

# LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

## SAFE FOOD HANDLING PROCEDURE

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### 1. **PURPOSE**

Amendments to the Food Act 1984 now require food premises registered in Victoria to implement a food safety program. A food safety program requires that a food business look at its operations step by step from the purchase of raw materials to the sale or service of food to the customer, identified all procedures with potential to cause harm to customers and ensure that sufficient controls are in place to minimise risks.

#### **The amendments can be summarised as follows:**

- University food production areas such as the Union, College caterers and other caterers on campus are required to have a separate registration and establish their own food safety programs.
- Areas selling potentially hazardous foods, which are intended to be cooked prior to consumption or businesses selling non-potentially hazardous foods which are unpacked will be required to hold a Class C permit.
- Businesses selling packaged foods only will be required to hold a D class permit.
- Areas preparing and supplying food other than for promotion, publicity, profit of fund raising (i.e. not-for profit) will not require a Class C permit. However, such areas will still need to comply with appropriate food handling guidelines.

These procedures are designed to highlight the existence of regulatory requirements for commercial food preparation areas and to ensure that food provided for general consumption by staff or students is prepared, stored and handled safely so as to minimise the risk of food contamination and food poisoning in humans.

### 2. **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Safe food handling**

The process to follow to ensure food handled prior to consumption is prepared, cooked and displayed to ensure contamination does not occur

#### **Food contamination**

Occurs when food is contaminated sufficiently large numbers of illness-causing bacteria due to poor food handling techniques.

#### **Food Regulations**

All commercial food premises are required by law to register their food premises in Victoria and to implement a Food Safety Program.

#### **Commercial Food Premises**

Premises in which food is sold for profit or as part of a commercial enterprise

**Non-commercial food premises**

Premises in which food is supplied but there is no profit gained, for example a department's end of year barbecue or social gathering

**Class C Registration**

A Council registration for premises where potentially hazardous food is intended to be cooked otherwise treated immediately prior to consumption.

**Class D registration**

Where packaged food is only sold

**3. PROCEDURE****3.1 Responsibilities****3.1.1 Head of Schools / Managers**

Managers and Heads of Schools must ensure that all food preparation, storage and handling within their area is performed in accordance with established food handling guidelines; and:

Managers and Heads of Schools must ensure that

- a) For areas classed as commercial food premises, a food safety plan in accordance with the Food Act 1958 has been prepared and the premises are registered.
- b) Where food is not provided for profit (non commercial), food registration is not required. Note however, food must be prepared and stored in accordance with established food handling requirements as per 3.1.2 and section 4.
- c) Where a commercial contractor is engaged to provide food services, the contract manager must ensure that the contractor has prepared a food safety plan in accordance with the Food Act and that their premises are registered.

**3.1.2 Persons involved in food handling**

Persons directly involved in the preparation and handling of food must ensure that University food handling guidelines are adhered to when preparing or handling food.

**4. GENERAL FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The following information is of a general nature only. Detailed guidelines and information can be obtained from the local Council or the Department of Health and Community Services

**4.1 Personal hygiene**

All food that requires preparation prior to being cooked and sold must be prepared under hygienic conditions at all times and persons handling food must observe personal hygiene requirements. See also reference 4.4(b)

- (a) Hand washing basins should be located in close proximity to where food is being prepared. Otherwise the following hand washing facilities should be provided.

- Hibitane or similar product together with an adequate supply of water.
  - A closed container of water with an outlet.
  - A container must be provided to contain sullage water.
  - disposable towels and nailbrush
- (b) Smoking is prohibited in food preparation areas.
- (c) Cuts and abrasions on hands must be covered at all times with clean, waterproof dressings, preferably brightly coloured.
- (d) Suitable clean protective clothing should be worn by every person involved in handling unwrapped food, or when cooking.

#### 4.2 Safe food storage

- (a) A major factor in the growth of illness causing bacteria is the temperature at which food is kept. The temperature range between 5 degrees C and 60 degrees C is known as the temperature danger zone as bacteria multiply faster in this range.
- (b) Some foods such as meat, poultry, dairy products and seafood are called high-risk foods because they provide an environment that is conducive to the growth of bacteria. Food must be stored in areas specifically designed to maintain the temperature within the correct range, for example refrigerators, cool rooms and freezers and must be stored in appropriate containers.

#### 4.3 Food display

- (a) All food should be totally wrapped, enclosed or covered at all times, including during transportation, storage and whilst on display at the point of sale.
- (b) Unwrapped ready-to-eat food must not be handled with bare hands.
- (c) Cooked and uncooked food must be kept separate at all times.
- (d) Tongs, gloved hands or other suitable equipment must be used to handle the ready-to-eat food.
- (e) All pre-packed food must be labelled in accordance with the Food Act 1984 and must include the name and address of the manufacturer, packer or importer, a list of all ingredients and date marking of foods with a shelf life of 2 years or less.

#### 4.4 Premises

- (a) The food stall shall be constructed in such a manner so as to prevent the contamination of food by dust or insects. All benches, counter tops, shelving and tables are to be constructed of a smooth impervious material free from cracks and crevices.
- (b) Washing facilities should be located in close proximity to where food is being prepared. Alternatively, the following washing facilities should be provided:
- A closed container of water with an outlet and a container to wash equipment and utensils
  - A device for heating water.
  - Towels and detergents.
  - These facilities must be kept separate from hand washing facilities.

- (c) A refuse receptacle must be provided in each stall for the temporary storage of refuse. The disposal of sullage water must be into the sewer.

#### **4.5 Medical conditions disqualifying persons from handling food**

- (a) The Department of Health and Community Services' Food Premises Code, states persons with the following conditions must not handle unpackaged food:
- Excretors of *Salmonella typhi* or *Salmonella paratyphi*
  - Acute gastroenteritis, including acute diarrhoea
  - Excretors of the aetiological agents of Cholera, Amoebic Dysentery or Bacillary Dysentery
  - Hepatitis A or Hepatitis E and all other forms of acute hepatitis until diagnosed not to be Hepatitis A or Hepatitis E
  - *Taenia solium* (Pork tapeworm) infection
  - Tuberculosis (in the infectious state)

#### **5. REFERENCES**

Food Act 1985

Human Services. 1997 'A Guide to Food Safety Programs for the Food Service Sector'

Health and Community Services. 'Food Premises Code'

#### **6. DOCUMENTATION**

Food safety checklist

This procedure, was approved by the Executive Occupational Health and Safety Committee at its meeting on 5 June 2000.