

FOOD HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR TEMPORARY EVENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended for food businesses selling food at temporary events. They will also be useful to environmental health officers, assessing compliance with food safety standards.

The primary aim of these guidelines is to make food businesses aware of their legal requirements and to suggest ways to assure food safety at the event. In nearly every situation, it is recommended that potential food operators contact the local council prior to the event.

The document includes brief information about associated requirements, such as power supply and waste disposal. The information should not be regarded as being definitive. Recommendations, examples and explanations are offered wherever possible to assist interpretation. Various diagrams and pictures are included to help comprehension.

1.1 What is a temporary event?

A temporary event is any occasion which is not permanent in nature, where food or produce for human consumption is sold or offered for sale to consumers. Examples include, but are not limited to, fairs, festivals, farmers' markets, shows and markets.

1.2 Obligations on people selling food

A person selling food or operating stalls and outlets used for selling food, produce, fruits and vegetables or pre-packaged food for human consumption, is deemed to be a 'food business'. Not-for-profit operations are not excluded. A 'food business' is required to sell safe and suitable food in accordance with the provisions of the NSW *Food Act 2003*. Copies of the Act (particularly Food Standards 3.1.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3) are available on the NSW Food Authority's website (www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au).

- a) Failure to comply with the requirements of the Act may result in prosecution, penalty infringement notices, product being seized, improvement notices or warning letters being issued, or prohibition orders being served. Fines up to \$110,000 for individuals and up to \$550,000 for corporations, and/or two years' imprisonment apply to some offences. It is recommended that all food businesses carry adequate public liability indemnity insurance.

2. GENERAL CONDITIONS

2.1 Approvals

- a) If you are selling butchers' meat, smallgoods, uncooked fermented manufactured meats, raw poultry, or wholesaling/processing meat, poultry, dairy products, seafood or plant products, you will probably need to be licensed by the NSW Food Authority. Contact the Authority before the event to find out the requirements.
- b) The prior consent of the local council may be required for the overall event. Check the requirements with your local council and the event coordinator.
- c) You (and/or your food business) must notify your food business details to the NSW Food Authority. This can be done (for free) on the Food Authority's website (www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) or by telephoning 1300 650 124 to find your closest council collection agency. Charitable and community not-for-profit organisations are exempt from this provision.
- d) ***To ensure a satisfactory inspection on the day by an officer authorised under the Food Act, contact the local council prior to the event to check you meet the requirements.***

2.2 Fees

Under the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Food Regulation 2010* the local council may charge a fee for inspecting your food handling activities or operation. The fee may vary between councils. Sometimes this fee may already be built into the overall event organisation. You should contact the council beforehand to enquire about the local situation.

2.3 Location of food stalls

- a) Stalls should be set up on sealed ground sites to minimise dust problems. If only unsealed sites, such as grass or dirt, are available, the ground should be fully covered.
- b) The open side of the stall should not face prevailing winds to reduce dust, odour and insect problems.
- c) Wherever possible, stalls should be located away from toilet and garbage collection areas to prevent likely air-borne contamination.

2.4 Toilets

The event management and food business operators should ensure that adequate toilet facilities for food handlers are made available.

2.5 Maintenance

The stall and its associated fixtures, fittings, equipment and those parts of vehicles used to transport food, must be kept clean and in a good state of repair and working order, free from dirt, fumes, smoke, foul odours and other contaminants.

2.6 Garbage and recyclable matter

Food business operators (and event management) must ensure there are:

- a) adequate bins at appropriate locations throughout the event area;
- b) adequately sized, enclosed rubbish bins at each food stall;
- c) arrangements to dispose of garbage contents at the end of the day; and
- d) recyclable, re-useable or compostable products wherever possible. This can be encouraged by avoiding products with excessive packaging.

2.7 Animals and pests

- a) Take all practicable measures to prevent pests (including birds, spiders and flying insects) from entering or remaining in the food stall, or in any fixtures or equipment, or parts of vehicles used to transport food.
- b) No animal is permitted to enter any food stall whether the stall is in operation or not. 'Assistance animals' are permitted in dining and drinking or other 'customer only' areas. ('Assistance animals' are guide dogs, dogs trained to assist a person in activities where hearing is required, or any other animal trained to assist a person with disabilities.)

