

GENERAL CIRCULAR

This general circular contains important information from the NSW Food Authority for seafood store licensees.

Please take the time to read this information.

If you have any queries, please contact
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General Circular 03/2008

To: All seafood store licensees
Subject: Food safety program and auditing requirements

PURPOSE

The purpose of this circular is to advise seafood stores on changes in requirements for them to operate under an audited food safety program.

As a result of the implementation of the 'Primary Production and Processing Standard for Seafood' (Standard 4.2.1) and subsequent amendments introduced by the *Food Amendment Act 2007 (NSW)* on 1 January 2008 the Authority has reviewed the priority risk classification of seafood stores where the activities conducted are limited to receiving, storing and transporting seafood.

BACKGROUND

Starting in 2001, seafood businesses other than retail-only businesses have been required to be licensed with the NSW Food Authority, previously SafeFood Production NSW. With the exception of some businesses handling live seafood, they have also been required to develop and implement a food safety program.

Since then, Food Standards Australia New Zealand has gazetted the 'Primary Production and Processing Standard for Seafood' and work has been underway on a national priority risk classification system.

Primary Production and Processing Standard for Seafood

The new 'Primary Production and Processing Standard for Seafood' sets consistent national food safety requirements for seafood primary production and processing businesses.

In summary, the standard requires:

- all primary production and processing seafood businesses in Australia to comply with outcome-based food safety requirements relating to
 - harvest or collection, handling, processing, storage, transportation and traceability of seafood
 - condition and maintenance of food premises and equipment; and
- businesses handling bivalve molluscs to develop and implement a food safety program.

The new standard is not applicable to businesses manufacturing certain seafood products such as smoking, canning, crumbing or where other ingredients are added nor to retail sale activities. These businesses will still be required to comply with *Food Standards Code* Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

Priority Classification System

A national priority classification system has been developed following initial work done within the NSW Food Authority. The system will be a guide for state agencies in implementing food safety management systems, including in some cases the need for a food safety program.

The priority classification system identifies the following seafood activities as medium to high priority:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commercial shellfish harvesting • oyster opening and • seafood smoking 	P1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seafood processors engaged in cooking, gutting/gilling/slicing of seafood 	P2

All other seafood business activities are identified at a lower priority.

PRESENT POSITION

The NSW Food Authority intends to require all seafood processors classified as P1 and P2 to develop and implement a food safety program where either a current food safety scheme exists or if a cost benefit analysis identifies this outcome as beneficial. Where a business conducts processing operations with different priority risk classifications then the higher priority ranking will determine the food safety program requirements for that business.

As a result, premises in NSW that are licensed as a 'seafood store' and only receive, store or transport seafood will no longer be subject to audits or be required to maintain an approved food safety program. Such businesses will still:

- require a NSW Food Authority licence
- comply with Food Safety Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 relating to hygiene and structural requirements respectively, and
- be subject to an inspection program as per the Authority verification protocol.

ENQUIRIES

Please direct any enquiries to:

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