

Storing food safely

If you're a food business, you need to keep food protected from contamination and at the right temperature so it stays safe to eat.



SAFE FOOD AUSTRALIA
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What are the requirements?

Under Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements, food businesses need to store food in a way that keeps it safe and suitable.

Reduce your risk

- keep storage areas clean, dry and free of pests
- use food-safe containers, covers and packaging to protect food
- store potentially hazardous food at 5°C or colder – check it with a thermometer
- store raw food like meat and seafood separately or below ready-to-eat foods to avoid contamination from meat juices etc.
- make sure frozen food stays frozen hard
- check that food packaging is undamaged
- don't store food in warm or humid areas or in direct sunlight if this could spoil the food or make it unsafe
- store food, containers and packaging off the ground and away from chemicals like cleaners and insect sprays.

How long can I store food?

Follow the manufacturer's storage instructions to be sure food stays safe and suitable for its expected shelf life.

Generally, unpackaged potentially hazardous ready-to-eat food should not be stored for more than 5 days. Food containing raw or low-cooked eggs should generally not be kept longer than 24 hours.

Tips for refrigeration

- regularly maintain and service your refrigerators
- don't overstock refrigerators, so chilled air can circulate
- check food temperatures directly with a thermometer to make sure food is at the right temperature
- check date marks on stock, sell older food first and discard food that is past its 'Use by' date
- don't leave food out of the refrigerator for any longer than you really need to
- don't open refrigerator doors too often or leave them open for long periods
- if opening packaged food, make sure you can still read the date marking and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Need more information?

Safe Food Australia is a guide to the food safety standards in Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code. Food storage is covered under Standard 3.2.2 clause 6. Potentially hazardous food is explained in Appendix 1.

Copies of the guide, some translated fact sheets and other information is available at www.foodstandards.gov.au/safefood or by emailing information@foodstandards.gov.au.