

Skills and knowledge

If you're a grower or primary processor of berries, leafy vegetables and melons, you must make sure your staff and supervisors have the knowledge and skills in food safety and hygiene to keep produce safe to eat.



Horticulture
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What are food safety and hygiene skills and knowledge?

- **Food hygiene** means the things done during growing and processing that prevent produce becoming contaminated and keep it safe to eat – for example, using safe water and clean equipment.
- **Food safety** is the guarantee the produce will not harm consumers who eat it – it's the result of practicing good food hygiene.
- **Skills** means being able to do a task in a way that ensures the produce stays safe – for example, people trimming produce must properly wash their hands and sanitise a knife.
- **Knowledge** means understanding food safety and hygiene issues related to different tasks – for example, people picking produce by hand must understand that dirty hands could contaminate it.
- Food safety and hygiene skills and knowledge can be developed through different kinds of training, for example, reading manuals or guides and working alongside experienced staff.

What are the requirements?

Primary producers and primary processors of berries, leafy vegetables and melons must ensure that each person who does a 'relevant activity' (for example, grows, harvests, trims, washes, sorts, or packs produce) and each supervisor, has the knowledge and skills in food safety and food hygiene appropriate for their work.

This means staff and their supervisors must have the right level of knowledge and skills to do their work. For example, producers need to know how to keep produce safe during growing and harvesting, and be able to do it. Primary processors need to have knowledge and skills that keeps produce safe during their processing. A person who trims and washes produce may have different skills and knowledge to a person who services equipment, but they all need to know and do their part to keep produce safe.

These requirements are under primary production and processing standards for [berries](#), [leafy vegetables](#) and [melons](#).

Does this apply to me?

In the Standards:

- **A primary producer** is a business that grows and/or harvests berries, leafy vegetables or melons.
- **A primary processor** is a business that does any of the following with berries, leafy vegetables or melons: washing, trimming, sorting, sanitising, storing, combining, packing, and transporting between packhouses.

Getting it right – reducing your risk

- Understand all the activities your business does in the food supply chain – a process flow diagram might be useful.
- Map out which activities each of your staff/supervisors are responsible for.
- Provide food safety training when staff first start work and regularly refresh training (e.g. each year).
- Set rules on good food safety and hygiene practices and make sure everyone follows them.
- Ensure staff and supervisors can understand and follow documented food safety practices.
- Train staff to identify and report things that could make produce unsafe (for example, toxic weeds in fields or animal droppings in processing equipment).
- Display instructions and signs in appropriate areas – photos and diagrams are a great way to remind staff what they should be doing to keep food safe.
- Develop a workplace culture that encourages supervisors and staff to do things correctly, ask questions and remind each other of best practices.

Need more information?

- Contact your state/territory [food regulatory authority](#)
- [Primary Production and Processing Standards \(Chapter 4\)](#)
- [Fresh Produce Safety Centre – Guidelines for Fresh Produce Food Safety 2022](#)