2.8 Children in food stalls

For health and safety reasons, children should not be permitted to enter a food stall.

2.9 Water and ice

- a) Potable water (ie. safe for human consumption) must be used for washing or preparing food or as an ingredient in food. Town water supplies are considered to be potable. The use of water from other sources may be suitable but this should be discussed beforehand with the local council.
- b) Only materials of 'food-grade rating' should be used to reticulate or store water.
- c) Ice used for keeping food cool or adding to food or drink must also be potable.

2.10 Electricity and gas supplies, fire extinguishers and work safety

- a) Food business operators (and event management) should ensure there is a sufficient supply of electricity for food handling operations, particularly hot and cold food holding and water heating.
- b) Electricity should be supplied through proper supply poles equipped with all necessary safety devices (as required by legislation). All work should be carried out by a licensed electrician and conform to Australian Standard AS 3002-1985 'Electrical Installations – Shows and Carnivals'. WorkCover NSW requires electrical appliances and leads to be tested at least annually, and identification tags to be attached.
- c) Gas should be installed by a licensed gasfitter and comply with the appropriate provisions of Australian Standards AS 1596-1997 and AS 5601-2000. A current compliance plate should be affixed to the vehicle for new installations or for any changes made to existing gas appliances.
- d) Gas-fired appliances used in the open should not have a gas bottle greater than 9 kg capacity and the bottle should be secured so that it cannot be tipped over. If using your own gas bottles, ensure they are pressure checked.
- e) A fire extinguisher and fire blanket should be supplied in any vehicle or stall where cooking or heating processes are undertaken. Even if you are not responsible for starting a fire, you should be able to extinguish small fires.
- f) Fire-safety equipment should be easily accessible in the event of a fire. The extinguisher should be suitable for dealing with the type of combustible materials present.

- g) Fire-safety equipment should be tested annually and have current tagging in accordance with Australian Standard 1851. Contact NSW Fire Brigades for more information.
- h) All measures should be taken to satisfy required WorkCover NSW conditions to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees and patrons. Contact WorkCover NSW for more information.

2.11 Pollution prevention

The *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* requires that operations should not cause any harm to the environment (ie. air, water, noise and surrounding land environments). For example, waste water should be discharged into the sewer system not onto the ground. Contact the local council for more information.

3. FACILITIES

Facilities should be constructed to ensure food safety, promote a good standard of food hygiene and enable easy cleaning and maintenance (see diagrams).

3.1 Construction of temporary food stalls

Temporary food stalls include any structure set up for a specific, occasional event, such as a fete, fair, market or concert (generally of one-day duration), where it can be demonstrated that food safety will not be compromised. Temporary structures, such as coffee carts, are not considered temporary stalls, premises or vehicles, and should not be permitted to be located at any site on a permanent basis without the prior consent of the local council.

The minimum standard of construction is:

- a) preparation and servery areas to be fully enclosed on three sides;
- b) the entire food premises (including barbeques and coolrooms) to be adequately screened to reduce the risk of food contamination and to restrict public access for safety reasons;
- c) the floor to be in the form of a groundsheet cut larger than the floor area to enable it to be turned up at the wall and clipped or otherwise fixed into position;
- d) walls to be of 'polytarp' or similar non-absorbent material, and able to be easily cleaned. The framework of the wall panels should support the fabric taut and rigid. No part of the walls should flap in the breeze or be otherwise insecure;
- e) the ceiling to be of similar construction to the walls; and
- f) the whole structure to be securely fixed together when assembled and be secured against wind loadings.

Some councils are encouraging regular food stall providers to upgrade to a food vending vehicle.

For pre-packaged and low-risk foods, there may be exemptions from certain construction requirements due to the reduced food safety risk. Please contact the local council if you wish to seek exemptions. Examples of pre-packaged and low-risk foods are pre-bottled/sealed jams, honey, pickles and drinks; pre-wrapped and sealed cakes, toffees and biscuits; and whole fruit, vegetables and nuts intended to be washed or peeled before eating.

