



STARTING A NEW FOOD BUSINESS

The Food Act 1984 requires that all business that handle, prepare, package, store, serve, supply, or repackage food must be registered with their local Council.

Approval from other authorities

Permits or approvals may also be required from other Council departments and/or authorities prior to applying for registration with the Environmental Health Unit. These may include:

- Town Planning (Ph: 8290 3329)
- Building (Ph: 8290 8218)
- Water Authorities: Yarra Valley (Ph: 13 1721)
South East Water (Ph: 13 1691)

Submission of application and plans

Premises must be fitted out in accordance with the Standard 3.2.3. of the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code and AS 4674.

All new food businesses must complete an application for plans approval and submit this form with two (2) copies of floor plans and specifications drawn to scale of not less than 1:100 showing:

- The layout of all fixtures, fittings and equipment;
- A description of materials to be used for surface finishes including walls, floors and bench tops;
- Locations of waste disposal area, bin wash area, storage areas, toilets etc.

Once the application form and fee is paid, plans approval generally takes around 10 working days, but may take longer if the information supplied is incomplete, or inadequate.

Premises construction

Once plans are approved, works may commence for the fit-out of the premises. On-site inspections may be requested or conducted by the Environmental Health Officer during the construction of the premises. Prior to opening, a final inspection must be conducted by an Environmental Health Officer. The business proprietor must arrange this inspection at least 2 days prior to the proposed opening date.

Food Safety Programs

A Food Safety Program is a written document that describes how your business keeps food safe. All Victorian Food Businesses are required to have a Food Safety Program before registration can be granted, unless the business sells non-perishable prepackaged food only. You will need to submit your Food Safety Program to the Environmental Health Unit either before the final inspection or on the day of the final inspection. Further information regarding Food Safety Programs can be found at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety>.

As part of the Food Safety Program, the business will also need to have a nominated Food Safety Supervisor. This person will be responsible for the implementation of the Food Safety Program. You are required to provide Council with the name and qualifications of the Food Safety Supervisor when you submit your Food Safety Program.

Granting registration

After a final inspection of your premises, an application for initial registration under the Food Act must be completed and signed by the proprietor, and a registration fee paid. Once this has been completed and all conditions have been met to the satisfaction of the EHO, and the Food Safety program has been submitted, you will receive a Certificate of Registration under the Food Act.

The registration is renewable annually, with the registration period running from 1 January to 31 December each year, regardless of when the premises was first registered.

Your premises must not open prior to receiving the Certificate of Registration. Under the Food Act it is an offence to operate a food business without being registered. A penalty of up to \$5000 can apply.

Where can I get advice?

If you have any further queries, please call Council's Environmental Health Unit on 8290 3393.