



Customer Rights

In operating a food premises your customer is entitled to expect food to be sound, wholesome, clean and safe. This requirement can only be achieved if food is prepared, stored and sold under hygienic conditions. To this end the Food Hygiene Regulations set minimum standards for premises. The thrust of the regulations are based on the standards of construction of the premises, and on the conduct of those premises. In other words, the whole of the regulations and controls are based on **CLEANLINESS**.

Premises - General

Whilst the building must be constructed in compliance with the Building Act 1991, it must be sound, well lighted, vermin proof and constructed and fitted out so as to be easily cleaned.

Well designed premises allow for an orderly sequence of work with no overcrowding, especially in the food preparation area.

Premises, Floors, Walls and Ceilings

All surfaces shall be smooth and light coloured. The floors shall be of impervious material such as good quality industrial vinyl without joints and covered at the wall. Walls can be of gloss enamel paint finish, but in some areas harder wearing surfaces will be required.

Ceilings must be smooth, light coloured and easily cleaned. Where the roof is of truss construction, they must be completely enclosed to prevent the accumulation of dust.

Ventilation

The premises shall be provided with adequate ventilation for the comfort of persons on the premises. Regular changes of air must be achieved by either natural and mechanical ventilation or both. The concept of ventilation will be:

- (a) to prevent air from becoming excessively heated.
- (b) to prevent condensation and formation of excess moisture on floors, walls, ceilings and equipment, etc.
- (c) to remove objectionable odours, fumes and impurities.

If adequate natural ventilation is not available a mechanical system must be provided which obtains air from a clean area. In turn the exhaust from a mechanical system must discharge in such a fashion that nuisance conditions are not created, this is particularly important for air being vented off from cooking and other food processing areas.

Canopies and ducting in association with mechanical ventilation shall be so designed and constructed that they are easily cleaned and grease is prevented from accumulating and condensates prevented from dripping onto food or food preparation areas. Opening to the outside air must be covered by suitable gauge screens.

Overcrowding

IS NOT PERMITTED – sufficient room must be provided to enable food handlers etc to carry out their work efficiently and to allow easy access for cleaning purposes.

Change Rooms or Areas

ARE TO BE PROVIDED with storage for personal effects and “street clothing”. Where more than four people are employed, then a separate room must be provided.

Toilet Facilities

MUST BE PROVIDED in a convenient place. This should be on the premises but in situations of multiple tenancies then a common toilet is acceptable provided it is in a reasonable distance from the food handling area. A wash hand basin must be provided in the toilet area.

Washhand Basins

MUST BE PROVIDED in a food handling area. They must be provided with hot and cold water, soap and nail brush. A towel or hand drying equipment must be located near by.

Water Supply

In the Opotiki town area, the Council water supply is of suitable bacteriological quality for use in food premises. In the rural areas of the district you will need to ensure that the water source from which you intend to draw your water is adequate and potable. It is recommended you seek advice on this from the Council's Environmental Health Officer in this regard.

Hot Water Supply

The premises **must** be provided with sufficient hot water.

The temperatures required are: skins not less than 63°C
all other purposes not less than 83°C

Plumbing

The premises shall be provided with sufficient sinks, hygienic fixtures, dishwashers, etc, that are of sufficient capacity to enable all appliances, containers, utensils and equipment used in connection with the manufacture, preparation, packing or storage of food to be cleaned efficiently and hygienically in accordance with the requirement of the Food Hygiene Regulations 1974.

Waste Water Disposal

Sufficient drains must be provided to carry away all sewage and liquid wastes to a sewerage system for proper disposal. Grease traps shall be provided and maintained in good working order to prevent fats and grease from entering the Opotiki Sewerage system, or other disposal facility.

Refuse

Shall be disposed of daily and cannot be stored internally on the premises.

Yards

Every yard or outside working area and every pathway etc connected with such yard or working area shall be provided and maintained to an appropriate standard. It must be paved or provided with an impervious washable surface. Adequate drainage shall be provided. Rubbish and empty containers etc must not be allowed to accumulate in the yard.

Premises in multiple occupancy buildings where no yard facilities are available or practicable shall provide alternative facilities for storage of articles or materials not required for immediate use.

Food Storage and Protection

Food storage should be planned for protection from rodents, flies, insects, dust and most importantly contamination by human agency, hands, coughing and street clothes. Uncooked / cooked meats, dairy foods must be separated on separate shelves or more preferably in separate refrigerators.

Personal Cleanliness

Food handlers need to be more careful than persons in other occupations. They must maintain a high level of personal cleanliness, wear clean clothes and avoid such habits as licking fingers, touching food, contact areas of glasses, cups, utensils, etc. ***Smoking is NOT permitted!***

Cleansing of Utensils

The food handler must distinguish between physical cleanliness and bacteriological cleanliness. Extra care and effort is required to ensure dishes and utensils are sanitised. Ordinary sink washing is deemed inefficient and only a commercial quality dishwasher can perform the task satisfactorily.

Housekeeping and Management

It is the responsibility of the owner to keep up to date in the knowledge of food handling techniques and hygienic practices, to plan the orderly arrangement of premises and cleaning schedules. The following points should be checked:

- Cleanliness and maintenance of premises.
- Dishwashing temperatures.
- Food protection and storage.
- Rodent and insect control (watch for cockroaches).
- Refuse storage and removal.
- Personal hygiene and behaviour.
- Crockery and equipment.
- Housekeeping.

Does your business stack up? REMEMBER it is your operation that is at stake!

Increasingly, the public are demanding high quality food, served in a wholesome condition. There are many traps for the careless food handler and food poisoning is a real possibility.

Food businesses' that have been the source of food poisoning outbreaks are frequently gone bankrupt due to adverse public reaction. As a rule serious outbreaks receive widespread media attention which in turn frequently leads to the whole region suffering a down turn. A district relying on tourism etc is particularly subject to such threat.

The regulations provide a basis for the safe handling of food – the rest is up to you!

D B Wilmshurst
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