USE HYGIENIC PRACTICES FOR FOOD SAFETY
LEARNER GUIDE
VERSION 1

Product code 5820
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

VETRes of TAFE NSW would like to acknowledge the support and assistance of the following people in the update of this learner guide.

Contributors: Robyn Caldwell, Angela McGinnes, Robyn Ward

Reviewers: Julie Davis, Kerrie McIntosh, Christine Watson

Project Management: Robyn Caldwell, Clancy Crean (VETRes)

Images: Images used with permission from Food Authority

Desktop publishing: printWest of TAFE Western

Printing: printWest of TAFE Western

TAFE NSW (VETRes) would also like to acknowledge the support offered by teachers and students across TAFE NSW who were involved in the validation of this product and the staff who were involved in the development of earlier versions of this learner guide; Philip Caldicott, Karin Canty, Jennifer Chiplin, Patrea D’Antonio, Joanne de Jersey, Rebecca Parker and Toby Prentice.

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TAFE NSW, VETRes
PO Box 1059
Orange NSW 2800
Phone: +61 (2) 6391 5603
Email: vetres@tafensw.edu.au

Title: SITXFSA001 Use hygienic practices for food safety
Version: First
Publisher: VETRes as administered by TAFE NSW Western Institute
VETRes Product Code: 5820
ISBN: 978-1-74236-526-8
Printed in Australia
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Welcome to the resource SITXFSA001 Use hygienic practices for food safety.

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to use personal hygiene practices to prevent contamination of food that might cause food-borne illnesses. It requires the ability to follow predetermined organisational procedures and to identify and control food hazards.

The unit applies to all organisations with permanent or temporary kitchen premises or smaller food preparation or bar areas.

This includes restaurants, cafés, clubs, hotels, and bars; tour operators; attractions; function, event, exhibition and conference catering; educational institutions; aged care facilities; correctional centres; hospitals; defence forces; cafeterias, kiosks, canteens and fast food outlets; residential catering; in-flight and other transport catering.

It applies to food handlers who directly handle food or food contact surfaces such as cutlery, plates and bowls during the course of their daily work activities. This includes cooks, chefs, caterers, kitchen stewards, kitchen hands, bar, and food and beverage attendants, and sometimes room attendants and front office staff.

Food handlers must comply with the requirements contained within the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

In some states and territories businesses are required to designate a food safety supervisor who is required to be certified as competent in this unit through a registered training organisation.
## Elements and Performance Criteria

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| 1. Follow hygiene procedures and identify food hazards. | 1.1 Follow organisational hygiene procedures.  
1.2 Report unsafe practices that breach hygiene procedures promptly.  
1.3 Identify food hazards that may affect the health and safety of customers, colleagues and self.  
1.4 Remove or minimise the hygiene hazard and report as appropriate for follow-up. |
| 2. Report any personal health issues. | 2.1 Report personal health issues likely to cause a hygiene risk.  
2.2 Report incidents of food contamination resulting from personal health issues.  
2.3 Cease participation in food handling activities where own health issue may cause food contamination. |
| 3. Prevent food contamination. | 3.1 Maintain clean clothes, wear required personal protective clothing, and only use organisation-approved bandages and dressings.  
3.2 Prevent food contamination from clothing and other items worn.  
3.3 Prevent unnecessary direct contact with ready to eat food.  
3.4 Ensure hygienic personal contact with food and food contact surfaces.  
3.5 Use hygienic cleaning practices that prevent food-borne illnesses. |
| 4. Prevent cross-contamination by washing hands. | 4.1 Wash hands at appropriate times and follow hand washing procedures consistently.  
4.2 Wash hands using appropriate facilities. |
Performance Evidence

Evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit in the context of the job role, and:

> demonstrate use of safe food handling practices in food handling work functions in line with organisational hygiene procedures on at least three occasions

> demonstrate procedures to:
  - identify food hazards
  - report unsafe practices
  - report incidents of food contamination.

Knowledge Evidence

Demonstrated knowledge required to complete the tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit:

> Basic aspects of commonwealth, state or territory food safety laws, standards and codes as follows:
  - Meaning of contaminant, contamination and potentially hazardous foods as defined by the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.
  - Employee and employer responsibility to participate in hygienic practices.
  - Reasons for food safety programs and what they must contain.
  - Role of local government regulators.
  - Ramifications of failure to observe food safety law and organisational policies and procedures.

