

# Health and Hygiene Requirements

As a food business owner or manager you are required to inform your food handling staff of their obligations to comply with food law and specifically with health and hygiene requirements when performing their duties.

When was the last time you informed your staff of these requirements? Have you documented this activity on the staff members training plan?

The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code states that a food handler must take all reasonable measures not to handle food or food surfaces in a way that is likely to compromise the safety and suitability of food. They have specific health and hygiene responsibilities too.

Food handlers with symptoms or diagnosis of a foodborne disease (such as vomiting, diarrhoea or fever) must:

- Report to their Supervisor they are or may be suffering from the disease, or that they are carrying the disease
- Not handle food where there is a reasonable likelihood of food contamination as a result of the disease
- If continuing to engage in other work on the food premises, take all practicable measures to prevent food from being contaminated as a result of the disease

Food handlers must:

- Take all practicable measures to ensure the body, anything from the body and any clothing does not contaminate food or food surfaces,
- Take all practicable measures to prevent unnecessary contact with ready to eat food,
- Ensure clothing is clean,
- Cover bandages and dressings on exposed parts of the body with a waterproof covering,
- Not eat, sneeze, blow, cough, spit or smoke around food or food surfaces,
- Wash hands whenever hands are likely to be a source of contamination (before handling food and after using the toilet, smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief, eating, drinking or touching hair, scalp or body), and
- Wash hands before working with ready to eat food after handling raw food.

Once you have informed your staff of these obligations it is important to monitor their work practices to ensure safe food. What strategies have you implemented if a food handler engages in incorrect practise?



# Health and Hygiene Requirements

Your responsibilities as a food business owner or manager are quite clear with these matters:

- Ensure food handlers do not handle food if there is a possibility of contamination through foodborne illness.
- Maintain easily accessible handwashing facilities and supplies of warm running water, soap or other items to thoroughly clean hands.
- Ensure food handlers have skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene matters relevant to their work.

It is important to remember that meeting compliance is the minimum standard and in fact you should be ensuring all of your food safety and business risks are carefully managed.

