

FOOD SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE



In Australia, there are around 5.4 million cases of food-borne illness each year, leading to 2.1 million days of lost work.

For any business, this is a significant and potentially avoidable cost. The bacteria responsible for these illnesses need food, warmth, air and time to grow to numbers dangerous to human health. The following table outlines steps you can take to minimise the risk of food-borne illness if your workplace provides food to employees.

Situation	Hints and tips
Catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure perishable foods are not left at room temperature for more than two hours. ■ Refrigerate foods on delivery where possible or ask the caterer to deliver a short period of time before the food is required. ■ Avoid foods that contain raw eggs, i.e. some types of mayonnaise and aioli. These products have been associated with salmonella outbreaks. Check with the caterer about ingredients. ■ Use a reputable catering company. ■ Be considerate to those with severe allergies. Remember that only a small amount of allergen can cause a potentially life-threatening reaction.
Packed lunches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide chilled storage facilities for employees who bring their own lunch. Where refrigerators are not available (e.g. building sites, trucks), encourage employees to use ice blocks and chiller bags, or provide employees with these items. ■ Provide heating facilities for employees to heat food.



Situation	Hints and tips
Canteen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workplace canteens are food businesses under the NT Food Act 2013, and must comply with the Food Standards Code. ■ For further information, contact an Environmental Health Officer within the Department of Health
Fundraising events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For fundraisers and charity events, there are less stringent requirements. See the links below for further information. ■ When selling food for charity, it is important to be aware of allergens. Ask people bringing home-made food to provide a list of ingredients that can be displayed.
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide hand-washing facilities in or near kitchen and dining areas. ■ Provide facilities for washing utensils. ■ Include kitchen equipment in your routine maintenance schedule.
Further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Your local Environmental Health Officer may be a valuable resource, contact details can be found at https://nt.gov.au/industry/hospitality/food-safety-and-regulations/environmental-health-contact-details. Alternatively, phone 1800 095 646 or email envirohealth@nt.gov.au. ■ Food Standards Australia and New Zealand provides fact sheets, general information on fundraising and charity events, and the Food Standards Code. Visit www.foodstandards.gov.au ■ For further information on food allergies, visit www.allergyfacts.org.au ■ For information on food safety and regulations, visit https://nt.gov.au/industry/hospitality/food-safety-and-regulations