

# Food safety supervisors

## What is a food safety supervisor?

A food safety supervisor takes a lead role in supervising food safety in a food business. A food safety supervisor must be 'reasonably available' at all times the business is operating and:

1. know how to recognise, prevent and alleviate food safety hazards of the food business;
2. have skills and knowledge in matters relating to food safety relevant to the food business; and
3. have the authority to supervise and give directions about matters relating to food safety to persons who handle food in the food business.

## Why is a food safety supervisor important?

A food safety supervisor adds an on-site level of protection for day-to-day food safety, as they are required to have experience and expertise relevant to the licensable food business and be able to supervise and give directions about food safety to persons in the food business. Additionally, the presence of a food safety supervisor at the food business is an important point of contact for both the local government and persons who handle food in the food business.

## Do I need a food safety supervisor?

Under the *Food Act 2006* (the Act), all licensable food businesses in Queensland must have a food safety supervisor. If a food business does not require a licence, it does not require a food safety supervisor. This includes the majority of non-profit organisations and other food businesses only selling packaged food, or low risk foods such as soft drinks or not potentially hazardous biscuits or cakes. The local government for the area where a food business is located can provide guidance on licensing requirements.

## Who can be a food safety supervisor?

A food safety supervisor must meet the requirements detailed in *What is a food safety supervisor?* above. The person must know about food safety hazards, have skills and knowledge relating to food safety, have authority to give directions in the food business and be reasonably available for food handlers and the local government. Anyone who meets those requirements may be a food safety supervisor, including the business owner, the licensee, a manager, an employee or an external contractor.

## Does a food safety supervisor need training?

It is recommended that a person successfully completes training to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of a food safety supervisor (specifically points (1) and (2) under *What is a food safety supervisor?* above). A person who has a Statement of Attainment issued by



a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for the national competencies identified in Table 1 is likely to satisfy those points.

A Statement of Attainment from an RTO may be issued to a person following successful completion of a training course, or successful demonstration to the RTO that the person has existing skills, experience or training to meet the national competencies.

If a person has previously completed a national competency shown in Table 1, there is currently no requirement to renew the training after a set period of time.

**Table 1 - Recommended competency standards for food safety supervisors**

Food sector	National competency code	Competency title
Food processing	FBPFSY1001	Follow work procedures to maintain food safety
	or FBPFSY2001	Implement the food safety program and procedures
Retail and hospitality	SITXFSA001	Use hygienic practices for food safety
	SITXFSA002	Participate in safe food handling practices
	or SIRRFSA001	Handle food safely in a retail environment
Health and community services	HLTFSE001	Follow basic food safety practices
	HLTFSE007	Oversee the day-to-day implementation of food safety in the workplace
	HLTFSE005	Apply and monitor food safety requirements
Transport and distribution	SITXFSA001	Use hygienic practices for food safety
	SITXFSA002	Participate in safe food handling practices

**Note:** Competency codes and titles are set by the National Quality Council and may change from time to time. If your food safety supervisor has a different competency code or title to those shown above, contact your local government for advice.

### How do I determine the food sector for my food business?

When determining the food sector for a food business, consideration should be given to the predominant activity of the food business -

- *Food processing* includes food businesses that manufacture food (as defined in the Act).
- *Retail and hospitality* includes food businesses that prepare and sell food by retail.
- *Health and community services* includes food businesses that prepare or sell food for consumption by vulnerable persons.
- *Transport and distribution* includes food businesses that do not prepare food, but handle food by storing food in warehouses or transporting food.

Examples of the types of food businesses in each food sector are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Examples of food businesses for each food sector**

Food processing	Retail and hospitality	Health and community services	Transport and distribution
Airline caterers	Caterers for private functions	Catering for hospitals, nursing homes	Bulk food distribution
Wholesale bakers	Convenience stores	Childcare centres	Water carriers
Breweries	Delicatessens	Hospitals	Warehouse
Canneries	Grocers	Hostels	
Flour mills	Hotels	Meals on Wheels	
Ice manufacturers	Retail market and stalls	Nursing homes	
Packers	Restaurants		
Pre-prepared meals	Supermarkets		
Wine production	Takeaways and cafés		

### Where can I do the recommended training?

The recommended training for food safety supervisors is conducted by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). An RTO may be a TAFE college, adult and community education provider, private provider, community organisation, school, higher education institution, industry body or other organisation. Training may be offered face-to-face or online.

