

## **10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses**

### **Critical Check Point 1 – “The Premises”**

**Are the food premises in good repair, clean and tidy and fit for purpose?**

#### **The Goal**

To ensure food rooms within food premises are designed and constructed appropriately, including all facilities, equipment and utensils are kept clean, maintained well, so they can be used to prepare and/or serve food that is safe and suitable.

#### **The Expected Results**

##### **Food rooms**

- adverse external and internal environmental factors (including dust, dirt, pests, dirt, fumes, smoke) are prevented and/or minimised to prevent cross-contamination
- room size is sufficient in regard to the number of people working there, the nature of the business, the potential patronage, and the volume and range of food prepared and served provides working conditions that facilitate good operating practices and ensures that cross-contamination and deterioration of food is minimised
- room size allows for the easy movement of people involved with preparing/serving food and provides good access to areas for cleaning, sanitation, checking and maintenance.
- in addition food rooms are:
  - not used as a sleeping place and are not directly connected to any room that is used as a sleeping place
  - not used for any purpose which is likely to contaminate any food or adversely affect the suitability or cleanliness of any food
  - exclusively for the purpose of the food business.

##### **Finishes and facilities in food rooms**

- materials used in the construction of exposed internal structures/surfaces, and appliances or food containers are not a source of contamination for the food (eg, they should not impart chemicals to the food)
- exposed internal structures/surfaces, and appliances and food containers are made of materials that can be easily cleaned, sanitised and sterilised (as appropriate to their use)
- adequate lighting that gives sufficient natural or artificial light for all activities, including cleaning
- sufficient natural or mechanical ventilation to effectively remove fumes, smoke, steam, and vapours; and in the case of a mechanically assisted air flow the intake must be positioned to draw clean air
- adequate self-drainage of floors to minimise water ponding
- provision of adequate supply of suitable water
- an adequate hot water capacity for the nature of the business
- suitable facilities that can meet temperature control requirements for the hygienic preparation and storage of food (eg, chillers, freezers, ovens)
- an adequate number of hand washbasins with warm running water and supplies for hygienic cleaning, sanitising and drying of hands or another suitable means of cleaning, sanitising and drying hands
- adequate facilities/appliances for cleaning and sanitising the premises, facilities and appliances.

##### **Cleaning Schedule**

Premises, equipment and utensils must be cleaned on a regular basis.

- The way to effectively achieve consistently good standard of cleaning is with a cleaning schedule which simply is a written list of what has to be cleaned, how is it to be cleaned, and when it has to be cleaned.
- All surfaces and equipment that come into contact with food (eg, benches, chopping boards, tongs, pots, cutlery etc) and equipment used to clean (eg, cleaning cloths etc) must be cleaned and sanitised.
- The best way to start is to walk through your premises and make a list of everything that needs cleaning

## **Develop Your Cleaning Schedule**

You may find it helpful to go through the following examples:

### **High priority cleaning:**

- Items that come into contact with food, work surfaces and chopping boards, utensils eg, knives, fridges, equipment with moving parts eg, food mixers, slicers and processors, sinks and soap dispensers, re-usable cloths and work clothes, ice machines.

### **Frequently touched items:**

- rubbish bins, broom and mop handles, door handles, taps, switches and controls, can openers, telephones.

### **Other cleaning:**

- floors, walls, ceilings, storage areas and freezers, waste areas and drains, microwaves, ovens, dishwashers, hot-holding and display, cabinets, self-service and staff areas.

Review your schedule regularly and check that all cleaning is being done properly.

Train staff on the cleaning schedule, so they know what they have to do, and when.

Supervise cleaning to ensure it is done effectively.

A copy of a blank cleaning schedule is available on request from the Nelson City Council.

## **General cleaning requirements**

- The manufacturer's instructions are followed when using chemicals and cleaning equipment.
- Food is appropriately protected or removed before cleaning or sanitising.
- **Cleaning occurs between tasks ('clean as you go').**
- Wherever possible items are left to air dry.
- Cloths are changed daily or more frequently if needed
- Used towels (eg. ones used for floor cleaning) are stored for laundering and not mixed with in-use cloths.

## **Dishwasher**

- Dishwashers are operated and serviced according to the manufacturer's instructions.