> Health issues likely to cause a hygiene risk relevant to food safety:
  - Airborne diseases.
  - Food-borne diseases.
  - Infectious diseases.

> Hygiene actions that must be adhered to in order to avoid food-borne illnesses.

> Hand washing practices:
  - Before commencing or recommencing work with food.
  - Immediately after:
    - handling raw food
    - smoking, coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose
    - eating or drinking
    - touching the hair, scalp or any wound
    - using the toilet.

> Basic aspects of hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) method of controlling food safety.
Specific industry sector and organisation:
- Major causes of food contamination and food-borne illnesses.
- Sources and effects of microbiological contamination of food.
- Workplace hygiene hazards when handling food and food contact surfaces.
- Basic content of organisational food safety programs.
- Contents of organisational hygiene and food safety procedures.
- Hygienic work practices for individual job roles and responsibilities.
TOPIC 1
HYGIENE PROCEDURES AND THE LAW
1.1 NATIONAL AND STATE WORKPLACE HYGIENE LAWS

If you are working in the service industry you must adhere to legislative and industry guidelines for personal and workplace hygiene requirements.

Many of these hygiene standards can be found in codes of practice and guidelines for specific industry sectors working within tourism and hospitality establishments.

Food service industries have formal procedures and policies for personal and workplace hygiene. Employees may become informed of their responsibilities through induction training, employee's handbooks or on the job training. It is important that all employees are aware of their workplace hygiene procedures to ensure that hygiene standards are maintained to both establishment and legal standards.

The legislation and codes of practice that govern food safety and hygiene requirements include:

- Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code
  www.foodstandards.gov.au/code
- NSW Food Regulation 2015 under the NSW Food Act 2003

Other legislation that impacts on safety and hygiene include:

- NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- NSW Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- National Code of Practice for the Control of Work-related Exposure to Hepatitis and HIV (Blood-borne) Viruses.
- Trade Practices Act 1974 (Cwlth)—enforced by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Fair Trading Act 1987 (NSW)—enforced by NSW Fair Trading.
These laws place specific obligations upon owners and operators of food businesses and anyone who is handling food to ensure that food and beverage remains ‘safe and suitable’ for human consumption.

A food handler is described by law as anyone ‘preparing, preserving, packing, storing, decorating, serving, conveying or delivering food’. This means that if you work in stores, the kitchen, food service areas, including function service or a bar, you are a food handler and have to meet the specific requirements of the food laws.

1.2 THE NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS

Australia has national food standards that focus on making sure that our food is safe to eat. The standards have been developed by FSANZ (Food Standards Australia New Zealand), and representatives of the food industry, to improve food safety in Australia. Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code contains Food Safety Standards for use within Australia.

The National Food Safety Standards are:

**STANDARD 3.1.1 – INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION**

This standard gives meanings and definitions to words used in the standards (e.g. food handler, clean, sell etc). It also gives the meaning of safe and suitable food.

**Safe food** [Clause 2(1)] is food that will not cause illness or other physical harm to a person eating it assuming that it was eaten as it was intended (e.g. meat and poultry), which contain food poisoning bacteria, are cooked before they are consumed.

**Suitable food** [Clause 2(4)] is food that is considered acceptable for consumption. Food is unsuitable if it:

- is damaged, deteriorated or perished or contains any substances that are damaged, deteriorated or perished
- is the product of a diseased animal
- contains a chemical or biological agent or other substances that are foreign to the nature of the food.

This would include the presence of an insect that would not cause illness; its presence makes the food unacceptable. Additionally food must also meet all other requirements of the Food Standards Code [Clause 2(5)], in relation to:

- allowable levels of agricultural or veterinary chemicals
- allowable levels of metal or non-metal contaminants
- matter and substances permitted (e.g. chemical preservatives, colourings).
STANDARD 3.2.1 – FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMS

A food safety program identifies the potential hazards that may be expected to occur during food handling. The program is designed to address all systems or processes within the organisation that are required to prevent, control or eliminate food hazards and keep food safe. This is a voluntary standard in NSW for most food businesses with the exception of businesses in the meat and dairy industries and some other areas of primary food production e.g. raw oyster harvesting, processing and distribution. The standard also applies to sectors of the food industry that are considered ‘high risk’ including hospitals, nursing homes and catering operations that serve food to the general public.

