

Food Safety Standards – Food business notification requirement

Chapter 3 (Australia only) Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code

NOTE: The Food Safety Standards do not apply in New Zealand. The provisions of the food standards treaty between Australia and New Zealand do not include food hygiene standards.

Under Food Safety Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and General Requirements, food businesses must notify the appropriate enforcement agency before commencing any food handling operations.

Who does the notification requirement apply to?

The notification requirement applies to almost every food business in Australia. A food business is any business or activity that involves the sale of food or the handling of any type of food for sale in Australia, with the exception of some primary food production activities.

This means that the notification requirement applies to activities undertaken for charitable or community reasons, as well as to commercial ventures and 'once-only' projects that involve the handling and sale of food. It includes businesses that may not think of themselves as food businesses, like chemists, cinemas, corner stores, petrol stations and swimming pools, if they sell packaged or any other type of food.

The exceptions are listed below.

Businesses like farms, vineyards, orchards or aquaculture farms, provided they do not sell or supply food directly to the public or process the food they produce.

Notification is not required for individual food vending machines or vehicles used only for the transport of food, but food businesses that operate food vending machines or food transport vehicles will have to provide the required notification for their business.

Charities and community groups should seek advice before submitting a notification to their local enforcement agency as simplified arrangements may apply in your State or Territory. As a general rule, however, they will have to notify the appropriate enforcement agency when they are planning any events involving the sale of food. Fact sheets specifically for charity and community organisations are available from the FSANZ website.

What do I do if I am already registered or licensed as a food business?

Nothing. Notification is needed to make sure enforcement agencies know about the food businesses in their areas and how to contact them, and to provide guidance on the food safety risks associated with your business.

What do I do if I establish a new food business; or not already registered or licensed as a food business?

Under Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and General Requirements, food businesses must give the following information to the enforcement agency responsible for food safety in their area before commencing food handling operations. This will usually be their local council but in some States and Territories it may be the health department or public or environmental health units, depending on the situation in each jurisdiction.

Notification is not an approval process and you do not have to meet any special conditions.

What information is required for notification?

You must provide the enforcement agency with:

- contact details for your business that include the business trading name and the name and business address of the owner of the business;
- information to help the enforcement agency assess the level of food safety risk associated with your business – this includes information on the type of business (such as retailer, manufacturer, transport, caterer, restaurant, or market stall), the foods that it makes or supplies, the size of the business and some specific questions related to the supply of high risk products and the supply of products to groups of people who are most at risk from food-borne illness; and
- the location of all your premises in the area of that enforcement agency.

Mobile food vendors must also supply information on the sites they work from and/or information on where they house or garage their vehicle.

Is notification something I have to do more than once?

No. A single notification is needed, as long as the information that was provided is still correct. However, when there are changes to, for example, the name, address or owner of the business, or to what it does or the food it deals with, then you must tell the enforcement agency about these changes before they take place.

Is there a notification form?

Model notification forms have been developed for the use of local enforcement agencies. Some may choose to use a different format but they should all be asking for the same information. Contact your local council or public health unit for information on the notification requirement and for the forms for your area.

Need more information?

Copies of the standards, the guides to these and other fact sheets and supporting material can be found on the FSANZ website (<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>). Food businesses may also seek advice directly from the Environmental Health Officers at their local council, or from their State or Territory health or health services department and Public Health Units. Information can also be accessed through the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing <http://www.health.gov.au/> .

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