## **For items that can't be put through the dishwasher**

- Pre-clean – remove visible dirt and food residue.
- Main clean – wash with hot water and the correct amount of detergent.
- Rinse with clean, hot water.
- \*Sanitise with a food-safe sanitiser
- \*Final rinse (see sanitiser instructions as required).
- Air dry or use a single-use drying cloth.

\* Only required where equipment/surface comes into contact with food.

## **Using cloths**

- Single-use cloths are used whenever possible and thrown away after each task.
- When using re-usable cloths they are thoroughly washed, sanitised and dried between tasks.
- A new or freshly cleaned cloth is always used to wipe surfaces that come into contact with ready-to-eat food.
- Outside tables etc are cleaned using cloths designated for these tasks only (these cloths are not to be used inside at all).

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## **Equipment used for cleaning**

- Cleaning materials are stored in a separate area away from food.
- Cleaning equipment is kept in good repair and not used for any other purpose.
- Cleaning equipment is cleaned and sanitised.
- Chemicals are clearly labelled.
- Chemicals are never stored in a food container.
- Staff are trained how to use chemicals safely.

## **Rhyming Reminders**

- **Tidy and clean, inspector's dream**
- **Dirt everywhere, inspector's nightmare**
- **We repair and make fit, so now we're a hit**

## 10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses

### Critical Check Point 2 – “The Food Workers”

**Are food staff smart with appropriate clean clothing and have clean hands?**

#### The Goal

To prevent contamination of food and food contact surfaces from inappropriate clothing and behaviour and to prevent food and food contact surfaces from becoming contaminated by unclean hands through effective hand washing and drying.

#### The Expected Results

##### Clothing

Appropriate clean clothing is worn when handling unpackaged food to protect it from contamination.

Outer protective clothes (eg, aprons etc) are removed when a food handler leaves food preparation areas (eg, to go to the toilet, lunch room, going home etc).

##### Personal conduct

- Food handlers avoid touching nose, mouth, hair and skin during food preparation.
- Food handlers do not spit, sneeze or cough over food.
- Disposable tissues are used to blow noses, and hands are washed afterwards.
- Smoking is not permitted in the food preparation area.
- Food is not eaten in food preparation areas.

##### Cuts and sores

- All cuts/sores on hands and arms are covered with a sticking plaster to stop microbes from the wound contaminating food.
- Brightly coloured waterproof sticking plasters are used that can be easily seen if they fall off. A disposable glove is used to cover sticking plasters if they are on the hand.
- If a cut/sore is weeping or infected and cannot be totally covered the person **does not** handle food.

##### When to wash hands

Everyone in food areas follows good hand hygiene practices by washing and drying their hands, especially:

- when entering any area where unwrapped ready-to-eat
- food is handled
- before touching unwrapped ready-to-eat foods
- after touching raw food (meat, veges etc)
- before putting on gloves and after removing them
- after coughing and sneezing
- after using the toilet.

##### How to wash hands properly

- Step 1: Clean under each fingernail using warm running water, soap and a nail brush.
- Step 2: Wash hands with warm running water and soap, rubbing vigorously (front, back and between fingers).
- Step 3: Dry hands thoroughly (front, back and between fingers), by using either:
  - single-use paper towel - Rub hands on two paper towels.
  - single-use cloth (roller) towel - Rub hands on two sections of towel.

##### Using gloves

Using gloves is not a substitute for hand washing as gloves do not protect food from cross-contamination (eg, passing microbes from raw food to cooked food).

Gloves, just like hands, can transfer microbes from raw food, equipment, utensils and surfaces to ready-to-eat-food.

Gloves must be changed between tasks (eg, after handling uncooked food and before handling ready-to-eat foods etc).

##### Hand jewellery and finger nails

To enable good hand hygiene, fingernails should be kept short.

Hand jewellery should not be worn if the food handler is working with unwrapped food.

### Rhyming Reminders

- Clothing and hair, cleaned and tidied with care
- Wash hands the right way, singing 'Happy Birthday'
- Hands and nails clean, it's nice to be seen
- Gloves may be OK, but clean hands are the best way



## **10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses**

### **Critical Check Point 3 – “The Knowledge”**

**Do management and staff have good knowledge and commitment to food safety?**

#### **The Goal**

All staff are trained and have a good understanding of safe food handling requirements related to their area of work and appropriate supervision is provided to ensure staff continually observe safe food handling practices.