3.2 Fixtures

- a) Food preparation benches, counters, shelving, stands and the like must be made from rigid, smooth-faced material, free of cracks or joints and be durable. Timber surfaces should be painted, laminated or clear finished. Shelves should be a minimum of 150 mm off the floor. Metal end sections should be sealed.
- b) The preparation and/or display of foods, including unpackaged ready-to-eat foods, must be protected from likely contamination from customers. Sneeze barriers or other protection enclosures should be considered.

3.3 Food vending vehicles

You should obtain documentary evidence of a satisfactory inspection by the local council of the vehicle construction and fit-out before the event, to ensure it meets compliance standards during the event.

3.4 Cleaning, sanitising and hand washing facilities

- a) A sealed container of potable water (minimum capacity 10 litres) with a tap should be provided, together with suitable bowls or containers for cleaning, sanitising and hand washing. Clean towels and detergent must be provided. For pre-packaged and low-risk foods, there may be exemptions from certain facility requirements due to the reduced food safety risk. Contact the local council for details.
- b) Re-useable eating and drinking dinnerware and tableware must be washed and sanitised in separate facilities used only for that purpose.
- c) A hand-washing facility, separate from other facilities and used only for that purpose, must be provided. Warm water is needed for effective hand washing and personal hygiene. Hot and cold water must be delivered through a single outlet to a dedicated hand basin. Liquid soap and paper towels must be provided at or near the hand washing facility.
- d) A suitable sanitising agent must be available for sanitising food handling implements and food contact surfaces. Where utensils are stored in a sanitising solution between uses, the solution should be changed frequently to keep it clean.

3.5 Waste disposal

- a) Sullage water should go to the sewer on site, if available, usually via a surcharge gully near the amenities block. If a sewer is not available, the waste should be disposed of as advised by the local council.

- b) A garbage bin with a tight fitting lid should be provided in the stall for solid waste. This should be emptied into the bulk bin or other facility before leaving.

4. GENERAL FOOD HANDLING

The requirements for handling food for sale for human consumption are outlined in Food Standards 3.1.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, copies of which are available on the NSW Food Authority's website (www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au). The requirements also apply to pre-packaged food and low-risk food. Fact sheets and user guides (including for charitable and community organisations) about these requirements are available on the Food Standards Australia New Zealand website (www.foodstandards.gov.au).

4.1 Food suppliers

Obtain fresh produce and products from reputable suppliers, as generally they operate under strict quality guidelines. Keep copies of invoices to trace back if needed in future.

4.2 Preparing food at home

Notification of food business details, construction, facilities, labelling and food handling requirements of the *Food Act*, apply equally to home situations as to commercial operations. This also applies to pre-packaged and low-risk produce and foods. Approval to use homes for food handling may also be required by local councils. You should contact the local council in these situations. A fact sheet for 'Home based and mixed food businesses' is available on the NSW Food Authority's website (www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au).

4.3 Transport of food to events

- a) All produce, foodstuffs and packaging for the event must be transported so that dust, pests and other likely sources of contamination are excluded. Whole fruits and vegetables and grains which are to be further processed, generally do not need to be transported under temperature control. (See 'Potentially hazardous foods and temperature control'.)
- b) Foods that are required to be stored under temperature control, or kept frozen, must be kept under strict temperature control or frozen during transportation. Food-grade plastic or insulated containers like eskies with tight fitting lids may be used for some foods. Where food comes into contact with the surface of the container, it should be impervious to moisture, constructed of a food-grade material and be capable of being easily cleaned and sanitised. Lids should not be removed from food containers when the vehicle is in motion or unattended.

- c) Commercial food transport vehicles should be suitable for the purpose.

