

CONSISTENT INTERPRETATION

Food Standards Surveillance

To: All South Australian Food Businesses

Title: Provision of Hand Wash Facilities

Purpose

To provide interpretive advice regarding the application of requirements for food businesses to provide suitable hand wash facilities.

Background

At the time of introduction of the *SA Food Act 2001* and adoption of the Food Standards Code, the Department of Health provided guidance to Environmental Health Officers regarding enforcement of Chapter 3, Construction Standards. Further to that advice, provision of suitable hand wash facilities is considered to be fundamental to enable food handlers to wash hands as part of an effective food safety management strategy.

Policy

SA Health seeks to remind all food businesses that Standards 3.2.2 & 3.2.3 specifies the design and features of hand wash facilities that food businesses are required to provide as a food safety control measure.

Food businesses are required to fully comply with these requirements. In the interim Food Businesses should ensure that alternative arrangements are in place to manage food safety risks associated with food handler hygiene and cross contamination.

Guidance

Food business must provide hand wash facilities where exposed food is handled and prepared and includes "handling clean equipment and eating and drinking utensils".

Food businesses may not be required to provide hand wash facilities Where food is delivered fully packaged to a food business and is sold in the same package, the food business may be permitted to operate without hand washing facilities.

Responsibilities of Food Businesses

Hand wash facilities must comply with the following requirements:

Food premises must have hand washing facilities that are located where they can be easily accessed by food handlers

- within areas where food handlers work if their hands are likely to be a source of contamination of food; and
- if there are toilets on the food premises – immediately adjacent to the toilets or toilet cubicles.



Hand washing facilities must be –

- permanent fixtures;
- connected to, or otherwise provided with, a supply of warm running potable water;
- of a size that allows easy and effective hand washing; and clearly designated for the sole purpose of washing hands, arms and face.

Guidance

Food premises that are used principally as a private dwelling or are temporary food premises may be not be subject to these requirements with the written approval of your local council Environmental Health Officer. Businesses that fall into these categories may discuss this issue with their Environmental Health Officer.

When handling food involves exposure to unprotected food or surfaces likely to come into contact with food, a food handler must wash his or her hands:

- before commencing or re-commencing handling food;
- immediately after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, eating, drinking or using tobacco or similar substances; and
- after touching his or her hair, scalp or a body opening.

Whenever washing his or her hands, a food handler must:

- use the hand washing facilities provided;
- thoroughly clean his or her hands using soap or other effective means, and warm running water; and
- thoroughly dry his or her hands on a single use towel or in another way that is not likely to transfer pathogenic micro-organisms to the hands.

Guidance

Soap can be a bar of soap, preferably it is liquid soap contained in a dispenser.

Use of hand gel type sanitisers alone is not sufficient

Warm water can be a mixture of hot and cold water or water heated to an appropriate temperature for direct supply, directed through a single outlet and preferably be operated by a single-lever type tap.

The temperature of warm running water is considered to be around 40°C.

References:

The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standards 3.2.2 & 3.2.3

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodstandards/foodstandardscode.cfm>

Safe Food Australia- A Guide to the Food Safety Standards, 2nd Edition, January 2001

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/publications/safefoodaustralia2nd519.cfm>

For more information

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