#### **The Expected Results**

##### **Minimum Expectation**

All staff are trained in the following procedures before they can work:

- Cleaning and sanitising (Refer Critical Check Point 1)
- Personal and Hand hygiene (Refer Critical Check Point 2)
- Readily perishable foods (Refer Critical Check Points 4-8)
- Food allergens (Refer Critical Check Point 10)
- Health and sickness (Refer Critical Check Point 5)

##### **How training is confirmed**

The manager/chef/supervisor trains staff in each safe food practice procedure relevant to their work, then watches them perform the task (correcting them as necessary).

The Environmental Health Officer may want to verify that staff are appropriately trained and will by observation note if they are following safe food management practices.

Copies of staff training certificates are held on site and are available for viewing by the Environmental Health Officer.

##### **Nelson City Council’s Safe Food Handler Award**

One way of ensuring staff have undergone good basic training in food safety is to undertake the Council’s Safe Food Handler Award. This is available from Council and only costs \$10.00 for each person undertaking the Award. It is done in the persons own time at their own place and when they have successfully completed the course they receive a Safe Food Handler Award Certificate from the Council.

[Use this link to Council’s web page to access the Award](http://www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz/food-safety-knowledge/)

**Or type the following URL into your browser:**

<http://www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz/food-safety-knowledge/>

#### **Rhyming Reminders**

- **Some have the knowledge, they got it from college**
- **Others Council's reward, Safe Food Handler Award**
- **The chef taught us well, our actions do tell**
- **So we've all done the talking, now let's do the walking**
- **We know and we do, so safe food comes to you**





## 10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses

### Critical Check Point 4 – “The Food Suppliers”

**Is food sourced from an approved supplier?**

#### The Goal

To ensure ingredients and supplies are obtained from reputable suppliers, and to check they are transported appropriately and arrive in good condition.

#### The Expected Results

##### Approved suppliers

Food is only bought from suppliers who are registered with:

- A New Zealand Territorial Local Authority (eg Nelson City Council) or
- the Ministry for Primary Industries (formerly New Zealand Food Safety Authority), or

##### Factors for your consideration:

- How quickly do they respond to your concerns?
- Do they seem responsible in the way they store, transport and pack their goods?

##### Receiving incoming goods

The following checks are made when food is delivered:

- packages are free of damage
- packages are properly labelled with the name and address
- of the manufacturer or supplier/importer, and a batch code or date mark
- food is not past its expiry date
- the vehicle and delivery person are clean, and food has not been exposed to any hazards (chemicals, machinery etc) during transportation
- frozen food is frozen solid when delivered with no sign of defrosting
- readily perishable food is delivered chilled (cold to touch – if in doubt, the temperature is checked using a thermometer to confirm its 4°C or below).
- hot readily perishable food is 60°C or hotter.
- Goods that are delivered outside operating hours are protected from contamination and temperature abuse and is achieved by the person delivering the goods storing them in the location approved by you

##### When there's a problem

- Reject or return goods to the supplier if delivered food does not meet the standards detailed above.
- **If goods can't be sent straight back to the supplier, store the damaged goods in a separate area and label 'Not for sale or use'.**
- Contact the supplier to resolve any problems as soon as they arise. If problems persist and can't be fixed, use a different supplier.

##### Records

Keep a record of any problems with a food supplier and action taken.

Copies of these records are to be available for viewing by the Environmental Health Officer

#### Rhyming Reminders

- **Our suppliers are good, they put the food where they should**
- **We check the food temperatures, so no misadventures**
- **If its not up to standard, its immediately sent backward**





## 10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses

### Critical Check Point 5 – “The Food Protection”

#### Is food adequately protected from contamination?

### The Goal

To ensure food is protected from contamination from all sources including food handlers and customers. Note this is matters additional to those provided in other Critical Check points such as cleanliness of premises and absence of vermin, staff hygiene and safe temperature controls.

