

# Safe food storage and display in food businesses

## Don't let your food turn nasty!

Food poisoning is a serious health problem. It can cause severe illness and even death.

Food poisoning can seriously damage the reputation of a business, damage the reputation of the food industry and damage the jobs of many workers.

As a person who handles food—whether you are a kitchen hand, a food process worker, a shop assistant or a waiter—you have an important responsibility to handle food safely. So:

- protect other people from getting sick.
- protect your reputation in the food industry.
- protect your business.
- protect your job.

Victorian and Australian food safety laws are designed to ensure that food that is sold is safe to eat and free of any contamination.

All Victorian businesses and organisations that make, display, transport or prepares food for sale must be registered with a local Council or in some cases with PrimeSafe or Dairy Food Safety Victoria. Except for specific exemptions, every business must also comply with Victorian food laws including having a Food Safety Program and having a Food Safety Supervisor.

## Store and display food safely:

- ✓ Keep raw foods and ready-to-eat foods separate to avoid cross-contamination.
- ✓ Store food in clean, non-toxic, food storage containers, don't store food in opened cans.
- ✓ Make sure food storage containers have not been used to store things other than food, wash and sanitise them before use. If the containers are not in good condition, throw them out and don't re-use containers which are only meant to be used once.
- ✓ Cover food with tight fitting lids, foil or plastic film, to protect from dust, insects and cross-contamination. Make sure food displayed on counters are wrapped or covered.
- ✓ Store food in areas specially designed for food storage, such as refrigerators, coolrooms, pantries and food storerooms. Never store food on the floor or on pallets.
- ✓ Never store food in areas containing chemicals, cleaning equipment, clothing or personal belongings.
- ✓ Remove and avoid using foods past their "use-by" dates, spoiled foods or foods in damaged containers or packaging.
- ✓ Make sure food is thoroughly cooked and the centre of the cooked food has reached 75°C before being stored in a fridge, freezer or bain-marie.
- ✓ Avoid keeping high-risk food in the Temperature Danger Zone. Keep chilled foods cold at 5°C or colder, and hot food hot at 60°C or hotter.
- ✓ Follow the business Food Safety Program.
- ✓ Follow the advice given by the Food Safety Supervisor.
- ✓ Be trained in safe food handling.

## Cross-contamination

Raw food can contain bacteria which causes food poisoning.

Cooked or ready-to-eat food in contact with raw food can be contaminated by bacteria from the raw food. This is called cross contamination.

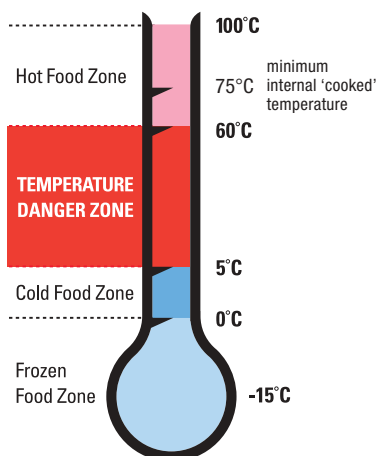
It's very important to keep raw food separate from cooked and ready-to-eat food.

Raw food should always be stored below ready-to-eat or cooked food in refrigerators and display cabinets. This means the raw food cannot drip onto the cooked food.

## Temperature Danger Zone

Bacteria grow quickly in high-risk foods when kept at a temperature between 5°C and 60°C. This is called the Temperature Danger Zone.

It is very important not to keep high-risk food in the Temperature Danger Zone longer than is absolutely necessary.



Cooking food to over 75°C kills most of the bacteria.

Avoid keeping high-risk food in the Temperature Danger Zone. Keep chilled foods cold at 5°C or colder, and hot food hot at 60°C or hotter.

## Storing and displaying cold food

Cold food must be kept at 5°C or colder

Frozen food must be kept frozen solid at -15°C or colder.

Coolrooms, refrigerators and freezers must have proper thermometers and temperatures should be checked regularly.

## Storing and displaying hot food

Bain-Maries and other hot food holders are designed to keep hot food hot at 60°C or hotter. They not intended for heating food. If used for heating food, the food will spend too long in the Temperature Danger Zone.

Make sure food is thoroughly cooked and the centre of the cooked food has reached 75°C before being stored in a Bain-Marie

Preheat Bain-Maries before use and operate it on the highest temperature setting.

Make sure the temperature of the food does not fall below 60°C.

Use a clean thermometer to check the temperature of the food.

Do not over fill trays in Bain-Marie because the food's temperature could fall below 60°C.

## Tags and labels on food

Tags can carry bacteria. For cooked and ready-to-eat food, use tags or labels on the trays, and not on the food itself.

Do not pierce cooked or ready-to-eat food with tags or labels.

## Packing and serving prepared food

Package food in clean, non-toxic, food storage containers strong enough for the job.

Wash and sanitise serving containers before using them.

Do not re-use containers that are only meant to be used once.

When serving food, make sure that all cutlery and crockery is clean and undamaged.

Wash any garnish before using it.

## More information

The Department of Human Services Food Safety Unit has a range of resources on safe food handling available from the website [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety) or by contacting 1300 364 352.

Local councils can also provide advice about safe food handling.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand also has a range of resources on food handling standards on the website [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)