



Food Businesses and Coronavirus

Key messages:

- There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 is spread through food.
- However extra care should be taken with hygiene and health to reduce the risk.
- Always clean and sanitise food preparation benches.
- Anyone with symptoms of respiratory illness should avoid preparing food for other people.
- Businesses need to review their operation and consider what other measures should be implemented to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- Businesses need to follow social distancing and other requirements from the Australian Government.

Deliveries and Takeaways

Council supports local food businesses looking for alternative ways to continue operating during the current restrictions on businesses, as well as providing an important service to the community in social isolation.

If you have a current Food Business Licence you are permitted to provide takeaway and/or delivery options to customers without any changes to your Licence, however, you must apply the following additional restrictions imposed by the Queensland Government under the public health emergency declaration:

- Social distancing, including keeping 1.5m between people must be accommodated, implemented and monitored by employees or contractors of the retail food service provider;
- Gathering for the purposes of ordering or collecting must not exceed one person per 4 square metres;
- The retail food service provider may only operate to the extent they are not promoting or facilitating persons consuming takeaway food or drink on or adjacent to their premises.

EXAMPLE: tables and chairs should be removed and all reasonable steps taken by the retail food service to direct persons away from gathering to consume takeaway food or drink on or adjacent to, the relevant premise.

Please also ensure that measures are in place to continue providing safe and suitable food to your customers during home deliveries and/or takeaways.

What can food handlers do?

- Food workers must wash hands:
 - *before starting work*
 - *before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food*
 - *after handling or preparing raw food*
 - *after handling waste*
 - *after cleaning duties*
 - *after using the toilet*
 - *after blowing nose, sneezing or coughing*
 - *after eating drinking or smoking*
 - *after handling money.*
- Report to your employer if you are sick or have been in contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.
- Follow instructions on the dilution and application of chemicals.

What can food business owners/managers do?

- Ensure food handlers thoroughly and frequently wash their hands with warm running water and soap and dry with paper towels before handling food or food contact surfaces.
- Ensure all food handlers have appropriate skills and knowledge in food safety and have been advised of their health and hygiene obligations. [Do FoodSafely](#) or [I'm Alert Food Safety Training](#).
- The nominated food safety supervisor should ensure adequate measures are taken to identify food safety hazards and ensure controls are implemented. [Click here](#) for more information on food safety supervisors.
- If you are on a private water supply, ensure water used in the food premises has been recently tested by an accredited National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) laboratory and forward the test results to Council.
- Ensure cleaning chemicals are available to use.
- Maintain food premises to a standard of cleanliness where there is no accumulation of dirt, food waste, grease or visible matter.
- Use single use food grade takeaway containers and ensure they are stored in such a manner to prevent contamination.
- Self-service should be limited to packaged food.
- Any worker with a suspected communicable disease (such as coughing, sneezing, flu-like symptoms, and gastrointestinal illness) MUST be excluded from the workplace.
- Monitor the temperature of potentially hazardous food to ensure hot food is kept at or above 60° and cold food at 5° or below.
- Use food delivery vehicles that are suitable to protect food and able to be effectively cleaned and, if necessary, sanitised.
- Maintain potentially hazardous food under temperature control during transportation or prior to collection by customers (hot food at or above 60° and cold food at 5° or below).
- Ensure customer areas are cleaned and sanitised frequently.
- Minimise cash transactions and use contactless card readers where possible. Sanitise EFTPOS machines regularly.

What should delivery drivers/personnel do?

- Follow Government health guidance on social distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to customers.
- Wear suitable, clean and where necessary, protective clothing.
- Maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness.
- Sanitise hands before and after each delivery transaction.
- Disposable gloves should not be used to replace correct hand hygiene.

What is Cook Shire Council doing?

Council will continue to provide essential services including ensuring food safety compliance. Any changes to these activities will be communicated directly to those affected. Council's Environmental Health Officer will observe the same personal health procedures for COVID-19.

There will be an increased focus on maintaining personal hygiene (eg increased hand washing) and social distancing practices (1.5m separation between persons). Staff will not be conducting inspections if they are unwell. It may be necessary to introduce alternate verification mechanisms, such as virtual auditing (video conferencing), desk audits or provision of electronic data on key food safety system performance measures as a means of demonstrating compliance with regulatory food safety obligations.

Council will continue to review administration of regulatory food safety inspections as further information about COVID-19 is available.

Council contact details

If you have any questions with relating to your food business please contact Council's Environmental Health Officer on 4082 0500 or mail@cook.qld.gov.au

Where can I find more information?

- [Novel Coronavirus and Food Safety](#)
- [Effective handwashing techniques](#)
- [Health and hygiene for food handlers](#)
- [Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) workplace risk management](#)
- [Business support](#)

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