### The Expected Results

#### General Protection

- Pre-packaged food is displayed in accordance with any **manufacturer/supplier’s storage** instructions.
- Bulk food that is repackaged for sale is labelled as appropriate.
- **Raw foods are stored so they can’t** contaminate cooked or ready-to-eat foods.
- Food is thrown away if its packaging or wrapping has been damaged to the extent that the food is exposed, or no longer contained in the wrapping.
- Products are stored off the floor (this helps with cleaning and prevents them picking up dirt which could be transferred to work surfaces).
- Products with damaged packaging are thrown away (eg, cans that are damaged, bulging or corroded).
- Storage areas are kept clean and free of pests and where appropriate food is stored in pest proof containers.
- Food is clearly labelled (not required for whole fruit and vegetables that are obvious as to what they are).
- Tableware, packaging, utensils, equipment etc are stored so they remain clean and protected from contamination.

#### Preventing Disease Transfer (Staff and others)

1. No one (including a contractor, visitor etc) is permitted in a food-handling area if suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea.
  - Anyone who has vomited or had diarrhoea in the 24-48 hours prior to entering the food premises must report it to the person in charge (ie manager/chef/supervisor).
2. Any food handler who has had diarrhoea two or more times, or any vomiting within a 24-48 hour period must seek medical advice and have a faecal specimen tested to identify the cause of illness.
  - The person in charge must ensure the food handler is excluded from the premises until they meet the appropriate clearance criteria (see Records section).
  - The person in charge is to determine whether a sick food handler is to be given safe alternative work that does not involve direct contact with open food, or with surfaces and equipment in any food area.
3. Any vomiting at work must be reported immediately to the person in charge
  - The food handler must be excluded immediately from all food handling areas.
  - The affected area and all contaminated surfaces, including equipment and utensils must be cleaned and sanitised.
  - Any food that may have become contaminated must be disposed of and the person in charge will ensure that this is done.
4. No one with jaundice (yellowing of the skin) who is suspected of, or has, hepatitis A is allowed in a food handling area.
5. No one is permitted to handle food if they have scaly, weeping or infected skin that cannot be totally covered during food handling.

### **Preventing Customer Contamination**

- Ready-to-eat food on display is either wrapped or otherwise covered to protect it from contamination by the use of:
  - sneeze guards
  - covers over food
  - other method approved by the Environmental Health Officer
- Food is put out for display/service as soon as possible after preparation.
- Clean serving utensils are provided for each food item or dish, and handles do not touch the food.
- Food on display is not topped up with, or mixed with fresh batches.
- When food displays (eg, unwrapped food such as salads, hot foods etc) need more food they are replaced with completely new batches of food.
- Left-over self-service food is not reused (eg, it is not carried over to the next day).
- Serving spoons are replaced whenever they have been misused, or could otherwise have become contaminated.
- Single use items are thrown away after use (eg, paper plates, cups, plastic cutlery etc).
- Self-service displays are appropriately supervised.

### **Transporting Food**

All food that is transported is covered or packed in a way that protects it from contamination.

- The parts of the vehicle where food is carried are clean.
- Ready-to-eat food is separated from raw food.
- Food is not transported along with anything that could contaminate the food or equipment (eg, tools, chemicals etc).
- Animals are not allowed access to any vehicle used to transport food or food equipment

### **Temperatures for Transporting Food**

- Important not to forget that transported readily perishable foods shall be kept within the safe temperature range which is either below 40c or above 60c.
- Readily perishable food must not exceed a maximum period of two hours outside the safe temperature range.

### **Rhyming Reminders**

- **Food kept off the floor, cooked stored above raw**
- **Staff not well, stay home and boss tell**
- **Wrap and keep covered, then no germs are harboured**
- **Allow contamination? It could be your damnation!**

## 10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses

### Critical Check Point 6 – “The Cooking”

#### High risk foods are cooked to safe temperatures?

#### The Goal

To ensure food is cooked properly so that any germs are killed off (pasteurisation) and that particular attention is given to high risk foods such as chicken (and other poultry) and processed meats (includes raw sausages, minced and tenderised meats).

#### The Expected Results

##### Thawing Frozen Foods

Frozen high risk foods must be safely and completely thawed before cooking.

