

Starting up a New Food Business *Registration under the Food Act 1984*

Registration under the Food Act

Under the Food Act all food businesses must be registered with their local Council in order to operate. The Health Services Branch at the City of Melbourne is responsible for registering food businesses. Registration is valid for 12 months and is renewed each year with Council who will issue an 'Application for Renewal of Registration' to all food businesses.

Key steps to assist in starting a food business:

- Submit Plans
- Complete 'Application for Preliminary Plans' form with fee.
- Food Safety Program including Food Safety Supervisor details.
- Complete 'Application for Registration' form with fee.

1. Submit Plans to Health Services

The City of Melbourne provides a service to assess plans of your proposed business prior to the commencement of any works. This ultimately assists businesses to meet all food safety requirements prior to any works being undertaken and reduces the possibility of changes having to be made before being registered to operate. You should complete the 'Application for Preliminary Plans' form and submit together with floor plans of your proposed food business. This service attracts a fee which is listed on the application form.

Health Services requests the submission of two (2) copies of the plans drawn to scale of not less than 1 to 100 showing the layout of all equipment, fittings and fixtures. This includes where these items are to be located and how they will be fitted. Remember to include the location of all floors, walls, and ceiling surfaces and provide information about the materials to be used. For example: stainless steel bench, tiled wall etc.

It needs to be clear from the plans where the water supply, waste disposal, lighting, the bin wash area, ventilation, sinks & basins, drains, storage areas and toilets are located.

If you propose to change the use of a premises (e.g. from a hardware store to a café) you will need to apply for a "change of use" permit from the Development Planning Branch (Ph 9658 9100).

2. Checking your plans

Health Services will check plans that are submitted to determine whether the proposed fit-out meets the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Food Premises and Equipment Food Safety Standards. (see the 'Food Safety Standards 3.2.3 Premises and Equipment' fact sheet.) A standard 15 working day service is provided by Health Services or if requested, a priority 5 working day service can be provided for an extra fee.

You will receive a letter from Council advising you of any additional requirements you will need to meet that have not been shown on your plans.

3. Premises inspection

Once you have received a copy of your assessed plans together with a letter of any additional requirements, you will need to contact Health Services to arrange for on-site inspections to check that the premises are being fit-out in accordance with the Standards.

Two visits are covered by the plans assessment service fee. Usually the first visit is when construction is at the half way mark and the other on completion of works, but before you are open to the public. **It is important that you arrange for both of these inspections as they will assist you in meeting all the requirements and make sure that you open without delay.**

During the final inspection an Environmental Health Officer will check that all of the specified requirements have been met. In the event that any requirements have not been met the premises may not be able to open. A further fee will be charged if additional visits are required or requested during the construction phase.

4. Food Safety Program

All new food businesses (Class 1 and Class 2) are required to have a Food Safety Program before registration can be granted.

Upon completion of works you will need to submit your Food Safety Program to Health Services. For further information refer to the 'Food Safety Programs' fact sheet. Health Services will review your Food Safety Program to make sure it is suitable for your business.

5. Food Safety Supervisor

Your business will also need a Food Safety Supervisor. You are required to provide Council with the name and qualifications of the Food Safety Supervisor when you submit your Food Safety Program.

6. Granting Registration

If your premises and your Food Safety Program both meet with the Standards and the Food Act 1984 then you will be able to apply for registration.

Before the premises can operate, you must apply to register by submitting a completed 'Application for Registration' form with the fee to Health Services. Once this has been processed you will receive a 'Certificate of Registration' (Food Act 1984) to operate a Food Business and a letter stating that you are now registered. Now you can open your business to the public!

Important note: Your premises must not be open to the public until approval is given by Health Services. Under the Food Act 1984 it is an offence to operate a food business without being registered and can lead to Council taking legal action.

Further Information

For any further information or help contact your Environmental Health Officer (EHO) at the City of Melbourne Health Services Branch on (03) 9658 8831/8815.