



Food News

Inspections, Observations and DFR Update

Inspections

Soon it'll be back into the next round of inspections with re-registration coming up at the end of July.

You will notice when you get your invoice that there is a slight increase in registration fees but this is not unexpected given that there were no increases last year.

Observations

I have noticed during recent inspections that some are getting a little slack when it comes to cleaning hard to reach places.

If I undertake an inspection, among other things, I expect to see all areas in-



cluding under appliances, inside cupboards and ovens and storage shelves to be clean.

You need to remember that you are selling food to the public and the standards of cleanliness are high. It is

not acceptable to have untidy premises and this will result in repeat inspections which may be at your cost.

If you haven't got a cleaning schedule in place, it is recommended that you do so.

GET CLEANING!!!

TIP: Get on Google and search 'cleaning schedule template'. Get something you can use and make a start. It's well worth while and it's really not that hard. Get all of your staff on board and make everyone responsible for tasks.

DFR Update

In February I attended the New Zealand Institute of Environmental Health conference in Taupo.

At the conference we were updated on the Domestic Food Review and where its at in parliament.

The New Zealand Food Safety Authority did their presentation and from that we can ascertain that the NZFSA have gone back and had a look at their proposals and for many this means

that the focus has changed from Food Control Plans (FCP) to National Programmes and Food Handler Guidance.

Another stage in the DFR is setting up a National Grading Project. I had considered beginning premises grading in CHB until we were advised that a national system was being developed. This will be rolled out approximately one to two years after the commencement of the new Food Act.

You can find more information and updates by looking at the NZFSA website: <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/policy-law/projects/domestic-food-review/>

If you are interested in taking part in where the food industry is heading, you can become a part of the Voluntary Implementation Programme (VIP). Contact me if you would like to arrange a time for me to visit and show you the 'Off-the-peg' Food Control Plan and Diary. If your business is eligible to join, we can work together to get you up and running...

RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS UNDER THE DFR

• Food Control Plans

A Food Control Plan consists of a set of procedures which document the controls a business has in place to manage each risk in their particular process. A food control plan can either be off-the-peg or custom made.

• National Programmes

National programmes will be the primary risk management tool. The scope of the national programmes will be around the minimum regulatory requirements that a food business will need to comply with to assure food safety. There will be up to four levels of national programmes which will be differentiated based on risk, impact on consumers, expected compliance rate and cost benefit.

• Food Handler Guidance

Food Handler Guidance brochures are a non regulatory tool designed to provide food safety advice to people who sell food infrequently (e.g. A fundraising barbeque) or who, as part of their business, sell food to few people.

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Pest & Animal Control

Not only can pests cost you money, they contaminate food, ruin electrical cables, cause disease and potentially result in closure of your premises. Remember it is your responsibility to control pests.

The most common pests found in premises in New Zealand include rats, mice, cockroaches, ants and flies. In some circumstances birds have also been able to access food premises.



DEALING WITH PESTS Exclusion...

The best way to deal with pests is to exclude them from your premises completely. Even if you do not have a current pest problem, measures must be taken to ensure that pests cannot enter the premises.

The best piece of rodent proofing equipment you can have is a pen! If you can push a pen through a gap then a mouse can enter. All gaps should be sealed using a hard, gnaw resistant material. Cement, mortar, hard filler, brush strips and fine gauge wire mesh are the best examples of materials that should be used to seal gaps.

How they get in...

Gaps under external doors - the most common way. Fitting a brush strip on the bottom of the door will seal the gap effectively.

Gaps around pipes and cables - make sure there are no gaps around pipes

or cables when they pass through external walls.

Gaps hidden by suspended ceilings - always check any suspended ceilings as there are usually cables and pipes running through walls that cannot be seen.

Doors and windows left open - all doors and windows should be closed at night or during any quiet period. Pest screens can be fitted to doors and windows that are left open regularly.

Uncovered drains and dry toilets - keep all drains covered and keep a water seal on toilets. If a toilet is not used, consider having it removed and seal the pipe.

Good Housekeeping

Mice and rats will eat food debris from the floor and refuse that is not placed into sealed bins. Remember that one mouse only has to eat the equivalent of one pea per day to survive.

