



Skills and Knowledge

National Food Safety Standards require a food business operator to ensure that all food handlers and supervisors have appropriate skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene in keeping with their particular work activities.

The Inner Sydney Councils Regional Food Group has produced this fact sheet from information provided by Food Standards Australia New Zealand to assist operators and food handlers working in various food businesses such as restaurants, coffee lounges, take away food shops, clubs, sandwich shops, function caterers, pastry shops, delicatessens etc.

What is the difference between a skill and knowledge?

A skill is being able to do something whereas knowledge is knowing about or understanding something.

What is meant by Food Safety and Food Hygiene?

Food safety is ensuring that food is safe to eat whereas food hygiene is keeping the premises and equipment clean.

Does everyone need to have the same skills and knowledge?

No. The skills and knowledge required will vary from job to job, for example from waiter to cook, to kitchen hand and similarly from business to business.

Will I need to attend a training course?

No. Skills and knowledge can be obtained in various ways including on the job training, reading and understanding leaflets or publications, informative wall signage or by hiring a consultant.



A business however may decide to send food handlers to a course run by a recognised training organisation or industry association or Council. Council's interactive, self assessment program 'Food on your Lap' may also be utilised.

What specific skills and knowledge will be required?

Broadly speaking these will include the following:

Food Deliveries

- Be able to recognize and understand the significance of swollen or dented cans
- Check use by date and packaging
- Recognise substandard goods like leaking cartons, bottles, broken seals, and cracked eggs
- Make sure all food items are correctly labelled
- Be competent in checking delivery temperatures

Food Storage

- Cover all food in the refrigerator, dry food store or freezer
- Label items if not already labelled and date (if required)
- Store food in airtight containers
- Put unused canned food into a glass or plastic container
- Don't keep personal belongings in food storage or preparation areas
- Know not to store food on the floor



Personal Hygiene (hands)

- Practice personal cleanliness and wear clean clothes, and hair net (if applicable.)
- Regular hand washing - before starting work, before handling food, after the using the toilet, handling raw foods or garbage, after a break, after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing etc
- Report illnesses to your supervisor
- Cover cuts and sores with bandage and glove
- Avoiding unnecessary handling food by using gloves or tongs
- Don't drink, smoke or eat or cough or sneeze near food
- Use the hand basin for hand washing only and dry hands using paper towels
- Bacteria are on everyone and everywhere
- Change gloves as often as you wash your hands

Food Temperature Control (thermometer)

- Bacteria grow if food is stored in the danger zone (5°C - 60°C)
- Don't prepare food too far in advance
- Store and display potentially hazardous foods in refrigerator or hot food appliance
- Know that hot food should be store above 60°C and cold food below 5°
- Be aware of what the 2 hour / 4 hour guide means
- Know how to check the delivery and storage temperatures of food
- Know what are potentially hazardous foods
- Know how to use, clean and calibrate a thermometer
- Defrost under refrigeration and allow 24 hours at least
- Reheated food should reach a temperature of 75°C
- Know that meat juices run clear after thorough cooking
- Under cooked foods can cause illness

Cross Contamination

- Keep raw and cooked foods stored separately
- Use clean and sanitised chopping boards and utensils

- Buffet / Smorgasbord require protecting barriers to avoid contamination and required supervision
- Know that raw meat /s and chicken are contaminated with bacteria
- Clothes or dirty benches or equipment can contaminate food
- Store raw meats, fish and poultry near bottom of fridge / cool room
- Store cleaning chemicals well away from food

Cleaning and Sanitising

- Understand the difference between cleaning and sanitising
- Report cleaning and sanitising matters to the supervisor
- All equipment should be clean and sanitized before use
- Dish washing machine operating at 65°C will sanitise appliances crockery, equipment, utensils
- Manual washing of dishes requires washing at 77°C for at least 30 seconds
- Maintaining a clean work area
- Use separate sinks for hand washing and for cleaning and sanitizing appliances and equipment and for washing fruit and vegetables
- Items like lettuce should not be soaked in a sink used for other purpose
- Are all wiping clothes clean and sanitised
- Know your part of the business cleaning schedule