

FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS

What to expect

The NSW Food Authority and local councils regularly inspect food businesses, monitoring the safety of the NSW food industry. We have created this resource to help you know what to expect when your business is inspected.

Audits are different and if your business needs a Food Safety Program, you will be audited. Visit foodauthority.nsw.gov.au to learn more about safety audits.



Will your business be inspected?

All types of food businesses can be inspected.

An inspection checks that good food safety practices are in place and the business complies with food safety laws.

Inspections can occur as part of a regular program, or during investigations of food complaints and food safety incidents and following market surveys.

Why are inspections necessary?

The Food Authority and local councils inspect food businesses to ensure food in NSW is safe for consumers to eat and is correctly labelled.

Inspections are necessary to:

- ensure public health and safety
- ensure food businesses follow food safety laws.

Without rigorous standards there is a danger of food being unsafe to consume which can cause serious illness, loss of work or even fatalities.

What is assessed?

During a food business inspection, the authorised officer will assess compliance with the general provisions of the Food Standards Code, particularly Chapter 3 - Food Safety Standards.

This includes:

- food handling controls: storage, display and transport, processing, the risk of cross-contamination
- cleaning and sanitising of the food premises and equipment including food contact surfaces
- use and accessibility of hand washing facilities
- food temperature control
- pest control
- premises design and construction, including water supply, waste disposal, adequate garbage facilities and lighting
- food labels are accurate and sufficient
- food safety training requirements that apply to the business.

From 8 December 2023, some retail businesses will also be assessed on compliance with Standard 3.2.2A:

- A trained Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) and FSS certificate are on the premises. (This is already a requirement for some businesses.)
- Food handlers have the required skills and knowledge.
- Food safety risks are managed effectively and can be easily demonstrated.

During an inspection of a manufacturer, wholesaler or importer, the authorised officer will also assess that there is a system in place for recalling unsafe food, and it is set out in a written document.

F1405/2308

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How to get a better inspection result

- 1 Keep the food premises, food contact surfaces and equipment clean and sanitised: under, behind, inside equipment and appliances; grease traps; floors; storage areas.
- 2 Have hand washing facilities that are readily accessible, dedicated to hand washing and have a supply of warm, running potable water, soap and single-use paper towels.
- 3 Control pest issues such as cockroaches and mice so there is no evidence of infestation; cover waste containers, protect areas from pests with flyscreens, and other preventative measures.
- 4 Keep high risk food at the correct temperatures (hot enough or cold enough) during receipt, processing, storage and display; have a food temperature measuring device (how do you know food is at a safe temperature?).
- 5 Cover food during storage and protect it from contamination.
- 6 If you require a Food Safety Supervisor, make sure they are reasonably available to supervise and assist staff.
- 7 Ensure all food handlers are trained and have adequate skills and knowledge for their duties.
- 8 If you manufacture, wholesale or import food, have your recall system document ready and available.
- 9 If you are a retail food business that is inspected by a local council, you can do a self-check using the Food Premises Assessment Report (FPAR) on the NSW Food Authority website that authorised officers use during retail food inspections.

Are inspections announced?

Inspections are usually unannounced.



Who does the inspection?

If your food business is retail (sells directly to consumers and is not a butcher), you will be inspected by an authorised officer from the local council.

If you have a non-retail food business (sells wholesale, manufactures, processes, transports, stores or imports food) and it doesn't need a Food Safety Program, you will be inspected by a NSW Food Authority authorised officer.

Visit foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry for the specific audit and inspection requirements for various food industries.

The NSW Food Authority regulates and supports the NSW food industry through licensing, audits, inspections, consultation and resources to ensure that food sold is correctly labelled and safe for consumption.