It is particularly important to ensure that food debris does not build up under and behind equipment. It is these dark, hard to see places that rats and mice prefer, so keep them debris free. This can be achieved by employing a 'clean as you go' policy so that if a spillage occurs, it is cleaned up immediately.

Ensure that all foods are covered when not in use and kept off the floor to discourage rodents from eating them.

Signs of Infestation

You should regularly check for signs of infestation, even if you employ a pest controller. It only takes a matter of days for an infestation to get out of hand.

Signs to look out for include: Rodent droppings, gnawed food and greasy smear marks along the bottom of walls.

Cockroach Control

Good hygiene practice is essential in the control of cockroaches, as is the reduction of access to food and water. Food should be kept in airtight storage jars and any food debris or waste should be cleared up straight away.

Cockroaches can survive longer on just water as opposed to just food so reducing supplies to water is essential in controlling cockroach populations. Fix any leaks and sweating pipes, provide ventilation to moist areas, mop up any spillages, and empty refrigerator overflow containers.

The next step is to remove any clutter where cockroaches might live i.e. loose wallpaper, broken tiles, cookery books and loose papers are also a perfect haven. Vacuuming regularly, especially in out of the way areas can suck up cockroaches, their eggs and the material they feed on.

I have an infestation!!!

The key to dealing effectively with pest infestations is to identify them in the early stages.

When signs of pests are detected, we recommend that you take the following steps to ensure that the health of your customers is not harmed and to remove the infestation:

1. Close the business until the mice, rats or cockroaches have been effectively cleared from food storage, preparation and service areas.

2. Engage a qualified, competent person to survey the premises and carry out such treatment as is necessary to remove the infestation.

3. Thoroughly clean and disinfect all equipment and surfaces that may have been contaminated by pests, including the floor, removing and disposing of any stock that may have been contaminated by pests.

4. Clean away all rodent droppings, dead cockroaches and cockroach eggs from the premises.

5. Keep all food off the floor in sealed containers that are not accessible by pests.

6. Block off all holes in the premises which may afford access to rodents with a hard, gnaw resistant material.

7. Block all gaps under doors and fit pest screens to doors and windows that may be left open

8. Fill all small crevices that may harbour cockroaches.

9. Fix leaky taps, cover toilet and deny all access to water to pests.

10. Dispose of any food that may have been contaminated by the mice, rats or cockroaches.

Cluster Flies—They're back!!!

Remember flies cannot be in your food preparation areas—if you are having a problem with flies, you need to contact pest control for appropriate means of removal or install fly screens and prevent them from entering your food preparation areas.

Ensure any products used are safe for use in a food premises and clean all surfaces after any spraying.

Readily Perishable Food

Readily perishable food is food that may contain microbes that multiply and cause illness, and that support harmful microbe growth. Such food must be kept under temperature control to prevent toxins from forming.

The following common foods can be considered readily perishable:

- Raw & cooked meat including meat containing dishes such as casseroles and lasagne.
- Dairy products and food containing dairy products such as custard.
- Seafood (excluding live) and



food containing seafood.

- Processed fruits and vegetables such as salads and unpasteurised juices.
- Cooked rice and pasta.
- Processed foods containing eggs, beans, nuts or other protein-rich foods.

Remember that the above products should not just be treated as readily perishable on their own but also when food you produce contains the above products such as sandwiches and quiches.

DISPLAYING FOOD

Displaying non-readily perishable food is fine however if displaying it on a counter ensure it is covered so as to avoid contamination by flies, people directly touching the food and people inadvertently sneezing or coughing on or near the food.

Approved Suppliers

Do you really know where your food is coming from???

Ensure that food only comes from suppliers who are registered with the New Zealand Food Safety Authority or a local Council. Also consider how quickly a supplier responds to any concerns you may have and whether they seem responsible in the way they store, transport and pack their goods.

Receiving Incoming Goods

Check the following things:

1. Packages are free of damage.
2. Packages are properly labelled with the name and address of the manufacturer or supplier/importer, and a batch code or date mark.
3. Food is not past its expiry date.
4. The vehicle and delivery person are clean, and food has not been exposed to any hazards (chemicals, machinery etc) during transportation.
5. Frozen food is frozen solid when delivered with no sign of defrosting.
6. Readily perishable food is delivered chilled (cold to touch or if in doubt use a thermometer to confirm 4°C or below).
7. Hot readily perishable food is 60°C or hotter.

