



HUME CITY COUNCIL **HUME FOOD NEWS**

Winter 2019

 hume.vic.gov.au



Around the Traps

ALTERING YOUR FOOD PREMISES

If you are thinking of altering your premises where food is prepared, served or stored, then approval from Council's Health Services Team must be obtained.

In the early stages of planning your renovation, you should talk to an Environmental Health Officer; this may involve getting them on site to discuss your ideas.

In addition, the Health Services Team can provide you with a copy of the Starting a Food Business, which contains all the information needed to plan the changes you wish to undertake.

If approval is not sought prior to the commencement of work, and your alterations are not compliant with relevant legislation and standards, you will be required to rectify all non-compliances which could add further cost to your business.

MAKING SURE THE FOOD YOU RECEIVE IS SAFE

To ensure the food that comes out of your kitchen is safe, the food that goes into your kitchen needs to be too.

This means making sure that all food delivered to your premises and collected from your suppliers is safe and suitable for consumption.

Any food received by your business should be...

- protected from contamination
- identifiable and traceable back to its supplier
- the correct temperature (below 5°C, above 60°C or frozen)
- labelled in accordance with the Food Standards Code.

Following the Purchasing and Receiving Food section within your Food Safety Program will help you meet these requirements.

Tips when receiving deliveries:

- check the truck for cleanliness
- examine the packaging for damage
- check use-by and best-before dates
- look for signs of pest infestation or other signs of physical or chemical contamination
- check the temperature of food to ensure it is 5°C or below; or 60°C or above
- tap frozen foods to test that they are frozen hard
- check the product is correctly labelled.

2018 FOOD RECALL STATISTICS

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has released data on Australian food recalls in 2018, including new information on the causes of allergen labelling-related recalls.

FSANZ Chief Executive Officer Mark Booth said there were 100 recalls in 2018, up from 69 in 2017, with 46 per cent of these due to undeclared allergens.

"These results demonstrate that food businesses in Australia need to be across the mandatory allergen labelling requirements in the Food Standards Code," Mr Booth said.

"FSANZ has identified four key causes of allergen-related recalls, including lack of skills and knowledge of labelling requirements, supplier verification, packaging errors and accidental cross contamination.

"Correct allergen labelling can mean the difference between life and death for people with food allergies, so it is vital that food businesses meet labelling requirements."

Mr Booth said FSANZ, along with enforcement agencies, continues to communicate with food businesses to ensure they understand labelling requirements and their importance.

Allergen Recalls

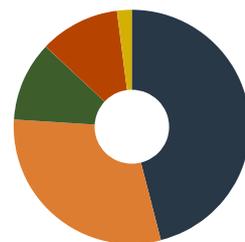
The highest number of recalls was due to undeclared allergens. There were 46 undeclared allergen recalls in 2018, up from 34 in 2017.

Customer complaints were the most common method of detecting the need to recall food followed by routine testing by the company.

Packaging errors are the leading cause of undeclared allergen recalls. Unknown causes can be due to the food business not being able to determine the root cause or FSANZ did not receive any post recall information from the business.

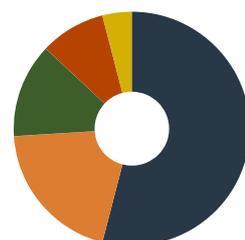
More information and an in-depth report can be found at foodstandards.gov.au/industry/foodrecalls/recallstats/pages/allergen-stats.aspx

SOURCES OF UNDECLARED ALLERGEN RECALLS



- Customer complaint (46%)
- Routine testing by the company (30%)
- Routine government testing (11%)
- Other (11%)
- Distributor/retailer complaint (2%)

CAUSE FOR UNDECLARED ALLERGEN RECALLS



- Packaging errors (54%)
- Unknown (20%)
- Supplier verification errors (13%)
- Accidental cross-contact (9%)
- Lack of skills & knowledge (4%)

Hume Food News

BE ALLERGY AWARE

For people with food allergies, eating food that contains ingredients they're allergic to could be life threatening. Avoiding allergen-containing foods is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction, which means it's important for food businesses to be aware of allergens and know what's in their food.

When consumers disclose their food allergy, the food service industry has a responsibility to help the customer with food menu choices by providing information about food allergens that may be present directly and/or indirectly in food menu items.

Knowing what's in your food is the law

The Food Standards Code requires that anyone who sells foods without a label (such as made and packaged on the premises from which it is sold) to provide accurate information about the following food allergens to customers on request:

- peanuts
- tree nuts, (e.g. almonds, cashews)
- eggs
- cow's milk (this includes all dairy foods)
- fish
- crustacea (e.g. prawns, lobster)
- sesame seeds
- soy/soybeans
- cereals containing gluten and their products, namely, wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt and their hybridised strains (e.g. triticale)
- lupin.