When thawing, ensure juices from defrosting food do not drip onto other foods or surfaces that come into contact with food.

Unless slow thawing can be achieved by placing food from freezer to refrigerator (requires good advance planning) any quick thawing must not result in food being held above 4<sup>o</sup>c for more than four hours prior to cooking.

Rapid thawing is best achieved by putting food into a water-tight sealed container or bag and then placed under cold running water.

##### Poultry

Checking poultry is cooked properly is essential as a significant proportion of fresh poultry items (this particularly includes chicken) has food poisoning bacteria (mostly campylobacter and also salmonellae species) not only on the surface of the meat and of course the gut cavity but also within the flesh. This makes cooking poultry a significant risk issue compared with cooking whole cuts of raw meat.

- One safe way to ensure poultry is adequately cooked is to use a temperature probe to check that the thickest part of the meat (usually the breast or the innermost part of the thigh) has reached 75°C (**this is an instant temperature ie food doesn't have to be held at this temperature for any specific length of time**)
- Other safe time temperature combinations are cooking at 70 °C for 2 minutes or 65 °C for 10 minutes. Note that these longer time lower temperatures need to be carefully recorded to confirm that the food is safe to eat.
- When cooking poultry write down the temperatures reached so you have a record to confirm that the poultry has been cooked safely

##### Processed raw meat (includes minced meat/sausage meat)

Processed meat such as rolled joints, tenderised or injected meats, livers, minced meats and meat products (eg, sausages, burgers) must be thoroughly cooked because microbial contamination can be throughout the meat.

- Meat products are checked that they are steaming hot through to the centre, with no red or pink meat remaining.
- Rolled joints are checked by inserting a skewer into the centre until juices run out. Juices will show no pink or red when joints are properly cooked.

##### Whole cuts and whole joints of meat

- The surface of the meat is thoroughly sealed to kill the germs present.
- Note: Whole cuts and whole joints of meat can be cooked to preference and served rare, if properly sealed (any contamination will only be on the outside surface of the meat).

##### Shellfish

- Look for change in colour and texture. Prawns will turn from blue-grey to pink and scallops become milky white and firm when cooked.
- Before cooking, any mussel or clam with an open or damaged shell is thrown away as it may not be safe to eat.
- To check that a mussel or clam is cooked, make sure the shell is open and that the mussel or clam has shrunk inside the shell.
- If the shell has not opened during cooking, throw it away.

### **Liquid dishes (eg, soups, sauces, gravies etc)**

- Cold spots are avoided by stirring frequently so an even temperature is reached.
- Dishes are brought to a simmer.

### **Customer self-cook**

The following steps are taken when food is provided for customers to cook their own meals (eg, hot stone, steamboat/hotpot, BBQ etc):

- customers are given appropriate instructions on how to cook and handle food safely
- sufficient appropriate utensils and tableware are provided to enable customers to avoid cross-contamination
- cooking equipment (eg, hotstone, grill etc) provided is capable of cooking food safely
- written procedures for safe cooking are available and staff are trained in process.

### **Records**

Copies of record sheets to confirm safe cooking of poultry and customer self-cooking must be available for viewing by the Environmental Health Officer.

Copies of blank record sheets for poultry cooking are available on request from the Nelson City Council.

### **Rhyming Reminders**

- **If you don't want it raw, make sure that you thaw**
- **Cook chicken well, check temp to tell**
- **For sausage and minced, no red or pink - be convinced**
- **Whole cuts of meat, sear for a rare treat**

## 10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses

### Critical Check Point 7 – “The Ups and Downs”

**Are prepared readily perishable foods safely cooled and/or reheated?**

#### The Goal

To cool hot, ready-to-eat foods quickly and/or to reheat food quickly and thoroughly. This is done to minimise the length of time it spends in the temperature danger zone (4°C to 60°C). Note you will need an accurate probe thermometer to do this job properly. Follow directions if provided on the product label.