4.4 Food storage

- a) Food business operators must ensure that all foods are stored so that they are protected from likely contamination, and that the environmental conditions will not adversely affect the safety or suitability of the food.
- b) There must be separately located storage facilities for items, such as chemicals, clothing and personal belongings, that may contaminate food or food contact surfaces.
- c) Food should be stored at least 150 mm above the floor or in suitable impervious containers and, where possible, kept out of direct sunlight.
- d) Potentially hazardous foods like poultry, meat, dairy products, seafood and egg-based products must be stored under temperature control. If intended to be stored frozen, the food must remain frozen during storage. (See 'Potentially hazardous foods and temperature control'.)
- e) Refrigeration facilities should be large enough to hold potentially hazardous foods under temperature control at all times. This may require the use of portable coolrooms. Do not overstock refrigerators or portable coolrooms, as the air will not be able to circulate freely around the foods.
- f) Cold foods should be stored at or below 5°C.
- g) Hot food appliances (bain maries and display cases) should enable hot foods to be kept at or above 60°C at all times.

4.5 Potentially hazardous foods and temperature control

One of the most common causes of food-borne illness is the storage and display of potentially hazardous foods at inadequate temperatures for extended periods. This can lead to the rapid and sustained growth of food poisoning bacteria. Examples of potentially hazardous foods include: cooked meat; dairy products; seafood; prepared salads; cooked rice and pasta; processed soya bean products and other processed foods containing eggs, beans, nuts, or other protein-rich foods; and foods that contain any of the above foods such as sandwiches and quiches.

- a) A food business must, when storing and displaying potentially hazardous food, store it under temperature control. If the food is intended to be stored frozen, ensure the food remains frozen during storage/display. Temperature control means maintaining cold food at a temperature of 5°C or below, or hot food at 60°C or above.

- b) Canned and bottled foods, dried or pickled products and some other processed foods, such as dried pasta, pasteurised juices and dried powder products, are not considered to be potentially hazardous unless opened or reconstituted.
- c) All food businesses that handle potentially hazardous foods are required to have a readily accessible, accurate, probe-type thermometer. Ensure the thermometer probe is cleaned and sanitised before it is used. It is good practice to monitor the temperature of hot or cold foods under operating conditions to ensure adequate temperature control is being maintained.

4.6 Cross-contamination

Adequate measures must be taken to prevent cross-contamination from raw foods to cooked foods. This includes:

- ensuring there are separate utensils for cooked and raw meats, poultry and seafood;
- covering all food;
- keeping cooked meat and salads separate from raw meat, raw poultry and raw seafood; and
- washing your hands after handling raw meats, raw poultry, raw seafood and raw vegetables.

4.7 Food display

When displaying food, you should take all practicable measures to protect the food from likely contamination by customers, dust, fumes or insects. This may mean using plastic food wraps, sealed containers, sneeze barriers, food covers or other effective measures.

4.8 Crockery, wrappings and packaging

- a) Single-use, disposable eating and drinking utensils are recommended.
- b) If re-useable dinnerware or tableware is used, you will need to show an authorised officer under the *Food Act* that you use an appropriate method for cleaning and sanitising them. (Machine dishwashers are recommended.)


- c) Crockery or plastic wares that are chipped, cracked, broken or are in a state of disrepair must not be used in connection with food.
- d) Packaging material must be suitable for food packaging and unlikely to cause food contamination. Only clean unprinted paper, food wraps or packaging must be used for wrapping or storing foodstuffs.

4.9 Single-use items

Single-use straws, eating utensils and other items that come into contact with food or the mouth of a person, must be protected from contamination until use and not reused.

4.10 Skills and knowledge

All food businesses must ensure that their food handlers have skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene matters appropriate to their work activities.

Charitable and community not-for-profit organisations are exempt from this requirement if they sell foods that are not potentially hazardous (eg. cakes without cream, biscuits, bottled jams or pickles), or foods which are to be consumed immediately after thorough cooking (eg. sausage sizzles, hamburgers, spring rolls). Note:  are not exempt from the other hygiene requirements.

4.11 Staff illness

- a) A person known (or suspected) to be suffering from a food-borne illness or who is a carrier of a food-borne disease, must not handle food, unless all practicable measures to prevent food being contaminated are undertaken. Symptoms may include diarrhoea, vomiting, sore throat with fever, fever or jaundice and infectious skin conditions.
- b) A food handler must notify their supervisor if they know or suspect that they may have contaminated food while handling food.