Reject any goods that do not satisfy you using the above criteria to assist.

If for some reason there is a problem and goods cannot be returned to the supplier then store the goods in a separate area and label them 'Not for sale or use'.

Market Days

Market Days are becoming more and more popular—as another way for 'foodies' to get their products out there.

There are a couple of things to remember if you intend to sell food at a market—the most important are below:

- Any food for sale must be prepared in a registered kitchen.
- Food must be labelled correctly including use by dates and ingredients. If food is for immediate consumption, you need to be able to tell the customer what ingredients have been used.
- Hygiene regulations still apply including the provision of toilets and hand washing facilities.
- Prevent temperature abuse—hot food stays hot and cold food stays cold.
- Prevent cross-contamination—separate tongs and utensils and separation of raw and cooked foods.
- Have single serve pots & cups for customers.
- Cover any displayed food.
- Have another person cash-handling.
- If wearing gloves replace regularly and avoid cross-contamination.
- It is illegal to sell food that is home-killed or caught for recreation. This includes customary catch.

ANY CHANGES TO YOUR FOOD PREMISES???

If you have made any changes to your food premises such as a change from selling sandwiches to now selling fish and chips or from selling food to eat on your premises to deliveries—then contact the Council and speak to the Environmental Health Officer.

Some changes may mean you have different regulations to follow so it's best to check and be sure that any changes will not affect how you operate and how your compliance is assessed.

FOCUS - Listeria

Listeria is widely found in nature and it can be transferred through food. Ready-to-eat products, such as deli meats and salads, soft cheeses and foods with a long refrigerated shelf life are often associated with the bacteria. Once food is contaminated with *Listeria* the bacteria multiply quickly, even at recommended refrigeration temperatures (2-4°C).

People more at risk of developing the invasive listeriosis infection include pregnant women and their unborn children; newborn babies; the frail elderly; anyone whose immune system has been weakened by disease or illness, and anyone on medication that suppresses the immune system.

In people at risk, symptoms may include fever, headache, tiredness, aches and pains. Less common symptoms are diarrhoea, nausea and abdominal cramps. Symptoms may progress to more serious forms of the illness, such as meningitis and blood poisoning. In pregnant women symptoms may be mild, but the consequences can be severe as listeriosis can result in miscarriage, premature birth or, in rare cases, stillbirth. In New Zealand around 25 cases occur annually. Of those about 20% are associated with pregnancy or newborn babies.

You can reduce the likelihood of infection by taking certain precautions. Eat only foods that are freshly prepared and well washed, follow good food hygiene practices such as washing and drying hands, and cook foods thoroughly to kill any *Listeria* bacteria. Refrigerate leftovers immediately and do not keep for more than two days. Reheat to steaming hot (over 70°C) before eating. *Listeria* is managed by hygienic preparation, storage and handling of food.

New Staff

Recently I have begun doing a job share with Liquor Licensing Inspector Merle Carr. Merle worked with me when I started training as a Liquor Licensing Inspector and Environmental Health Officer.

Although Merle's position isn't directly related to health, you may get her on the phone if you're trying to contact me. Merle may also pop into your kitchen whilst undertaking liquor licensing inspections.

Merle will be working on Monday and Tuesday and I will be here Wednesday to Friday. Occasionally these days will change however I will always be on call for any urgent enquiries or problems.

Information Sources:

New Zealand Food Safety Authority (website & FCP)
Leicester City Council

FOOD SAFETY TRAINING PROVIDERS

Agri-Quality New Zealand (0508 00 11 22)

EIT (06 974 8000 x 5042)

FutureCol (06 878 5428)

Innovative Educators & Hospitality Training Solutions Ltd (027 326 7109)

Hospitality Training Professionals (06 363 8299)

Safe Food Handler.com (03 528 6814)

The Open Polytechnic (0508 650 200)



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Bobbi Twist

Environmental Health Officer

Phone: 06 857 8060

Fax: 06 857 7179

Cell: 027 243 8806

E-mail: bobbi.twist@chbdc.govt.nz

www.chbdc.govt.nz

Central Hawke's Bay District Council

P O Box 127

WAIPAWA 4240

Ruataniwha Street

WAIPAWA 4210