To find an RTO:

- visit <http://training.gov.au/Home/Tga>, scroll down to 'quick search', under 'nationally recognised training' enter the recommended competency code. In the search results, click on the code and then click on 'Find RTOs approved to deliver this unit', or
- perform an internet search using keywords 'food safety supervisor training', or enter the recommended competency code. You may wish to include your geographical location or 'online' depending on your preferred delivery method.

Food business licensees are encouraged to confirm that their chosen training provider is a current RTO and will provide a Statement of Attainment on successful completion of the recommended competencies.

### Is my previous training or work experience sufficient?

#### **Previous training/qualification**

A person with a tertiary or trade qualification that included food safety and hygiene subjects could be considered to meet the requirements for a food safety supervisor. Evidence of the subjects completed and the content of the subjects may be required.

### *Recognition of prior learning*

RTOs approved to deliver the recommended competencies can conduct a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment. The RTO will assess any previous formal or informal training or education, along with any relevant work or general life experience to determine if a person meets the required outcomes of the competencies. The RTO may issue a Statement of Attainment for the specified competencies, or provide a partial credit advising of any gap training required to obtain the recommended competencies.

### *Substantial work experience*

A person with substantial experience in the food industry who has acquired extensive skills and knowledge in matters relating to food safety and knows how to recognise, prevent and alleviate food safety hazards may not need to complete the recommended competencies. If concerned, the person or the food business licensee should contact their local government to discuss their situation.

## What does 'reasonably available' mean?

The Act requires a food safety supervisor to be 'reasonably available' to be contacted by the local government and food handlers at the food business at all times that the food business is being carried on. A food safety supervisor should be located on the premises or should be able to be contacted by the local government or food handlers whenever food handling is being undertaken. There is no specific requirement to have one food safety supervisor for every store location, but a food safety supervisor must be reasonably available for each store.

If the food safety supervisor is absent (such as on leave), there should be a documented mechanism (written procedures) to ensure directions about matters relating to food safety are available to persons who handle food. For example, written guidance for temperature control measures for deliveries and cold storage.

A food safety supervisor is not required to be available when the business is operating but no food handling is being undertaken. For example, a sporting club kitchen closes at 9pm but the club remains open until 11pm for entertainment activities. A food safety supervisor is not required for the period after 9pm even though the business is open.

## How do I nominate my food safety supervisor?

A food business licensee must notify the local government that issues their licence of the name and contact details of their food safety supervisor.

A licensee for a new food business must notify the local government of the food safety supervisor's details within 30 days of the issue of their licence.

A licensee for an existing food business must, within 14 days, notify the local government:

- of a change in a food safety supervisor's contact details
- if a person stops being a food safety supervisor
- of the name and contact details of a new food safety supervisor.

Each local government has their own form or process for receiving notifications of food safety supervisors. A food business licensee should contact their local government for further information.

### Are other persons in the food business responsible for food safety?

The Act places obligations on food business licensees and food handlers in relation to the safe handling of food. Additionally, the food safety standards in chapter 3 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) (available at [www.foodstandards.gov.au/code](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code)) set out health and hygiene requirements for food businesses and food handlers.

Clause 3 of food safety standard 3.2.2 of the Code requires a food business to ensure that all persons undertaking or supervising food handling have skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activities. For example, a chef that prepares and processes food will need high level skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene; however a waiter or shop assistant that only handles packaged or ready-to-eat food may require a lower level of skills and knowledge.

The skills and knowledge requirement is in addition to the requirement for a food business to have a food safety supervisor.

Some local governments offer basic food handler training, or sponsor an online training course for food handlers, designed for all employees of a food business. This type of training does not usually provide the detailed knowledge required of a food safety supervisor, but may assist a licensee in complying with the requirement for all staff to have skills and knowledge appropriate to their work activities. A food business licensee should contact their local government for further information on any training offered.

### For further information

The Queensland Department of Health has a variety of fact sheets with detailed information on food safety. These can be accessed at [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au).

If you have any further questions relating to food safety supervisors, contact the local government for the area in which your food business is located. Contact details can be found in the White Pages or at [www.dlqp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory](http://www.dlqp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory).