

Food for thought

Information provided by The City of Newcastle



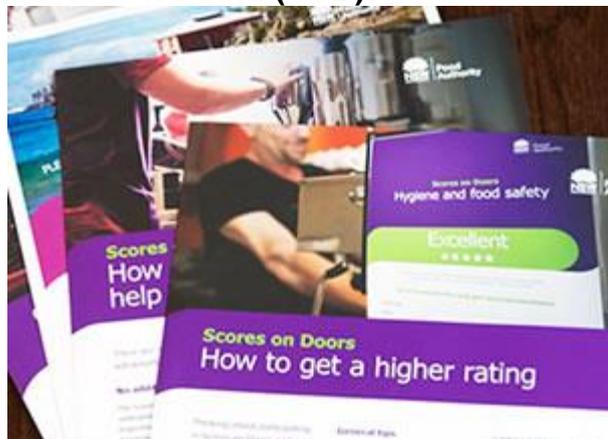
2017-18

A Snap Shot

During the 2016/17 financial year there were 960 fixed food premises and 160 temporary and mobile food vendors inspected in the Newcastle City Council Local Government area.

Of the total fixed food premises inspected 75% passed their first inspection, which is a small improvement on last year.

Scores on Doors (SOD)



Scores on Doors is the NSW food hygiene scoring program that informs customers about hygiene and food safety standards. There are no extra inspections or costs.

The score rates a food business's compliance with hygiene and food safety requirements based on the inspections conducted by Council Food Inspectors. Scores are based on a standard assessment checklist.

Businesses will be offered a certificate and a sticker to display in a prominent, public position such as a front window or behind the counter, so customers can easily see the business has qualified for a score when they visit.

Scores on Doors can be a marketing advantage for businesses that comply with food safety legislation. Displaying a Scores on Doors certificate and sticker can provide a point of difference from competitors.

Ensure you have the common problem or non-compliance issues covered.

Download a self- assessment below

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/scoresondoors/FPAR.pdf>

Food Safety Supervisor (FSS)

Reminder: Did you conduct your Food Safety Supervisor course in 2011, 2012 or 2013? If so it's likely your FSS certificate has either expired or is about to.

The FSS has a very important role to play in your business. The definition of a FSS is a person who:

- is trained to recognise and prevent risks associated with food handling in a retail food business
- holds a current FSS certificate (no more than five years old),
- is not a FSS for any other food premises or mobile catering business, and
- can train and supervise other people in the business about safe food handling practices.

The FSS requirement applies to retail businesses who process and sell food (prepare and serve) that is:

- ready-to-eat
- potentially hazardous (i.e. needs temperature control)
- NOT sold /served in the supplier's original package.

There are two offences that carry penalties if a food business does not comply.

- Fail to appoint a FSS within 30 days of the original FSS ceasing to act in that role and:
- Fail to keep a copy of the FSS certificate on the premises.

Issue of a penalty notice for the above offences is \$330 for an individual (sole trader) \$660 for a registered company.

To find an approved RTO in your area, go to <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/rp/fss-food-safety-supervisors/for-rtos>

To ensure the safe production of raw egg products special attention must be given to the preparation, storage and handling of eggs and raw egg products, to prevent the growth of Salmonella.

For further information on this topic go to:

http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/retailfactsheets/safe_preparation_of_raw_egg_products.pdf

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PEST CONTROL IN FOOD BUSINESSES

Common pests such as rats, mice and cockroaches can carry bacteria and viruses, and can contaminate food and food contact surfaces. Pest sightings, and food contamination due to pests, result in a large number of customer complaints.

The legal requirements

The Food Standards Code requires food businesses to take all practicable measures to:

- prevent pests entering the food premises
- eradicate and prevent the harbourage of pests on the food premises.

Practicable measures to prevent entry of pests include:

- sealing all holes, gaps and cracks in walls and ceilings
- installing and maintaining flyscreens to windows and door openings
- keeping doors closed when not in use
- installing weather strips at the base of doors.

Practicable measures to eradicate and prevent harbourage of pests include:

- regular checks for signs of pests
- maintaining the food premises and equipment in a clean condition (a cleaning schedule may assist)
- keeping food covered in sealed containers
- storing food, equipment and food containers above the floor
- keeping garbage storage areas clean and tidy
- removing rubbish regularly and making sure that external areas (outside bin areas) are clean and well-maintained
- removing unused equipment and fixtures from the premises
- implementing a suitable pest control program which may require the services of a licensed pest controller.

Using a licensed pest controller

While using the services of a licensed pest controller is not a legal requirement, it can help you to demonstrate that you are taking all practicable measures to eradicate and prevent the harbourage of pests. However, steps such as those listed above must also be used to demonstrate and achieve compliance.

For further information visit

http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/retailfactsheets/pest_control.pdf

FOOD ALLERGIES ARE ON THE INCREASE

What is a food allergy?

A food allergy is an immune system response to a food protein that the body mistakenly believes is harmful. The most severe allergic reaction is anaphylaxis and can be life threatening. Food induced anaphylaxis has doubled in the last 10 years. Signs and symptoms can include: hives, swelling of the lips, face, eyes and tongue, tightness of the throat, breathing difficulty, dizziness and/or collapse.

A food intolerance is NOT the same as a food allergy. Whilst food intolerances can cause discomfort and distress it is not life threatening. The most common intolerances include lactose, gluten, yeast and sulphite.

What foods cause most allergic reactions?

The first nine foods listed below cause around 90% of food allergic reactions. They are:

Peanuts, tree nuts (e.g. almonds, cashews), eggs, milk, fish, crustacea (shellfish, e.g. prawns lobster), sesame seeds, soybeans, cereals containing gluten and their products, namely, wheat, barley, oats and spelt.

What can you do?

The law requires you to:

- provide accurate information when a customer asks about allergens in foods you are serving.
- NOT provide food that contains an allergen when a customer specifically requested NOT to contain that allergen.

Allergy Aware Checklist

1. KNOW your ingredients
2. AVOID cross contamination
3. LISTEN to your customers
4. EDUCATE yourself

For further information visit

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/retail/bepreparedbeallergyaware.pdf>

Meet the Team



Isabel Aranha, Ann Marie Green, Robyn Platt, John Metten, Jennifer MacDonald, Sarie Wheatland.