

food matters

in Bassendean

Town of Bassendean food safety newsletter

Plastics ban in WA: what does this mean for your food business?

The Western Australian Government is implementing a state-wide ban on the supply of certain plastic items to assist in the reduction of plastic pollution into the environment. The ban introduces regulations to ban single-use plastic items in a two-stage approach, with stage 1 having come into effect on 1 January 2022, but with the **enforcement** of stage 1 starting on **1 July 2022**.

Single use or disposable plastic items which are banned from 1 July 2022 are:

- all plastic shopping bags with handles
- disposable plastic utensils—straws, stirrers, cutlery
- disposable plastic foodware without lids—plates, bowls and food containers
- expanded polystyrene (EPS) takeaway food containers
- helium balloon releases.

Disposable plastic cups are also banned, however, enforcement will not commence until **1 October 2022**.

Who does it apply to?

- **Retail or hospitality businesses** including cafes, restaurants, takeaway outlets, discount stores, supermarkets, market stalls, or any other retailer.
- **Manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and wholesalers**—who must not supply banned items in WA.
- **Community groups, government bodies and not-for-profits**, such as charities, welfare services, religious bodies, education providers, sporting groups and fundraising events must not supply banned items. This includes items used as part of a service, for daily activities, or during events or fundraising activities.



i The National Retail Association's **Guide for Business** provides examples of items which are banned as well as examples of alternative products that are allowed to be used which your business may wish to switch to. The guide, and many other useful resources can be viewed and downloaded from plasticsbanwa.com.au (see [WAPlasticsBan_RetailerBrochure_V4_WEB.pdf](#))





Food poisoning

In an average year, there are an estimated **4.1 million cases of food poisoning in Australia that result in 31,920 hospitalisations, 86 deaths and 1 million visits to doctors.**

FOOD POISONING (also called foodborne illness) is the name for the range of illnesses caused by eating or drinking contaminated food or drink. The contamination may be through bacteria, parasites, viruses or toxins.

The chances of foodborne illness can be reduced by:

- Avoiding cross contamination, which is where food poisoning organisms from raw food contaminate ready-to-eat food.
- Keeping high standards of personal hygiene.
- Understanding how to properly clean food processing equipment and surfaces.
- Purchasing food only from registered/approved food businesses.
- Minimising the time potentially hazardous food spends in the temperature danger zone (5–60°C) in which food poisoning bacteria can grow.

Examples: Food is cooled too slowly

A restaurant boils rice to use in fried rice the next day. To keep the rice soft and fluffy it is stored on the kitchen bench overnight and not in the coolroom. Spore forming bacteria survive boiling and grow to very large numbers overnight. The rice is only gently heated during preparation of fried rice and customers are poisoned.

or

A restaurant serves chilli from a bain marie throughout the day. The chilli is not reheated prior to display and warms very slowly in the bain marie. The chilli stays in the temperature danger zone for much of the day and food poisoning bacteria flourish in the warm food.

Example: Food is inadequately cooked

Undercooking hamburger patties is a significant risk. Children, in particular, have been exposed to illness due to eating rare beef patties. Eating a rare hamburger carries a risk far greater than eating a rare steak. Bacteria are found on the surface of steak, and these are killed when the meat is seared. When meat is minced surface bacteria are spread through the whole mix and bacteria can survive at the centre of a patty cooked rare.

Example: Eggs—served raw or undercooked

Food poisoning outbreaks connected to the use of raw or undercooked eggs have been increasing. Raw egg products including mayonnaise, sauces and desserts are being used widely in the food industry. Some large outbreaks traced back to bakeries or cafes have been caused by mayonnaise, aioli or 'egg butter' prepared using raw eggs, too little vinegar and too much time outside of refrigeration.

How to deal with food poisoning complaints



When an incident occurs, it is important to act quickly and professionally. All alleged food poisoning incidents should be referred to and only dealt with by the Manager. It is important to allow the customer to explain their concerns, and for the Manager to advise that an investigation will be undertaken.

Collect the following information from your customer:

- The customer's contact details.
- The symptoms shown, with start date and time, and duration.
- The date and time they ate in your establishment.
- What they ate in your establishment.
- If anyone ate with them, and whether they are also experiencing any symptoms.
- Did they notice anything wrong with the food or during their visit?
- Check all food safety records are in order and note any anomalies (fridge/freezer temperatures, core cooking temperatures, cooling times and temperatures, kitchen cleaning schedule).
- Identify if there were any problems with any of your procedures.
- Identify if any other similar complaints have been made.

What paperwork do you have to complete?



It is good practice to keep a record of any customer complaints as part of your documented food business records. Record all information given and the details of your in-house investigation and any corrective action undertaken. In addition, keep on file any correspondence you had with the customer. It is also a good idea to advise the customer of the outcome of your investigation.

The Environmental Health Officer's role

Always co-operate with the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) and let them guide and assist you during the investigation. Remember, at this stage, the alleged incident may not have been your responsibility.

