laminate and certain plastics.

Sinks: The number and size of sinks that may be required depends on factors including but not limited to, the type of operations that need a sink (eg. washing food, washing and sanitising equipment), the scale of operations, volume of food and equipment that needs to be washed, frequency of washing tasks, the size of objects to be washed.

Washing of eating and drinking utensils and food contact equipment:

- (1) Double bowl sink (minimum) – one side for cleaning and the other for rinsing/sanitising, **or**
- (2) A single bowl sink plus a dishwashing unit capable of sanitising in the rinse phase.

Washing/preparation of fruit and vegetables: A separate, designated sink is required.

Handwashing Facilities (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 14)

- Must be permanent fixtures and be provided within areas where food handlers work and wherever unprotected food or food contact surfaces are handled.
- Must be located immediately adjacent to toilets or toilet cubicles.
- Must be located where they can be easily accessed and remain unobstructed.
- Must be connected to a supply of warm running water (preferably through a mixer tap).
- At least one hand basin must be provided in areas where unprotected food is handled.
- Must be large enough to allow for effective washing of hands, arms and face.
- Must be clearly designated for sole purpose of washing hands, arms and face.
- Must be provided with a supply of soap (preferably liquid) and single use towels at all times.

Additional hand washing facilities may be required and this is dependent on, the size of the premises, the layout, the use of the area and the number of food handlers.

Storage Facilities (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 15)

Chemicals, staff clothing and personal belongings must be stored in separate, designated areas where they are not likely to contaminate food.

Toilet Facilities (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 16)

Adequate facilities must be made available for food handlers and fitted with compliant handwashing facilities.

Food Transport Vehicles (FSS 3.2.3 Clause 17)

Food Transport Vehicles must be constructed so as to be easily cleaned and be able to afford adequate protection to the food (including refrigeration where necessary).

Food Safety during Power Failures

Power outages are occurring more frequently in summer and winter; often due to storms, substation faults or planned outages. To ensure the safety of the food in your food business and to avoid discarding expensive food, it may be worth considering investing in a portable generator.

Notification and Further Information

All businesses that sell food are required to notify their Council of their food business by completing a **Food Business Notification Form**. Notification is required 14 days prior to beginning any operations, when business ownership or contact information changes, and when the business ceases to operate. Please be aware that operating a food business without notifying Council and/or within a non-compliant premise is an offence and penalties can apply.

For more information contact an Environmental Health Service or Council’s Building/Planning department on 8229 9999.