

**SAFE FOOD STORAGE AND DISPLAY
IN FOOD BUSINESSES**

Safe Food Storage and Display in Businesses

Food poisoning is a serious health problem. If food is not stored and displayed properly, bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels. If this occurs, the result may be food poisoning. Every person whose job involves handling food has an important responsibility to prevent food poisoning.

By storing, handling and displaying food safely, you:

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

Making and selling food carries with it certain responsibilities. The food must be safe and free of any contamination. Every business that sells, makes, transports or prepares food in Western Australia must be registered with a local Council.

Storing Food

Food must be stored in areas specially designed for food storage, such as refrigerators, coolrooms, pantries and food storerooms. You should never store food on the floor or on pallets, as it may be attacked by rats, mice or insects. Coolrooms, refrigerators and freezers must have proper thermometers and temperatures should be checked regularly.

Never use a food storage area to keep chemicals and equipment used for cleaning, clothing and personal belongings.

Make sure that food does not remain in storage too long by using older stock first. This is called stock rotation.

Food Containers

If you use food storage containers, make sure they do not have any holes in them, and are not dirty or rusty. Make sure they have not been used to store things other than food, then wash and sanitise them before use. If your containers are not in good condition, replace them.

Cover food with tight fitting lids, foil or plastic film, so the food does not dry out and is protected from dust and insects. Do not re-use containers which are only meant to be used once.



Any food stored out of its original packaging or made on the premise needs to be properly identified and date marked so that you know when the food was made or when it needs to be used by.

Canned Food

Once you have opened a can of food, put any remaining food in a clean, sealed container – do not store it in the can.



Store Raw Food Separately

Raw food contains bacteria, including bacteria which can cause food poisoning. If food which has been cooked or is ready-to-eat comes into contact with raw food, then bacteria can contaminate the cooked food. This is called *cross-contamination*.

For this reason, it is very important to store raw food separately from cooked and ready-to-eat food. If the two types of food are stored in the same refrigerator, the raw food should always be stored lower down than ready-to-eat or cooked food. This means the raw food cannot drip onto the cooked food.

Displaying Food

Counters

Food that is displayed on counters must be either wrapped or covered to protect it from contamination.

Refrigerated Display Cabinets

Food in refrigerated displays must be kept at or below 5°C. If you sell frozen food, it must be kept frozen hard, at or below -15°C until it is sold. Allow enough space for the cold air to circulate around the food.



Be mindful that there can be temperature variations within a display cabinet and that all food requiring refrigeration is kept below 5°C.

Bain-Maries and Other Hot Food Holders

Bain-Maries are designed to keep hot food hot (60°C or above), not for heating food. If you use them for heating, food will spend too long in the Temperature Danger Zone.

Food should be heated so that the core temperature of the food is at 75°C *before* being placed in the Bain-Marie.

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

Use a clean thermometer to check the temperature of the food. Make sure the temperature of the food does not fall below 60°C.

Do not over fill trays in Bain-Marie because the food will not stay above 60°C.

Tags and Labels

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. Wash any garnish before using it.

Bacteria

Bacteria can multiply frighteningly quickly. A single bacterium can multiply into more than two million bacterium in just seven hours. You should always prepare food from the freshest possible ingredients, and serve it as soon as possible after preparation.

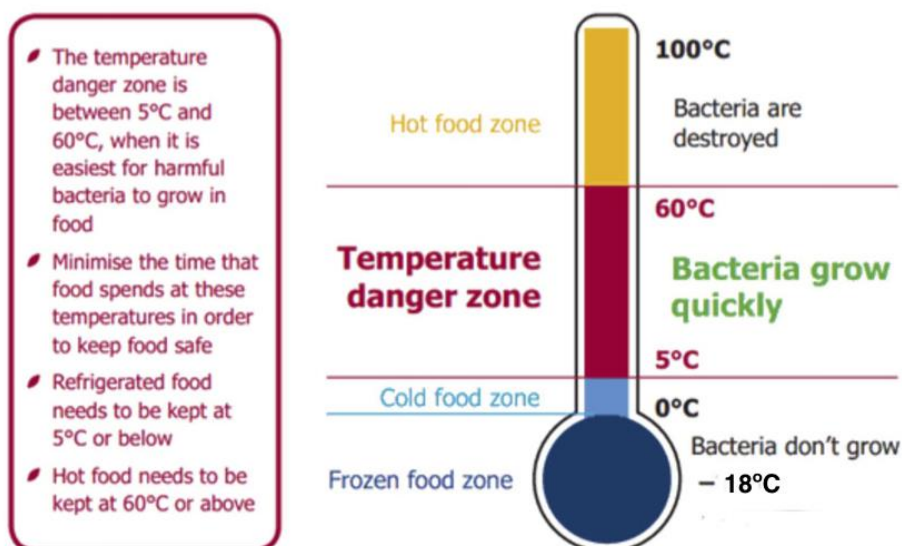
Time	No. of Bacteria
12:00	1
12:20	2
12:40	4
3:00	512
5:00	32,768
7:00	2,097,152

Temperature Danger Zone

Bacteria grow rapidly when the temperature is between 5°C and 60°C. This is called the *Temperature Danger Zone*. Always keep High Risk Food below 5°C or above 60°C.

Make sure that food is in the *Temperature Danger Zone* for as little time as possible. Keeping food at a safe temperature not only reduces the risk of causing illness; it also reduces food spoilage and gives food a longer shelf life.

It is a requirement of the *Food Standards Code* that every food business have at least one food thermometer accurate to at least $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$. This will allow you to monitor the temperatures as required.



High Risk Food

Certain types of food are called High Risk Food because bacteria are more likely to grow on them.

High Risk Foods Include (any foods that contain any of the following high risk foods):

- Dairy products: milk, cream, soft cheese, yoghurt
- Cooked and liquid eggs
- Prepared salads, coleslaws, pasta salads
- Cooked pasta & rice
- Poultry
- Prepared cut fruit salads
- Small goods
- Seafood
- Meat

Packaged foods which are dried, powdered, tinned, or in jars are usually not High Risk Food while unopened. However, once opened, they may become High Risk Food and should be stored safely.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the Shire's Health Service by calling 9290 6742