#### The Expected Results

##### Cooling hot foods

Readily perishable ready to eat food is cooled from 60°C to 21°C in two hours and from 21°C to 4°C in four hours **Whole cuts and whole joints of meat. Don't put a large amount of hot food in a small refrigerator as the unit will be unlikely to have sufficient capacity to effectively reduce the temperature of the hot food within the required time and in fact you may risk other foods in the refrigerator from becoming warm.**

##### Methods for chilling hot food dishes

- Use a blast chiller.
- Put the food into a tray or larger dish (preferably metal) to increase its surface area.
- Divide food into smaller portions.
- Place on a rack to improve air circulation around the food.
- Move hot food to a colder area.
- Place vacuum packed foods into iced water.
- Stand pans of hot food in cold/ice water.
- Stir hot liquid as its chilling.
- **Use the 'cool setting' on the oven (the oven must be cool first!).**
- Place the food in the chiller once it has cooled to 21°C.

##### Reheating Cold Food

Foods should reach an internal temperature of above 60°C (75 °C is a safe target and is essential when reheating chicken) and reheating is completed well within 2hrs to be safe. Note that a bain-marie or warming cabinet should not be used to reheat food because they may not reheat food quickly enough.

##### Methods to reheat cold food

- Ensure you use equipment that reheats food effectively.
- Microwave or conventional oven, pot/pan/wok etc.
- Stir or mix food to make sure there are no cold spots and the food is evenly reheated.
- When reheating poultry a probe thermometer must be used to check that it reaches an internal temperature of 75°C (same as when cooking poultry)
- For other foods check that it has been reheated to well above 60°C
- Serve reheated food quickly (eaten within 2hrs) or maintain it at 60°C or hotter until served for eating

##### Records

Copies of blank record sheets to confirm safe cooling and poultry reheating for are available on request from the Nelson City Council.

#### Rhyming Reminders

- **Make cool within two, it's important you do**
- **Then chill below four, make sure it's no more**
- **Reheat it quickly, or you may get sickly**
- **Maintain piping hot, below 60 its not**
- **Remember it how? Record it now**



## 10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses

### Critical Check Point 8 - "The Display"

#### Are readily perishable foods stored/displayed at safe temperatures?

#### The Goal

To display and serve food in a manner that minimises the risk of contamination and the growth of harmful germs by limiting the amount of time prepared readily perishable food is held in the temperature danger zone (4°C to 60°C).

#### The Expected Results

##### Display of hot foods

Readily perishable, ready to eat food, is reheated as in Critical Check Point 7 before being hot held.

- Equipment such as bains-marie and warming cabinets are cleaned and preheated before food is put into them.
- Hot hold units are not overloaded.
- Food is stirred/ turned/mixed over **to make sure it's kept hot right through.**
- Existing batches of food are never topped up with new batches.
- Food is held at 60°C or hotter.

##### Checking hot-holding temperatures

- When checking hot-holding temperatures, the probe thermometer is inserted into the centre of thickest piece of the meat/part of the dish.
- Another method for checking chilled food temperatures may approved by the Environmental Health Officer (eg use of infra-red thermometer).

##### Display of Chilled Foods

- Ready-to-eat, readily perishable foods are held at 4°C or below unless on display no longer the four hours (provided food kept cool (at or below 16 °C) otherwise if allowed to become warm (ie above 16 °C) the maximum time that readily perishable food can be safely held is 2hrs.
- The time ready-to-eat food is left on display above 4°C (ie without refrigeration) is indicated by either:
  - time written on stickers stuck on wrapping or next to the food
  - coloured stickers stuck on wrapping or next to the food
  - other method approved by the Environmental Health Officer

##### Checking chilled food temperatures

- The temperature of refrigerated food is checked using a probe thermometer to measure the temperature that food is held at. Note that when the food itself is to be checked the probe of the thermometer must be sanitised after each food probed.
  - Otherwise an indication of the temperature of chilled food either stored or displayed can be ascertained by placing a container of water, cube of jelly or a non-food use lemon and probing this
  - Another method for checking chilled food temperatures may approved by the Environmental Health Officer (eg use of infra-red thermometer)

##### Recording Temperatures

- You will need to confirm that temperature controlled storage and display temperatures are achieved so write down the temperatures reached on a daily basis so you have a record to confirm that the food has been stored/displayed safely.
- Blank recording pages are available from the Nelson City Council.

