

Food Business - Food Safety Program Guidelines

What is a Food Safety Program?

A Food Safety Program (FSP) is a written plan detailing the actions taken by a business to ensure the food it sells is safe for people to eat.

It identifies and controls food safety risks and hazards, and is an important tool to help businesses handle, process and sell food safely.

An appropriate and well implemented Food Safety Program can help a business:

- ensure the safety of food it prepares and sells
- better manage its operations through improved record keeping and cost control practices
- demonstrate due diligence in the preparation and sale of food.

Who needs a Food Safety Program?

Not all food businesses require a FSP.

The [Food Act 2006](#) outlines who must comply with this requirement. Under the Act, all of the following **high-risk food businesses** must have a FSP in place:

- Businesses that serve, process or deliver potentially hazardous food* for the consumption of vulnerable people (e.g. hospitals, aged care facilities and child care services)
- Catering businesses that serve food to the general public
- Businesses that harvest, process and distribute raw oysters and other bivalves
- Businesses that produce manufactured and fermented meats

** Potentially hazardous foods are foods that must be kept at certain temperatures to minimise the growth of bacteria that may be present in the food, or to prevent toxins forming. Foods that are potentially hazardous include : raw and ready-to-eat meat and fish and any foods made of these items, such as ham, pies, fish fingers; milk and food containing milk such as cream, custard, dairy-based desserts; cooked rice and pasta; ready-to-eat foods such as salads, cut fruit and vegetables; and ready-to-eat meals such as lasagna, curry, sushi and salad sandwiches.*


Even if you don't require a FSP, it can benefit your business, particularly in cases where: you are seeking to distribute food product through supermarkets, and therefore need an FSP to verify its quality.

- your core point of difference is premium service and high standards of food quality.
- you would like to open your food products to an international market.

Food Safety Plan Criteria?

The FSP must:

- Identify all food safety hazards that could potentially occur in the food handling operations of the food business.
- Identify where, in a food handling operation of the food business, each hazard identified can be controlled and the means of control.
- Provide for the monitoring of the means of control identified
- Provide appropriate corrective actions to be taken when a hazard identified is not under control.
- Provide for regular review of the program to ensure it is appropriate for the food business.
- Ensure appropriate recordkeeping practices are observed, including maintaining records about action taken to ensure the business is carried on in accordance with the program.



There are several [FSP examples available from Queensland Health](#) to assist food businesses in developing a Food Safety Program that is relevant to the food business. These examples are only tools to assist in developing your program; all activities, hazards, controls, corrective actions and monitoring must be site-specific to your business.

Accreditation of Food Safety Plan

Council must assess your Food Safety Program to ensure it meets the requirements of the [Food Act 2006](#). This is a one-off process called accreditation. Re-accreditation is only required if you make major changes to your FSP.

When applying for accreditation, Council also requires you to obtain and submit written advice from an approved Food Auditor as to whether your FSP meets the requirements set out in the *Food Act 2006*.

Council cannot assess your application without this advice. A list of [approved Food Auditors](#) is available from Queensland Health. If you have any questions or concerns about an approved auditor, contact the Department of Health on phone (07) 3328 9310 or by email foodsafety@health.qld.gov.au.

Process in a nutshell

Step 1: Apply

Submit to Council the following:-

- a FSP application using the Application for a Food Business Licence <https://www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/3771/application-for-food-business-licence>
- a copy of the FSP,
- notice of written advice from the approved Food Auditor, and
- payment of the relevant fee

Step 2: Assessment

Council will assess your application for accreditation within 30 days, unless additional information is required. If your program is accredited, an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) will inform you through a Letter of Accreditation.

Step 3: Audit schedule

Once the FSP is accredited, Council will set an audit schedule with the first audit due in 6 months. You must then ensure that an approved third-party Food Auditor carries out an audit of the FSP at the set frequency.

Obligations in a nutshell

Business Owner (holder of accredited FSP)

- Submit an application for accreditation of their FSP
- Implement & comply with the accredited FSP
- Ensure the first compliance audit is conducted within 6 months of accreditation
- Take action to remedy non-compliances identified during audits

Auditors

- Advise Local Government about the accreditation of FSP
- Conduct audits of accredited FSP
- Prepare & submit reports of audits conducted by the auditor
- Submit audit reports to the holder of an accredited FSP & the Local Government that accredited it

- Notify Department of Health & Local Government of any critical non-compliance

Local Government

- Assess Application, FSP, Food Auditor Notice and decide if your program is accredited. (This will occur within 30 days provided all material is submitted)
- Determine the frequency you need to ensure a third-party audit is undertaken – the first audit will be due in 6 months following accreditation.
- If accredited Council will issue a Letter of Accreditation and audit frequency.

What fees and charges will apply?

To view Council's fees and charges for a food business licence visit

www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov/fees-charges.

Further Information

For further information contact Council at 1300 763 903 or email

enquiries@cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au.