4.12 Requirements for food handlers

When engaged in any food handling operation, a food handler must:

- a) not contaminate food or food contact surfaces with their body or clothing;

- b) prevent unnecessary contact with ready-to-eat food;
- c) wear only clean outer clothing;
- d) cover all dressing and bandages on exposed body parts with a waterproof dressing;
- e) not eat over uncovered food or food contact surfaces;
- f) not sneeze, blow or cough over uncovered food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food;
- g) not spit, smoke or use tobacco while working in the food stall; and
- h) not urinate or defecate except in a toilet.

4.13 Hand washing

A food handler must wash his or her hands using soap and warm water, then dry with single-use towels:

- a) before commencing or re-commencing handling food;
- b) immediately before handling ready-to-eat food after handling raw food;
- c) immediately after using the toilet;
- d) immediately after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or tissue, eating, drinking and after touching his or her hair, scalp or a body opening; and
- e) before using disposable gloves for handling food. Remember if wearing gloves, you should change them as often as you are required to wash your hands.

4.14 Money handling/touching customers' hands when serving ready-to-eat food

While the likelihood of contamination from customers' hands when exchanging money is low, consideration should be given to minimising the risk. Examples include using a disposable glove or where sufficient staff are available, nominating one to handle money.

4.15 Cleaning and sanitising

- a) The food stall or vehicle must be maintained to a standard of cleanliness where there is no accumulation of garbage or recycled matter (except in appropriate

- containers), food waste, dirt, grease or other visible matter.
- b) All fixtures, fittings and equipment, and those parts of vehicles used to transport food, must be maintained and cleaned so there is no accumulation of food waste, dirt, grease or other visible matter.
 - c) Eating and drinking utensils must be in a clean and sanitary condition immediately before each use.
 - d) Bench tops and surfaces of equipment in contact with food and storage appliances, must be kept in a clean and sanitary condition to ensure food is unlikely to be contaminated. 'Sanitary' means cleaning first, followed by heat and/or chemical treatment at the right concentration, or some other process to reduce the number of bacteria to a level unlikely to compromise the safety of the food. Chlorine-based sanitisers can be used for this purpose. Care should be taken when using chemical products.
 - e) The containers used for chemical storage should be appropriately labelled.
 - f) Chemicals must not be stored near food or any packaging likely to come in contact with food to avoid the risk of contamination.

4.16 Labelling

The following requirements are outlined in more detail in the Food Standards Code, which is available on the NSW Food Authority's website (www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au). For detailed advice on labelling requirements, please contact the NSW Food Authority.

Pre-packaged products must be clearly labelled with:

- a) a **description of the food** (eg. 'strawberry jam' or 'chocolate cake');
- b) **the name and address of the supplier** - a street address is needed, not a post office box number or email address;
- c) **production lot identification** - this assists trace-back of food products that may be the cause of a food-borne illness or other food-safety issues. The presence of a 'date mark' (see below) is sufficient to meet this requirement;

