



## Welcome

to the latest edition of our Food Safety Newsletter - right in time for us to wish you all a very happy and prosperous Christmas and New Year period.

To help you through this busy time, we've compiled a range of information on food safety issues, and answers to some of the questions we're frequently asked from local businesses. Read on to find out about:

- Pest Control
- NSW Plastics Ban
- Food Labelling Resources
- Refrigerated Storage Time
- Record Keeping

You'll also find a copy of the Food Authority's 2023 'Retail Food Business' Food Safety Calendar, which provides a range of important information on safe food handling.

Lastly, after almost 17 years working in the local area as an Environmental Health Officer - mostly in the space of food safety - Kate Major has finished up working with MidCoast Council. We wish Kate all the very best for the future and thank her for her wonderful and tireless contribution to food safety and public health.

Kind regards, and all the best for the festive season,

**Emily Nicolson, Environmental Health Officer**

## PLASTICS BAN: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

From 1 June 2022, the use of lightweight single-use plastic bags was banned in NSW. These are bags with handles that are 35 microns thick or less and are partly or fully plastic.

From 1 November, the supply of single-use plastic cutlery, stirrers, straws, plates and bowls, and expanded polystyrene plates and bowls, cups, and clamshell containers was also banned in NSW.

The NSW EPA is the regulator and will monitor and enforce bans, so make sure your business is up to date and compliant with the current rules.

To learn more and for information on exemptions, scan the QR code or visit [dpe.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/plastics-ban-nsw](https://dpe.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/plastics-ban-nsw)



## PESTY PROBLEMS

While we welcome all that summer offers, the recent warm, wet weather has seen an increase in pest activity in local food businesses.

Food inspections are currently reporting issues with pests such as rats, mice, cockroaches and flies which can carry bacteria and viruses, contaminating food and food contact surfaces.

Business-owners should take all practicable measures to prevent pests entering their premises by:

- sealing all holes, gaps and cracks in walls and ceilings
- ensuring flyscreens are in good condition
- installing weather strips at the base of doors

To eradicate and prevent harbourage of pests, make sure you:

- regularly check for signs of pests
- thoroughly clean premises
- keep food covered and in sealed containers
- implement a suitable pest control program and follow the advice of your pest controller.

Pest controllers are essential to eradicating pests, however they are only effective when the other measures mentioned above are carried out.

## FOOD LABELLING



**There's no doubt about it... food labelling requirements can be confusing.**

If you're in the business of selling food products, you should be aware of whether you're legally required to label your food products. And if so, what type of information you must include.

Fortunately the NSW Food Authority is on hand to help businesses like yours understand their responsibilities when it comes to food labelling.

Jump online and take the interactive 'Do I need a food label' quiz to determine if your product needs a label.

The 'Food Labelling Assistant' is another easy-to-use interactive tool which steps you through what you need to include, from your business information, to date marking, ingredients and nutrition information.

Visit [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) and search 'food label' for more information.



Food labels provide important information such as the presence of allergens that may cause life-threatening reactions for some people.

## REFRIGERATED STORAGE TIME



The length of time that potentially hazardous food can be safely stored under temperature control depends on the particular characteristics of the food, including processing and packaging factors and the temperature at which it is stored.

Generally, the following timeframes should be followed to ensure food will be safe for consumption:

- Keeping potentially hazardous ready-to-eat food no more than **5 days at 5°C or less**
- Shorter refrigeration times might be advised for particular foods, because they are higher risk; for example foods containing raw egg must not be kept longer than 24 hours.

It's important to ensure all staff in your business remember:

- Even under temperature control, food must not be used past the use-by date.
- Food must not be used if it is deteriorated, damaged or perished – if in doubt throw it out.
- Food must not be used if it has been out of temperature control and does not comply within the timeframes noted within the 4-hour / 2-hour rule - a scientifically-checked system for how long food can be held between 5°C and 60°C (the danger zone).

Learn more about the 4-hour / 2-hour rule by searching '4 hour 2 hour' at [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)

**0 to 2 hours**

Use immediately  
or keep at 5°C or below  
or at 60°C or above



**2 to 4 hours**

Use immediately



**More than 4 hours**

Throw away

## GOOD RECORD KEEPING MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

In the Food Safety Calendar 2023 you will find a pull-out section which provides the following templates:

- Cooling food log
- Cleaning and sanitising schedule
- Temperature monitoring log

While using the templates is not mandatory, food businesses must be able to demonstrate that food is being handled safely and in accordance with the food standards code.

To ensure your food handling practices are safe, we encourage all MidCoast food business-owners to get into the habit of routine and thorough record-keeping. Using the templates provided will give you and your staff the tools you need to demonstrate safe food handling.