

The EHPA Food SIG suggest rewording the new Food Standard Code so that it is written in Plain English to assist in clearer and easier understanding of the contents, both for authorised officers but also for food businesses.

3.2.2A-2 Definitions - Fundraising Events

The EHPA Food SIG recognises that the sale of food as a successful means of raising funds for community and charitable groups.

We believe more information is required to clarify whether it applies to infrequent one off events by community/charitable groups or if it applies to community/charitable groups that provide meals to vulnerable people on a daily basis.

The EHPA Food SIG would support one-off events being exempt from the proposed requirements. Any volunteers that want to undertake basic food handling training are encouraged to do so.

3.2.2A-2 Definitions and 3.2.2A-11- Food Safety Supervisors

- Period of certificate currency
The proposed standard 3.2.2A - 2 requires a valid FSS certificate issued within the immediately preceding period of 5 years, once the standard is introduced.

The supporting document 3 “A Guide to proposed Standard 3.2.2A – Food Safety Management Tools” indicates that the FSS certificate is valid 5 years and that either a refresher course or a new course will need to be repeated every 5 years.

Will all States and Territories mandate through their Food Acts that the FSS will need to update their qualifications every 5 years?

Will the RTOs have the capacity to deliver refresher or new FSS course, especially in regional areas where demand will be high, given many in Victoria will have completed their FSS training greater than 5 years ago?

- Format of FSS Training
There are many food businesses where English is not their main language. There is a huge gap in FSS training in languages other than English, especially in regional areas, which is disincentive for those businesses to undertake the required training. RTO providers will need to offer training in languages other than English, as well as supporting resources.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many RTO providers adjusted their face-to-face teaching mode to virtual training. This is different to on-line learning. It would be good for RTO to continue to offer virtual FSS training as an alternative to face-to-face learning. From a learning point of view, face-to-face and virtual discussion will enhance the learning and understanding outcomes of participants as opposed to pure on-line training.

- EHPA Food SIG fully support the statement that the FSS being reasonably available to advise and supervise each food handler within the food business. We also agree with NSW and ACT provisions that only require one FSS to be appointed at one food premises and would like this mandated or clarified in the “Guide to proposed Standard 3.2.2A – Food Safety Management Tools”.

Submission - Proposal P1053 – Food Safety Management Tools

On behalf of Environmental Health Professional Association – Food Special Interest Group

Contact [REDACTED]

3.2.2A – Definitions and 3.2.2A-10 - Food Handler Training

The EHPA Food SIG support the requirement for all food handlers to have completed approved food handler training.

Our preference is for food handler training to be delivered by an RTO to ensure consistency in content and help assist with identification verification of the student and language barriers.

The EHPA Food SIG is concern about a food handler's ability to transfer the skills and knowledge acquired through a 90 minute on-line learning module is inadequate to impart the necessary skills and knowledge required. The EHPA Food SIG would support food handlers also undertaking a refresher course every 5 years.

There are numerous cases where Victorian Food Act authorised officers have discovered one person completing the 'Do Food Safely' course multiple times on behalf of other staff, the answers are posted online or in private group chats to save food handlers time and/or ensure a pass mark.

If the delivery of FHT through RTO's is not feasible, we would suggest that the state government free sites (such as 'I'm alert' and 'Do Food Safely') have measures in place to help confirm the persons' identity to prevent other people completing the training on behalf of someone else.

The EHPA Food SIG DOES NOT SUPPORT the onus of assessing the adequacy of a food handler's skills and knowledge by the Authorised Officer during the food safety inspection or audit. This places an additional burden on the Authorised Officer who may only visit the food business once a year. It is common for food businesses to experience a high turnover of food handlers, so it may take some time before the food handler's skill and knowledge can be assessed by the AO.

Another consideration into an AO ability to assess food handler skills & knowledge is based on the size of the food business. Whilst it may be achievable in a small café business with 1 food handler needing assessment, it will not be possible for an Authorised Officer to assess multiple staff at a large restaurant during a food safety risk assessment.