STANDARD 3.2.2 – FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

This standard sets out specific requirements for food businesses and food handlers to ensure that food does not become unsafe or unsuitable. It states that food handlers must have skills and knowledge in food hygiene and safety and must follow correct health and hygiene rules to make sure that food is safe to eat at each stage of handling—from receiving to disposal. It also provides directions for food businesses to notify the government authority of their name, address, manager and type of food sold.

The standard specifies processes to control food safety at each step of the food handling process. Some requirements relate to the receipt, storage, processing, display, packaging, distribution, disposal and recall of food. Others relate to the skills and knowledge of food handlers and their supervisors, the health and hygiene of food handlers and the cleaning, sanitising, and maintenance of premises and equipment.

STANDARD 3.2.3 – FOOD PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

This standard identifies how food premises and equipment must be designed and built so they can be easily cleaned. Premises must also provide water, waste disposal, light, ventilation, cleaning and personal hygiene facilities, storage space and access to toilets.

STANDARD 3.3.1 – FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMS FOR FOOD SERVICE TO VULNERABLE PERSONS

This standard applies to food businesses involved in food processing and service to vulnerable persons. A vulnerable person is defined as a person who receives care from one of the facilities listed in the standard or is a client of a delivered meals organisation—these are generally older persons and people who have weakened immune systems. Vulnerable people are more susceptible to food borne illness than the general population.

The facilities include:

> hospital facilities including acute care, psychiatric, hospice, chemotherapy and renal dialysis facilities
> aged care facilities including nursing homes, respite care, same day aged care and low care aged care facilities
child care facilities, including long day care, occasional day care and employer sponsored child care (does not include family day care).

The application of the standard to food businesses, however, depends on a number of criteria, including the number of people to be served (six or more), the principal activity of the business and whether the food is potentially hazardous and ready-to-eat.

ACTIVITY
FOOD STANDARDS
To find out more about Food Standards Australia and New Zealand visit their website www.foodstandards.gov.au and access the consumer information section. Click on ‘additives’. What information can you find? How could this help a person working in a kitchen?
1.3 FOOD LAWS IN NSW

In this state, the regulatory authority for food legislation is the NSW Food Authority (within NSW Government Department of Primary Industries). It works to ensure food in the state is safe, correctly labelled and that consumers are able to make informed choices about the food they eat.

The *NSW Food Act 2003* and the *NSW Food Regulation 2015* ensures the safe handling of food for sale in NSW, with the Food Regulation being regularly reviewed and updated to keep pace with changes in the food industry and to minimise the burden of government regulation. Its aim is to protect public health by preventing the sale of contaminated or adulterated food. Contaminated or adulterated food has unsuitable harmful biological, chemical or physical elements contained in it.

Failure to follow the food act or its associated regulations can result in fines or even gaol sentences in extreme cases. The associated regulation is the *NSW Food Regulation 2015*, which states specific requirements for food safety. These food safety requirements are based on the national standards for food safety, which are found in Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code.

The act and regulations can be accessed via the NSW Food Authority website at [http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) (search ‘legislation’).

**ACTIVITY**

**RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION**


Locate four resources in this section that will help you to keep up to date with food safety in your workplace.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
1.4 FOOD SAFETY LEGISLATION AND THE FOOD HANDLER

The most important legislative requirements for the food handler are contained in Standard 3.2.2 – Food Safety Practices and General Requirements.

This standard sets out specific requirements for food businesses and food handlers to ensure that food does not become unsafe or unsuitable.

The standard specifies process control requirements for each step of the food handling process. Some requirements relate to the receipt, storage, processing, display, packaging, distribution, disposal and recall of food. Others relate to the skills and knowledge of food handlers and their supervisors, the health and hygiene of food handlers and the cleaning, sanitising, and maintenance of premises and equipment.

The unit of competency SITXFSA001 Use hygienic practices for food safety encompasses the national standards required for:

Division 2 – Food handling
> food handling – skills and knowledge.

Division 3 – Food handling controls
> food receipt
> food storage
> food processing
> food display
> food packaging
> food transport
> food disposal.

Division 4 – Health and hygiene requirements.