#### Rhyming Reminders

- **Warm just like you, then it's no more than two**
- **Cool 2 to 4, is OK but no more**
- **If it's more than four, then it's gone out the door**
- **Remember it how? Record it now!**





## 10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses

### Critical Check Point 9 – “The Dates & Labels”

**Are foods correctly labelled, within expiry dates and is good stock control practised?**

#### The Goal

To find out which foods need labelling information and what information needs to be on the label and to ensure pre-packed foods are checked to be within expiry dates and readily perishable foods that you have pre-prepared are only held for safe periods.

#### The Expected Results

##### Food Labels

Pre-packaged food

- Packaged food that is purchased for retail sale is checked to make sure that the labelling is in English, is legible, and includes:
  - quantity marking (eg, net weight)
  - name and address of manufacturer, or supplier or importer within New Zealand or Australia
  - appropriate date marking
  - statement of ingredients (if needed)
  - nutrition information (if needed)
- Labels must also meet any food identification requirements and if appropriate:
  - any specific standards
  - warning and/or advisory statements
  - instructions for storage and use

Bulk foods bought in for repackaging

- Food that is repackaged for retail sale is checked for labelling requirements using **the MPI's (NZFSA's) Labelling Guide**.
- If labels are required the product information supplied with the bulk food is used as a basis to develop labels for the repackaged food.

Foods made and packaged on site

- All foods that are being made and packaged for retail sale are checked for labelling requirements using **MPI's (NZFSA's) Labelling Guide**.

##### Food additive requirements

A food additive is a substance not normally consumed as a food itself, but is added to the food to perform a particular function, eg: colouring, emulsifier, flavour enhancer (eg, MSG), flavouring, intense sweetener, preservative, raising agent, stabiliser and thickener.

The Food Standards Code contains a list of foods that are allowed to contain food additives and the permitted food additives. Only additives listed in the Food Standards Code may be added to food.

##### Expiry Dates and Stock Control

A **'first in first out'** policy for displayed food is used. Old stock is displayed so that it is used or sold first; new stock is placed behind old stock.

- Readily perishable food on display is checked daily to ensure that **it is within its 'Use By' date**.
- Food dated that day is either used or thrown away at the end of the trading day.
- **Food that has reached its 'Best Before' date is removed from display or sold clearly marked as past its 'Best Before' date.**

##### Use-by' date

**'Use by' dates apply to foods that should be eaten before that date for health and safety reasons.**

- They are usually applied to chilled, ready-to-eat foods with a short shelf life (eg, foods that contain fish, meat, eggs or dairy products that do not need any further processing or cooking) that will spoil and support pathogen growth if they are stored at room temperature.
- **The 'use-by' date is the date until when, provided the food has been stored in intact packaging and in accordance with stated storage conditions, it is safe to eat.**

**It is illegal to sell food that's past its 'use-by' date as it could make your customers ill.**

### **'Best-before' date**

'Best-before' dates relate to food quality.

- It is the date until when, provided the food has been stored in intact packaging and in accordance with stated storage conditions, it will be fully marketable and retain its quality.
- Food generally loses some of its quality and taste and can lose some of its nutritional value if eaten after this date.
- Foods with a shelf life of less than two years must **have a 'best-before' date**.
- **It is not illegal to sell food after its 'best-before' date** provided it is still fit to eat however this is definitely not a 'best practice' and in any case the customer must be alerted to the expiry date.

### **'Baked-on' and 'baked-for' dates**

'Baked-on' and 'baked-for' dates relate to bread that has a shelf life of less than seven days.

- They refer to the date when the bread was baked.
- **These dates are often used instead of 'best-before' dates** on bread.
- If the bread starts to spoil before the seven days are up it should be thrown out.
- It is not illegal to sell bread past its 'baked-on' or 'baked-for' date providing it is still fit to eat and again the customer is advised that the bread is 'old stock'.

### **Unlabelled Readily Perishable Prepared foods Stored in Refrigerator**

The shelf life of readily perishable products varies widely depending on the nature of the product and its ability to spoil and or grow pathogenic organisms.

- For example preservatives using acids, salts and sugars will extend shelf life as will drying. All of these factors reduce water activity and/or provide environments that are hostile to most pathogenic organisms.
- The highest risk is with fresh cooked products that are normally consumed without further cooking and that may continue to look OK but can grow food poisoning organisms overtime.
- Whist spoilage can be obvious (smell, colour, texture) foods that may have been contaminated with and continue to have grown food poisoning organisms and/or toxins may otherwise seem perfectly OK.

