



PENRITH

# FOOD SAFETY NEWS

EDITION 17,  
APRIL 2020



PENRITH  
CITY COUNCIL

## WELCOME

Welcome to our seventeenth edition of 'Food Safety News', a quarterly newsletter for local food businesses. This is one way we can help you keep up to date with your responsibilities under the Food Act, 2003, Food Regulation, 2015, Food Standards Code and with any current issues. Check out our regular tips to help maintain high standards of food safety.

## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AND SAFE FOOD HANDLING IN YOUR FOOD BUSINESS

In light of increasing coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission and the upcoming influenza season, maintaining Council's high food safety standards is more important than ever. You are reminded of your obligations under the Food Act 2003 and Food Standards Code 3.2.2. You can implement simple practical measures around food handler hygiene, food premises cleanliness and food handling which will have a huge impact on decreasing transmission of all viruses and bacteria within our community.

Viruses such as coronavirus are transmitted through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through contact with contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.

The following standard advice for hygiene within your food business should be followed at all times.

### Food Handler Hygiene

- If unwell, staff are not to prepare or handle food and should not be working in the premises. If displaying any COVID-19 symptoms, refer to NSW Health's advice, contact the Health Direct number 1800 022 222 or contact your GP. For further information refer to the NSW Food Authority's information regarding Food Business and COVID-19, World Health Organisation's information on COVID-19 and information from Food Standards Australia.
- Staff must cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing and then wash hands thoroughly with soap and water;
- All cuts or wounds on hands and arms must be covered; and
- Staff clothing and all tea-towels and cloths are to be clean.

### Handwashing

All hand wash basins must have warm water, and an adequate supply of liquid soap and single use towels at all times;

- Handwashing must occur:
- Before preparing, cooking, handling or serving food;

- After using the toilet, touching clothing or body parts, handling money, sneezing, handling rubbish or touching animals, or cleaning up any spills in the kitchen; and
- Between preparing raw and cooked foods.

Handwashing is to be thorough and in accordance with best practice. The World Health Organisation's website has posters outlining steps for effective hand washing that you can download and hang near your hand wash basin.

### Cleaning and Sanitising

- Food premises must be cleaned with detergent and water to remove all dirt and grease;
- Sanitising must occur after cleaning, using a food grade sanitiser, chlorine or ammonia based, made up to manufacturer's instructions. Note that if the surface is not clean, disinfection with sanitiser will not be completely effective;
- Clean and sanitise frequently touched surfaces regularly; and
- All food utensils and equipment must be cleaned and then sanitised. Heat treatment in a commercial dishwasher is an appropriate sanitising method for utensils that can fit. All other utensils must be cleaned and then sanitised with a food grade sanitiser.

## Handling of cash

For intermittent handling of cash, the staff member should be advised to perform hand hygiene immediately after handling cash (either soap and water or hand sanitiser, whichever is available). This means hand sanitiser may need to be available to support this across a range of settings that don't currently have this.

For longer periods of cash handling, the staff member should wear gloves while handling cash, and then carefully remove the gloves and perform hand hygiene at the end of the period of cash handling.

## COUNCIL'S SUPPORT OF LOCAL FOOD BUSINESSES

Penrith Council is providing financial relief for cafes and restaurants by temporarily suspending inspections fees and annual administration fees for local food businesses currently facing economic hardship caused by impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

If you or a staff member has a confirmed case of COVID-19, public health officials will determine if any other team members need to self isolate based on the period in which the confirmed individual would have been infectious. Contact the Health Direct number 1800 022 222 for further advice.

## LOCAL FOOD BUSINESS & COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Council's Environmental Health Officers will soon be contacting all local food business proprietors to offer support and advice during this period, specifically in relation to health and hygiene, cleaning and sanitising and to offer advice to businesses who may have changed their standard operations such as offering takeaway meals to accommodate the current COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important to note that although we have all had to adapt the way we work and operate, food safety is still very high on our priorities. Council's normal routine inspection program has been modified during this time to reduce face-to-face contact. Council Officers are still responding to serious food related complaints.

Maintaining confidence and ensuring a high level of food safety from local food businesses continues to be a significant priority for Council. We are currently in discussions with Agencies such as NSW Health and the NSW Food Authority about the most appropriate way of supporting businesses in this time and should an Officer visit your business, we will observe the same personal health practices for COVID-19

as those expected of food businesses and the public. This includes:

- Increased focus on maintaining personal hygiene (e.g. increased hand washing);
- Social distancing practices (1.5 metre separation between persons);
- Adherence to the 4 square meters of personal space in a confined area.

To minimise the risk of contamination to Council staff and to you and your employees, it is necessary to introduce alternate verification measures, such as desk top inspections over the phone or provision of electronic data on key food safety performance measures as a means of demonstrating compliance with regulatory food safety obligations (providing photos, videos, copies of invoices/receipts).

## HOW LONG IS THIS ADVICE IN EFFECT

Advice on the administration of Council's Food Safety program will continue to be reviewed as further information about COVID-19 is available.

For further information, please use the following links:

- **NSW Health**  
[health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx](https://health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx)
- **NSW Food Authority**  
[foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/help/covid-19-advice-for-businesses](https://foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/help/covid-19-advice-for-businesses)
- **Australian Government**  
[health.gov.au/](https://health.gov.au/)
- **NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment**  
[planning.nsw.gov.au/News](https://planning.nsw.gov.au/News)

## FOOD HANDLER EDUCATION SEMINARS

Please note that due to the current and ongoing situation with COVID-19 and in accordance with the Government's advice, Council has temporarily ceased providing our quarterly Food Handler Education Seminars.

Council recognises the importance of this service and rest assured, as soon as the Government's advice allows, Council will resume these Seminars.

For more information go to [penrithcity.nsw.gov.au](https://penrithcity.nsw.gov.au) or phone 4732 8055