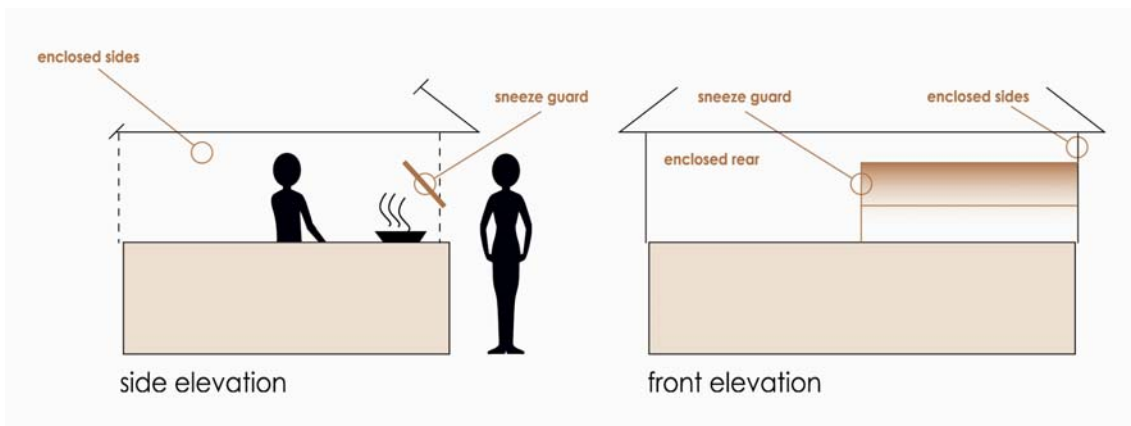
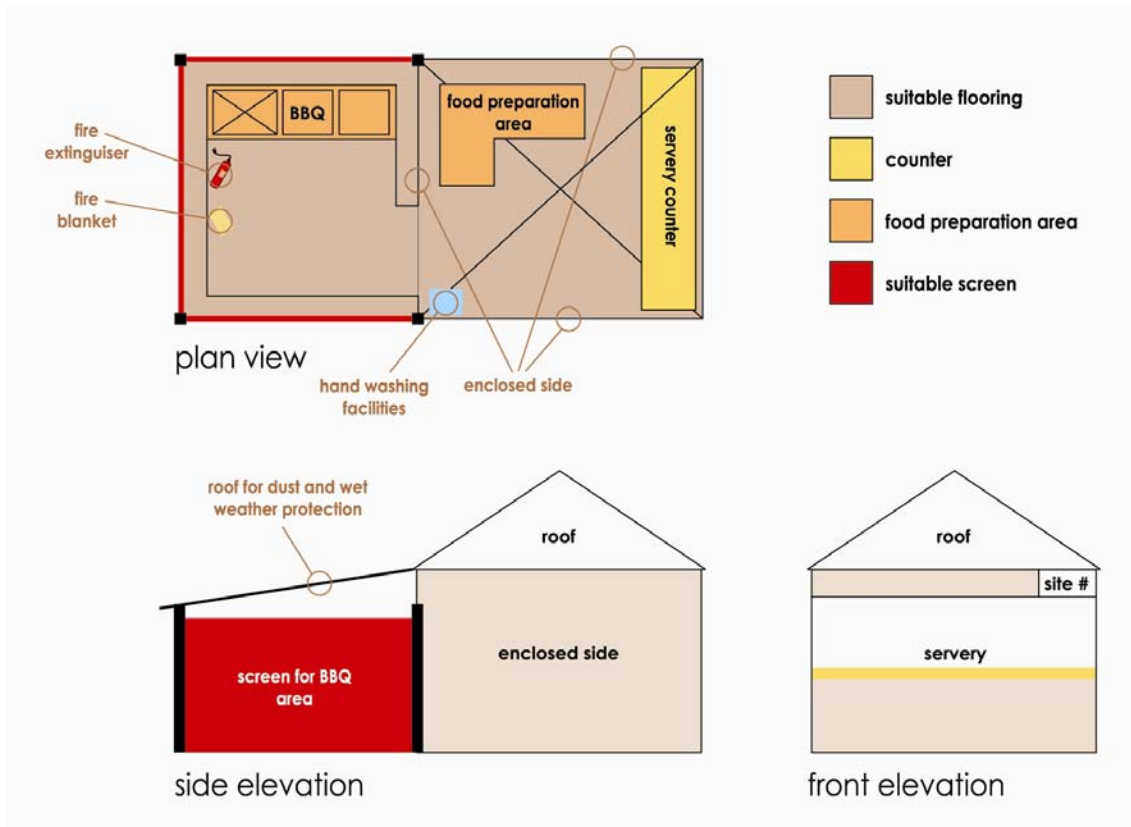
- d) **mandatory and advisory warnings for** unpasteurised milk, aspartame, unpasteurised egg products, quinine, cola with added caffeine and guarana extracts;
- e) **a list of ingredients**, including added water in descending order by ingoing weight;
- f) **date marking** (eg. 'best before' date to indicate how long the food will keep). Note that some foods require a 'use-by' date and should not be sold after the expiry date. Packaged foods that need to be consumed within a particular time period for health and safety reasons, should carry date marking in the form of a 'use-by' date, along with other labelling details;
- g) **storage conditions**(eg. 'keep refrigerated');
- h) **nutrition information panel** - most packaged food should now display a nutrition information panel, however some foods are exempt from this requirement; and
- i) **characterising ingredient** - a characterising ingredient (% labelling), means it is mentioned in the name of the food. For example 'strawberry jam', the label should show the percentage (%) of strawberries in the ingredient list.