To provide some guidance on safe storage the following guidelines are provided:  
(The times are probably conservative but the old adage "fresh is best" is a good one).

<b>Category</b>	<b>Refrigerated &lt;4°C</b>	<b>Frozen Solid &lt;-10 °c</b>	<b>Deep Frozen &lt;-18°C</b>
Unprocessed ready to eat meat, fish and dairy products and cooked grains and cereals (eg cooked chicken, steak, custard, rice)	1-2 days	1 month	6 months
Processed (smoked, salted, pickled etc) ready to eat meat and dairy products and cooked grains and cereals (eg bacon, smoked meats and fish, sausages, yoghurt, marinated seafoods)	4-5 days	3 months	6-12 months
Raw meat, fish and dairy products that are to be subsequently cooked before eating	Quality issue – check for spoilage	Quality issue – check for spoilage (freezer burn/damage)	Quality issue – check for spoilage (freezer burn/damage)

Notes:

- All pre-packaged foods having an expiry date must not be held beyond that date unless cooked.
- The times assume no foods have been allowed to exceed 4°C for more than 2hrs all products are to be wrapped or in containers (wrapping and in particular, vacuum packing can decrease spoilage from oxidation and improve shelf life).
- Un-packaged products should be clearly marked as to what they are and date the product was put in refrigerator/freezer.
- Note.

### **Rhyming Reminders**

- **Fresh is the best, otherwise it goes west**
- **Read and make sure, that it is 'Best Before'**
- **If it's after the date, then it's in the bin mate!**
- **Label it well, so others can tell**

## 10 Point Health Check for Food Businesses

### Critical Check Point 10 – “The Allergens”

**Does the food business have accurate information about allergens and are ingredients of each food known?**

#### The Goal

To provide customers with accurate information on whether a food contains specific allergens, or could have traces of an allergen from cross-contamination and to ensure you know what the ingredients are in each food you sell and what additives are permitted.

#### The Expected Results

##### Allergens

Foods that most frequently cause allergic reactions include cereals, shellfish, eggs, fish, milk, nuts, sesame seeds, peanuts, soybeans, sulphites, wheat and bee products such as royal jelly, pollen and propolis. These foods are responsible for over 90% of serious reactions.

- If you are told by a customer that they suffer from allergies, talk to them about what menu items may be appropriate for them to order.
- If you are not confident that you can produce for them safely, **don't**.
- It is better for them to eat elsewhere than risk an allergic reaction.

**Ensure that you're supervisor is immediately told if a customer advises that they have an allergy or intolerance so that they can confirm that the correct advice and action is provided.**

##### Know what's in the food

Someone who has a food allergy or intolerance (such as lactose or gluten) needs to know the exact ingredients of the food that they eat.

- Be aware that of all ingredients used in the food to be served to customers with a food allergy.
- Check whether ingredients are free from the allergen
- Check all the ingredients in the dish, as well as what is used to cook the dish (eg, oils etc) as well as sauces and garnishes served with the dish.
- If there is any doubt about whether a food contains even a small amount of an allergen, tell the customer – never guess!

##### Avoid cross-contamination

**Make sure food doesn't get contaminated with small amounts of an allergen from surfaces, utensils and equipment that has been used to prefer other foods.**

- Ensure that clothing is clean and thoroughly wash your hands.
- Prepare food containing different allergens in separate areas using separate equipment and utensils.
- If this is not possible, then thoroughly clean all equipment and utensils to be used prior to preparing the food.
- Do not fry food in oil that has previously been used to fry food containing an allergen.

**Note that in worse case scenarios someone who suffers from allergies can collapse and die within a few minutes of consuming an allergen. This is known as anaphylactic shock. Dial 111 immediately if someone collapses and if they had advised they were allergic let the paramedics know this.**

#### Rhyming Reminders

- **Unless sure as can be, don't say 'allergen free'**
- **For all other cases, best advise 'may be traces'**
- **Staff clear as can be, check ingredients to see**
- **Staff inform clearly, and customers choice finally**