

# Food Safety Newsletter



## Contamination Edition

### Welcome

Welcome to the City of Rockingham's Food Safety newsletter. This newsletter aims to provide up-to-date food safety and regulatory information to food handlers and food businesses within the City. Please contact [customer@rockingham.wa.gov.au](mailto:customer@rockingham.wa.gov.au) if you have any feedback or suggestions for future editions of the food safety newsletter.

### Topics



Understanding  
food contaminants



How to ensure that food sold by  
your business is safe and suitable



[rockingham.wa.gov.au](http://rockingham.wa.gov.au)

## Understanding food contaminants

There has been a recent increase in customer complaints against food businesses regarding the contamination of food purchased within the City. Food businesses have a duty to sell safe and suitable food. This includes ensuring food does not contain physical, chemical or biological contaminants that may cause illness or harm to consumers.

### Physical contaminants

Physical contaminants refer to foreign objects that have been introduced to the food during any food handling procedure. Different types of physical contaminants can include pests and droppings, dirt and other filth, metal, glass, paint fragments and plastic, hair, jewellery and personal items.

#### Pests and droppings

Pests and droppings can be received on fresh fruit and vegetables when they come from the supplier. Pests can also come into contact with food if it is not protected during all food handling steps.

#### Metal, glass, paint fragments and plastic

These types of contaminants can enter food through the use of:

- broken food storage containers
- deteriorated single-use materials
- damaged trays and other food contact equipment
- flaking shelving or racks for storage
- damaged equipment or fixtures
- food contact surfaces that were not thoroughly cleaned after accidentally smashing glass; or following premises repairs or installation of new equipment.

#### Dirt and other filth

Fresh fruit and vegetables can be contaminated with visible matter such as dirt and sand when received from the supplier. Food may also become contaminated by exposure to unclean food contact equipment and surfaces. Dust can be blown or fall onto food if fans, ceilings and air conditioner vents are not cleaned regularly. Oil can also drip onto food from exhaust canopies or from other unclean food holding equipment.

#### Hair, jewellery and personal items

Hair can fall into food if it is not tied back, or if hair coverings are not worn by food handlers. Hair can also contaminate food by falling from a food handler's clothing. Band-aids, false nails and jewellery may also fall into food if worn during food handling activities.



## Chemical contaminants

Improper cleaning practices or storage of chemicals may cause food or food contact surfaces to be accidentally contaminated by chemicals. Fresh produce may have chemical residues from pesticides. However, some chemical contamination is caused by naturally occurring toxins in the food.



## Biological contaminants

Biological food contaminants include bacteria, fungi, yeasts, mould and viruses. Some of these can occur naturally in food but can be spread through poor food handling practices and grow to dangerous levels with inadequate temperature control and improper storage. Cross contamination can also occur when ready to eat foods are handled using the same surfaces and equipment as raw food.

Viruses and bacteria can spread through contamination of food by saliva, blood and faecal matter due to poor hygiene practices of food handlers such as lack of hand washing. Food handlers can also spread illness if handling food, or by sneezing or coughing onto food and other surfaces in the kitchen when unwell.

Bacteria may also be present in harmful levels in food kept and sold past its use by date.



## How to ensure that food sold by your business is safe and suitable



Compliance with the Food Standards Code will reduce the chance that food sold by your business will be contaminated by physical, chemical and biological contaminants during food handling steps.

### **Food receipt**

Only accept food from reputable suppliers, with no physical damage to packaging or obvious signs of contamination. Ensure that all potentially hazardous food is delivered under temperature control.

### **Food storage**

Cover food so that it is protected from contamination. Store food under appropriate environmental conditions and under temperature control. Keep all food off the floor or other contaminated surfaces. Keep ready to eat food on shelving above raw, potentially hazardous food in storage.

### **Food processing**

Minimise the time potentially hazardous food is out of temperature control, rapidly cool and reheat food and keep food protected from contamination. Use process steps that minimise the risk of cross contamination.

### **Food display**

Display food under temperature control, using equipment and procedures that prevent contamination by customers.

### **Food packaging**

Use clean, undamaged, food-grade, sealed packaging or containers with lids and do not re-use single use packaging.

### **Food transportation**

Protect food with sealed packaging or containers with lids and transport it under temperature control.

## Further advice



Ensure that food handlers do not work when unwell. Measures they can take to prevent the contamination of food include:

- avoiding sneezing, coughing and smoking within the food premises
- wearing waterproof dressings to cover wounds
- wearing clean clothes and hair coverings
- removing their jewellery
- keeping their nails short
- washing their hands whenever hands are likely to be a source of contamination of food.



Avoid physical contact with food where possible by using gloves and clean utensils to handle food.



Thoroughly clean all areas of the food premises on a regular basis and ensure food contact surfaces are thoroughly cleaned and sanitised prior to contact with food.



Maintain the premises, fixtures, fittings and equipment so that no parts are likely to break or chip off and contaminate food.



Prevent the entry and harbourage of pests at the premises.



Train staff in safe food handling procedures.



Keep personal items away from food storage and preparation areas.



Keep chemical bottles and maintenance items in a designated area, where they are not likely to contaminate food.



Wash fresh produce, including garnishes to remove any visible dirt and insects, as well as chemical residue.



Rotate stock and dispose of food when it is past its use-by-date.



### Warning

Selling contaminated food may cause harm to your customers and lead to customer complaints. This can cause reputational damage to your business and result in enforcement action to be undertaken by the City of Rockingham.