While unpackaged, processed foods are exempt from most labelling requirements, consumers who have known allergies, need to know if a particular ingredient is present in the food they are eating. Standard 1.2.3 of the Food Standards Code requires the presence of some ingredients to be displayed on, or in connection with, the sale of the food containing them. The presence of other foods needs to be either indicated by a display or declared to the purchaser on request.

Food sold at stalls that raise money solely for charitable or community causes and not for personal financial gain no longer need to be labelled. The only exception to this is Royal Jelly or foods that contain it. In these instances a warning statement should be included on the label.

5. TEMPORARY FOOD STALL CHECKLIST

Typical Food Stall



5.1 Temporary Food Stall Checklist

HAVE YOU...?

1. Received the necessary approvals:
 - NSW Food Authority for high risk foods?
 - Council for:
 - home-based operations?
 - setting up at the event?
 - satisfactory food vending vehicle inspection?
2. Notified your food business details to the Food Authority?
3. Public indemnity insurance?
4. Asked about inspection fees?
5. Checked your stall will:
 - be located in a dust-free area, away from toilets and garbage bins?
 - have sufficient supply of potable water?
 - have adequate wastewater disposal facilities?
 - have adequate garbage bins?
 - have power?
 - have suitable construction – floor, walls and ceiling?
 - have food handling facilities for storage, cooking, hot/cold holding, preparation and serving?
 - have cleaning and wash-hand facilities?
 - address safety issues – fire control and WorkCover issues?
6. Provided a suitable vehicle and containers for the transport and storage of the food?
7. Addressed food handling operations adequately, including:
 - all food handlers have adequate skills and knowledge for their activities?

- checked if there are potentially hazardous foods involved? If YES, then have you....
 - provided adequate hot or cold storage facilities (eg. portable coolrooms, adequate supply of ice, hot boxes)?
 - checked that there is a thermometer?
 - checked a sanitiser is available?
 - checked that frozen foods can be correctly thawed?
 - organised designated staff to handle money only, while other staff serve ready-to-eat food using tongs or gloves?
 - provided adequate measures to protect food from contamination (eg. lidded containers, sneeze barriers)?
 - checked that eating and drinking utensils are protected from contamination until use?
- minimised the need for re-useable dinnerware and tableware?
- packaged food is appropriately labelled?
- adequate shelving so food is not stored on the ground?
- checked that hand washing supplies, including soap and paper towels, have been provided?

If you answered NO to any of these questions (except having potentially hazardous foods), then you may need to discuss these issues with the local council and/or change your management plan, before the event begins.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact your local council or the NSW Food Authority for further information. Council contact information appears in the telephone White Pages or on their respective website.

6.1 NSW Councils

Tel: White Pages or Yellow Pages

Website: <http://www.lgsa.org.au/site/councils.html>

6.2 NSW Food Authority

Tel: 1300 650 124

Fax: 02 9647 0026

Website: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au>

Email contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

6.3 Food Standards Australia New Zealand

Website:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafetystandardsaustraliaonly/>

Food safety fact sheets:

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/mediareleasespublications/factsheets/foodsafetyfactsheets/index.cfm>

6.4 WorkCover NSW

Switchboard

Phone: 02 4321 5000

Fax: 02 4325 4145

Website: <http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/default.htm>

6.5 NSW Fire Brigades

Tel: 02 9265 2999

Fax: 02 9265 2988

Business hours: 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Website: <http://www.nswfb.nsw.gov.au/>