The EHO will want to review all stages of food preparation and production, including cleaning schedules and documentation held. They may take food and environmental samples.



It is vital you act upon any advice provided by the EHO and deal with any identified failings in your operation swiftly. Ultimately, they need to be satisfied that you are producing safe food.



Food Act review

The Department of Health WA are conducting a review of the *Food Act 2008*, which is the principal legislation for food safety management in Western Australia.

The purpose of the review is to examine the operation and effectiveness of the Act in meeting its objectives to ensure food for sale is safe and suitable for human consumption, to prevent misleading conduct in connection with the sale of food and to provide for the application of the *Food Standards Code* in Western Australia.

The review will identify, through analysis of stakeholder submissions, any issues with the operation and effectiveness of the Act and make recommendations that will strengthen and support the objectives of the Act being met and promote greater regulatory effectiveness.

The Town provided a submission to the Department of Health in May 2022.



You can read more about the reform at the Department of Health's website.

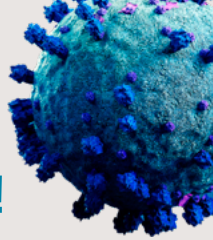


Immune boosting recipes

THIS WINTER, try incorporating some immune boosting ingredients into your recipes or look for some new recipes to offer your customers and help them beat the winter sniffles.

For some ultimate immune-boosting meals for winter visit taste.com.au.

COVID-19: what's in, what's out!



Over the past two years, a number of restrictions impacting food businesses have been mandated, eased, reintroduced, tightened then eased again. Despite the changes with these mandates, other measures have always remained in place. These measures (mitigation measures) are essential to prevent further spread of infectious diseases and protect all people, especially groups of people at increased risk for severe illness, and essential workers.

These mitigation measures include:

Hand hygiene

People should clean their hands after being in a public place, blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing, using the toilet, and before eating.

- Cleaning hands requires the use of soap and water to remove germs and the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) and scrubbing hands for at least 20 seconds.
- When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol (often listed on the label as ethanol, ethyl alcohol, isopropanol, or 2-propanol) can be used. Apply enough product to cover all surfaces of both hands and rub together until they feel dry, or for approximately 20 seconds.

Cleaning and disinfection

The risk of transmitting SARS-CoV-2 from surfaces is low when compared to transmission through the air from respiratory droplets, however, it is still important to clean and disinfect those surfaces that are frequently touched, particularly those that are touched by many people, such as drinks fridge, tables, door handles, hand-wash basins and toilets.

- Clean surfaces with soap or detergent to remove germs, dirt and impurities.
- Disinfect using chemicals, such as surface sanitiser or bleach (sodium hypochlorite), to kill germs on surfaces, lowering the risk of spreading infection. Please follow the safe handling information provided on the product.

Respiratory etiquette

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use.
- Perform hand hygiene (e.g. hand washing with soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic handwash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Physical distancing

- Maintain at least a 1.5-metre distance from others (2 arm lengths).
- Stay home if unwell, even if you have mild cold or flu-like symptoms. If you are presenting with symptoms of COVID-19, get tested.
- Wear masks in public indoor settings where physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

Substandard cleaning

Recent inspections of food businesses within the Town revealed that the standard of cleaning has dropped in a number of premises.

Clause 19 of the *Food Safety Standards* 3.2.2 requires that a food business must maintain the food premises and all fixtures, fittings and equipment to a standard of cleanliness where there is no accumulation of:

- (a) garbage, except in garbage containers;
- (b) recycled matter, except in containers;
- (c) food waste;
- (d) dirt;
- (e) grease; or
- (f) other visible matter.

Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are provided with a range of enforcement options to ensure proprietors of food businesses address issues identified during inspections. These include:

- Improvement Notices
- Infringement Notices
- Prohibition Orders
- Seizure powers
- Prosecution.

During an inspection, if the EHO determines that the level of cleaning or maintenance is poor, or that an issue identified at a previous inspection has not been attended to, an Improvement Notice may be issued. In situations where the issue is not rectified appropriately, or where the Improvement Notice has not been complied with, the EHO may issue an Infringement Notice. Where non-compliance is observed regularly, the EHO will recommend that legal proceedings commence and the Town's Solicitors will be notified.

A food business in the City of Gosnells was recently convicted for offences under Standard 3.2.2, which included cleaning of the premises and equipment.

| Section of Act/ Subsidiary Legislation | Details of offence | Penalty imposed |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>Food Act 2008</i> (WA) Section 22 (Compliance with Food Standards Code) | Non-compliance with Standard 3.2.2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clause 6(1)(a) – Food storage• Clause 7(1)(b) – Food processing• Clause 19(1) – Cleanliness of premises• Clause 19(2) – Cleanliness of equipment• Clause 21(1) – Maintenance of fixtures, fittings and equipment | \$100,000 plus costs of \$1,790.30 |



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