Further consideration / clarification is sought relating to regulating mandatory food handler training requirement and enforcement by Authorised Officers / regulators –

- Who will determine that the food handler training meets the minimum requirements?
- Will the food handler be required to provide evidence of their food handler training to the food business?
- Will the food business be required to keep this evidence?
- Will the AO / regulator need to review this and assess if it is adequate?
- What action will be proposed if there are food handlers who don't have this training?
- How soon after completing the training does the food business have to provide this information?
- Who will assess and determine internal training provided by large companies as suitable food handler training?

The EHPA Food SIG would like to see FSANZ produce further information that would assist food businesses or the Food Safety Supervisor to determine if a food handler has adequate food safety and hygiene skills and knowledge commensurate with their duties.

Training of food handlers, including any supporting written information, must be in languages other than English. There is a huge proportion of food handlers of non-English speaking backgrounds, who are discouraged from seeking further training because of language barriers. These courses may cost more or take longer to deliver because of the need for an interpreter.

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Contact [REDACTED]

3.2.2A-2 Definitions – Food Handler Training content

Although allergen management is out of scope of this proposal, it is a significant contributor to food recalls and legal action because of poor food handler practices and allergen management within a food business, which also present greatest food safety risk to the consumer.

Unfortunately, consumers have died after eating food despite assurances from the food handling staff that the food is free from the allergenic material requested. As a result, Victoria has introduced mandatory reporting to the Secretary of Department of Health by medical practitioners of any patient presenting for treatment of anaphylaxis. In addition, the majority of food recalls are because of undeclared allergens or contamination with allergenic ingredients. Poor food allergen management is a significant food safety issue in the food industry and needs to be included as a separate topic in the mandatory training of food handlers.

The EHPA Food SIG strongly recommends that food allergen management be included in as a separate topic in the food handler training and not treated as part of food contamination.

3.2.3A-12 - Evidence

The EHPA Food SIG suggest amending the sentence to ‘...*the food business must make **and use** a record...*’ to indicate that it may be a living record that needs updating, filling out etc. rather than a template being created and not used.

The EHPA Food SIG supports the requirement for Category 1 food businesses to make a record to substantiate any matter that is prescribed by the Food Safety Standards.

However, temperature control is not just about recording the temperature of food; it is more importantly about the corrective action to address the problem when it is not meeting those parameters. The “evidence” should also include documenting the corrective action.

The EHPA Food SIG also believe it is important for Category 2 food businesses to also manage temperature controls during processing. In the absence of this, it is recommended that the temperature of food continue to be monitored, however only record when the temperature is not being maintained and the corrective action to rectify it.

The EHPA Food SIG has no problem with records being kept for 3 months.

The EHPA Food SIG is concerned that the Guide suggests the evidence required to demonstrate compliance with clause 3.2.2 – 7(4) is “that the cooked and cooled PHF has been **reheated within 2hrs to 60°C** or above by a record or demonstration for each batch or SOP”. Safe Food Australia doesn’t explain what “rapidly heat food to above 60°C” means.

The EHPA Food SIG believes that 2hrs is too long and would prefer the clause aligns to the Victorian Food Safety Program template version 1.3 which recommends reheating the previously cooked and cooled food to above 75°C (same as cooked food temperature).

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3.2.2A – Definitions and 3.2.2A-6 – Category 1 Businesses and 3.2.2A-7 Category 2 Businesses

Please clarify if a home based businesses that purchases deli meats, cheeses, fresh fruit and dry biscuits and assembles it into a grazing platter which is delivered/collected as ready to eat would fall into a category 1, 2 or 3.

According to the Guide supporting the proposed standard, it is not clear whether this example is category 1 or 2, because deli meats are specifically mentioned in category 2 food business. But, it could also be a category 3 food business depending on whether you focus on receiving unpackaged food, or if the food business unpacks the food.

Many of these advertise on social media and are unregistered.

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