

Food Service to Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme

Requirements for Vulnerable Persons Food Businesses

A new food safety law will commence on 18 August 2008.

The NSW Food Authority (the Authority) has introduced a new law in NSW which covers businesses who serve food to vulnerable persons.

The new law was developed to protect vulnerable people in our community, including older persons and people who have weakened immune systems.

The law will help the Authority to implement a new national standard more effectively.¹

The new law will impact businesses such as hospitals, aged care facilities, same-day aged care services, respite services and certain delivered meal organisations such as Meals on Wheels.

Businesses covered by the new law will need to hold a NSW Food Authority licence and to have an audited food safety program in place.

A manual has been prepared to help businesses understand and prepare for the new requirements

The Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme Manual (the Manual) has been prepared to explain the new requirements in more detail. The Manual can be accessed at: www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
The Manual contains detailed information on:

- Which businesses need to be licensed
- Cost of a NSW Food Authority licence
- How to develop a food safety program (including a template food safety program and a worked example).
- Minimum compliance requirements businesses need to adhere to
- Technical information a business might need to help it to serve safe food.

Impacted businesses need to submit a licence application form by 18 October 2008

Businesses covered by the new law will need to submit an application form and pay the appropriate licence fee by 18th October 2008.

The licence application form is available on the Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/xxxx/licenceapplicationformetc.

A business is deemed to be licensed once it has submitted an application form and paid the appropriate fee. Once the form is received, the business will be sent a licence.

It is against the law for impacted businesses not to submit a licence application form by this date.

¹ *Standard 3.3.1 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, titled Food Safety Programs for Food Service to Vulnerable Persons, was gazetted 5 October 2006 and commences 5 October 2008*

Businesses covered by the new law will need to develop a food safety program and have it audited from March 2009

The new law gives businesses time to implement their food safety program and to prepare for an audit. Businesses should continue to develop and implement their food safety program in the interim period.

Audits of impacted businesses will commence from 1 March 2009. From this date businesses will need to have their food safety program audited on a regular basis.

Aged day care businesses have extra time to implement their food safety programs and be ready for audit. Audits of aged day care businesses will commence from 1 September 2009.

Businesses can choose to be audited by the NSW Food Authority or use a commercial auditor

Businesses who choose to be audited by the Authority will be contacted by an auditor some time after the above dates have passed to book in an audit.

Businesses may choose to use a commercial food safety auditor instead of using an Authority auditor. Before using a commercial auditor, the business must first have had an audit conducted by the Authority, where an 'A' or 'B' rating must have been achieved. Businesses who have completed this audit and are wishing to use a commercial auditor should contact the Authority's Helpline (see Helpline details below).

Help is available

For more information, businesses should head to the Authority's website or contact the Authority's Helpline on:

Phone 1300 552 406

Fax 9647 0026

Email: contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au