Manufacturers must declare all the allergens listed above on a food label.

Learning More About Allergens

The Allergen Collaboration has created a Food Allergen Portal to help businesses better understand food allergies. The portal provides different sectors in the food community with links to best practice food allergen resources and key messages to promote in the different sectors.

The Allergen Collaboration has a number of key messages for the food service industry in regard to food allergens. They are:

- Implement an effective food allergen management program
- Train all staff in food allergen risks, management and communication
- Provide clear, up-to-date and accurate information on the food allergen status of the foods you provide
- When consumers disclose their food allergy, the food service industry has a responsibility to help the customer with appropriate food menu choices by providing information about food allergens that may be present directly and/or indirectly in food menu items
- Consideration should be given to allowing some consumers with complex or multiple food allergy to bring their own food into your premises. If you choose to allow this in special circumstances, it is safer for all concerned and may encourage these consumers, their family and friends to return.

The food allergen portal can be found on the FSANZ website at:

foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/foodallergies/foodallergenportal

MAKE YOUR BUSINESS ALLERGY SAFE

All About Allergens is a free online training course developed for the food industry to help food businesses develop best practice procedures for making their business safe for customers with allergies.

This includes teaching food service staff to identify and manage food allergens, as well as how to respond to enquiries from customers with food allergy.

The course and free, downloadable resources can be found at:

foodallergytraining.org.au

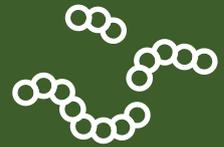
Find out more

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia:
allergyfacts.org.au/allergy-management/food-industry/food-service

National Allergy Strategy:
nationalallergystrategy.org.au



Know your bacteria



Clostridium Botulinum

What is Clostridium botulinum?

Clostridium botulinum (C. botulinum for short) is a bacterium that can produce a very dangerous toxin. It grows in places where oxygen levels are low.

What illness does it cause?

Foodborne botulism (caused by ingesting the bacteria's toxin) and infant botulism (generally in children, caused by eating the bacteria's spores).

Botulism is a nationally notifiable disease and must be reported to health authorities.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of foodborne botulism include vertigo, nausea, dry mouth, vomiting, double vision and trouble speaking and swallowing. Symptoms may progress to muscle weakness and constipation.

Symptoms of infant botulism include constipation, loss of appetite, weak sucking and crying, and muscle weakness including poor head control.

If not treated early, botulism can lead to paralysis and death. Symptoms usually start 18 to 36 hours after eating the food containing the toxin. The illness can last for weeks or months.

Who can get sick?

Anyone can get botulism although it is extremely rare in Australia. Generally only infants under 12 months old get infant botulism.

Where does it come from?

It can be found in soil and water, on plants and in the gut of fish, birds and mammals. Botulism spores are very tough and can survive a wide range of conditions (even boiling temperatures).

Common foods that can be contaminated with C. botulinum include home-canned and bottled foods and vacuum-packed foods that have not been processed properly; fermented, salted and smoked meat and seafood; and (in the case of infant botulism) honey.

How can people get sick?

By eating food, water or soil contaminated with the bacteria or its toxin.

How can illness be prevented?

- Care should be taken when preparing canned and bottled foods, vacuum-packed food (including sous vide cooking) and fermented, smoked or salted meat and fish products that will not be thoroughly cooked before eating
- Throw away preserved or vacuum-packed food that is badly damaged, bulging or looks spoiled
- Avoid giving honey to infants under 12 months old.



TAKING CARE OF TRADE WASTE

If you have a food business, it's likely that you generate 'trade waste', or wastewater. If this is the case, then you need a Trade Waste Agreement with your local water authority and a maintained grease trap at your business.

A grease trap captures the offensive wastewater from sinks, dishwashers and floor waste. It needs to be cleaned out regularly so it doesn't block up the sewer or overflow creating odour or cleaning issues for your business.

Hume has three water authorities that cover the municipality: Yarra Valley Water, Western Water and City West Water. Their officers may visit your food business to check that the grease trap is regularly emptied and cleaned.

If you don't have a grease trap you will likely be charged an Asset Protection Fee by the water authority until your grease trap is installed.

It is an offence under the Water Act 1989 to put your trade waste down the sewer without having a Trade Waste Agreement with your water authority and this agreement requires

food businesses to have a correctly sized grease trap that is regularly emptied and cleaned.

If you are not sure if your business generates trade waste or if you have trouble locating your grease trap, call your local water authority:

Yarra Valley Water: 9872 1240
Western Water: 1300 650 422
City West Water: 131 691