Division 5 – Cleaning, sanitising and maintenance.
1.5 FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMS

Food handlers must follow food specific workplace hygiene procedures to ensure hygiene standards are maintained where all food and beverage is stored, prepared, cooked and served. These include preparation, temperature controls and storage requirements.

Many food service establishments are required to document their food hygiene requirements as part of a food safety program. A food safety program is a quality procedure focused on systems or processes that are required to prevent, control or eliminate the incidence of food hazards. These processes are developed to ensure food is produced and served safely. This is achieved by implementing Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.

Your responsibility as a food handler is to handle food hygienically at all stages involved in the preparation and serving of food. These stages include:

- receiving goods
- storage
- defrosting
- preparation and processing
- cooking
- cooling
- service
- packaging
- reheating
- display
- transportation.

Remember, you may also need to record temperatures and food handling activities on specific documentation (forms) that are part of a workplace food safety guide. Examples of monitoring records may include:

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<td>Storage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation and cooking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fruit and vegetable sanitising record</td>
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<td>Transport and dispatch</td>
<td>Dispatch records</td>
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</table>
You must also take necessary precautions when moving around the workplace and/or from one task to another to maintain food safety.

HACCP as a food safety system was first developed in the 1960s to protect astronauts on manned space flights against food poisoning. The purpose of HACCP is to prevent, control or eliminate food safety hazards that can cause illness, injury or death. The Pillsbury Company working with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and United States of America (USA) army laboratories developed the system. The focus of the system was to take a preventative approach to product safety. HACCP replaced end product testing to provide food safety assurance.

THE PRINCIPLES OF HACCP

1. Conduct a hazard analysis. Outline processes and identify potential hazards. Describe the control measures.
2. Identify the Critical Control Points (CCP) of the process.
3. Establish the critical limits or standards for control measures.
4. Establish the requirements for monitoring the CCP.
5. Establish the corrective action to be taken when monitoring indicates deviation from limits.
6. Maintain effective record keeping that documents the HACCP system.
7. Establish procedures to verify that the HACCP system is working.

More information is available from the Food Authority website. Search ‘food safety program HACCP’.
1.6 ENFORCING THE FOOD LAWS

Food Safety Officers or inspectors, who may also be known as Environmental Health Officers (EHOs), have the authority to inspect food businesses. The inspector can arrive at any time; you cannot stop an inspector coming onto your premises.

These inspectors have a number of responsibilities and powers, they may:

> provide assistance and advice on all food safety matters
> enter and inspect a food business at anytime
> order a clean-up or close a food business
> take samples of food for analysis offsite
> prevent the sale of contaminated or adulterated food.

Customers today are also very aware of hygiene. When they see poor standards of hygiene they will report what they have seen. The public can contact their local council or area health service and inform them of businesses with unsound practices. The inspector will then visit the business to investigate and report back on the findings. Inspectors also visit routinely once or twice a year to check up on the hygiene practices at a food business.

If the authority believes there has been a breach of the act, the business may be put on notice to lift its performance or placed under regular monitoring. Serious breaches can result in court action, fines and closures. The authority makes this information available to the public by publishing penalty notices that have been issued to food businesses.

**ACTIVITY**
RAMIFICATIONS OF FAILURE TO OBSERVE FOOD SAFETY LAW

Go to: [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) and search ‘NAME AND SHAME’. Are there any businesses in your local area who are listed? If yes, list their infringement details and fine.

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
DID YOU KNOW?

The Food Safety Information Council is Australia’s leading disseminator of consumer-targeted food safety information which aims to address the estimated 4.1 million cases of food poisoning in Australia each year that result in 31,920 hospitalisations, 86 deaths and 1 million visits to doctors on average each year.

1.7 SUMMARY

While working in the hospitality and retail service industries you must adhere to legislative and industry guidelines for personal and workplace hygiene and food safety requirements.

Many of these standards can be found in codes of practice and guidelines for specific industry sectors working within the food environment. These documents are available from the NSW Ministry of Health, Work Cover, Australian Safety and Compensation Council, the NSW Food Authority or industry associations such as the Restaurant and Catering Association or Australian Retailers Association.

Hospitality and retail service organisations have formal procedures and policies for personnel and workplace hygiene and food safety requirements. Employees may become informed of their responsibilities through induction training, employee’s handbooks or on the job training. It is important that all employees are aware of their workplace hygiene procedures to ensure the hygiene standards are maintained to both establishment and legal standards.