

PIPI TESTING PROGRAM

Q: What are the testing requirements for the pipi industry?

A: The pipi industry is required to conduct testing to manage two types of food safety risk;

1. Microbiological risk

As the pipi industry operates on remote open beaches with limited pollution sources, the NSW Food Authority has acknowledged this and has therefore reduced the testing regime to one E.coli end product sample per month when fishers are operating.

2. Biotoxin risk

Two options are available for routine monitoring of toxic algal blooms;

- a) fortnightly sampling of water for algae levels plus monthly sampling of shellfish for biotoxin analysis where stock is present and being harvested, or
- b) where shellfish stock is not regularly present or transient (such as open ocean beaches), weekly sampling of water for algae levels is required.

During sampling, if potentially toxic algal species are detected which are above predetermined trigger levels, shellfish are sent for biotoxin testing to ascertain the level of toxin in the pipis in order to determine the risk.

To ensure food safety risk is managed, in the event of increased algal blooms, it may be necessary to move the pipi industry's biotoxin management program onto routine biotoxin testing to complement the algal monitoring program.

Q: Why is water testing for algae required each week?

A: Algae sampling is required weekly to monitor for algal blooms. As pipis have shown a tendency to accumulate biotoxins, regular monitoring is required to ensure product safety.

The NSW pipi industry has an excellent reputation for producing safe product, therefore, the level of sampling required is considered reasonably low by international standards where often, weekly sampling for both algae and biotoxins is required.

Q: Why are there sometimes delays between the opening of the pipi fishing season and harvest area openings?

A: Following an extended closure, two algal samples collected a week apart are required to open a beach for harvest. This is to ensure no recent algal blooms have occurred which could present a food safety risk.

Within the current scope of testing, to ensure harvest areas can be opened as soon as possible following the seasonal closure being lifted by NSW Fisheries, the industry should:

- commence the required algal sampling at least 10 days prior to the opening date to allow two samples to be collected one week apart and analysed by the laboratory.
- promptly forward the laboratory results to the Food Authority or arrange for the laboratory to forward the results directly to the Food Authority.
- contact the Food Authority prior to the opening date to advise that an opening is being sought. Openings can be actioned on weekends with prior arrangement.

Once compliant sample results have been received, the Food Authority can generally declare a harvest area open within the hour.

More information

- visit the website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- phone the helpline on 1300 552 406



Department of
Primary Industries
Food Authority



About the NSW Food Authority: The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled. It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to minimise food poisoning by providing information about and regulating the safe production, storage, transport, promotion and preparation of food.

Note: This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).



Department of
Primary Industries
Food Authority

6 Avenue of the Americas, Newington NSW 2127

PO Box 6682, Silverwater NSW 1811

T 1300 552 406

contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

ABN 47 080 404 416

More resources at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au



[nswfoodauthority](https://www.facebook.com/nswfoodauthority)



[nswfoodauth](https://twitter.com/nswfoodauth)

September 2015
FI243/1509