

Lakes Food Newsletter



Issue 10/September 11

Welcome.....

.....to a jam packed issue of the Lakes Food Newsletter. We have noticed that there seems to be some confusion between the Food Safety Bylaw and the voluntary implementation of Food Control Plans. Hopefully this newsletter will help clear things up! If you have questions about the Bylaw or Food Control Plan, please get in touch by calling 450 0300 or emailing enquiries@lakesenv.co.nz

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The QLDC Food Safety Bylaw

The Food Safety Bylaw is a local bylaw made pursuant to the Local Government Act and only applies to food premises in the Queenstown Lakes District. It regulates the grading of all premises that are registered locally, whether under a Food Control Plan (FCP) or under the Food Hygiene Regulations.

The draft Bylaw has now been out for public consultation and submissions have closed. We received a few submissions, which will be taken into consideration and, if required, there may be some minor changes to the draft Bylaw, before it goes before a full Council meeting to be ratified.

The Bylaw will most likely become effective from October 2011, so from the beginning of next month all food premises that are inspected or audited by us will be graded. During the 1-year lead-in period it will not be compulsory for premises to display the grade achieved. Please read the article on page 2 for some tips on how to get ready for grading.

Food Control Plans

National food legislation is currently being reviewed and the proposed new Food Bill is before Parliament. This new piece of legislation will require that all food premises have a Food Control Plan (FCP) in place. A FCP is a documented system which identifies and addresses all food safety risks in a food premises.

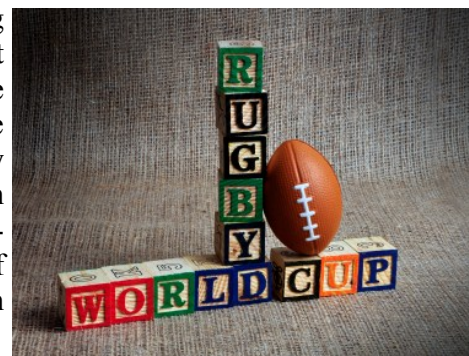
Unfortunately the whole process of getting the new legislation written and enacted is taking an extraordinary long time, but to get things rolling the current legislation was amended to allow premises to voluntarily implement FCPs. This is a national programme and is completely separate from our local Food Safety Bylaw. The New Zealand Food Safety Authority has developed template a FCP, for food premises in the food service sector (such as cafes and restaurants), which is available from us for free.

There are now have 78 premises in the District that have moved onto the new system and we are getting lots of positive feedback from them. Whilst there is some work involved in the initial set-up and tailoring of the FCP, once things are in place you can reap the benefits of having good systems in place. If you are interested in finding out more or if you already have a copy of the FCP and need some help please contact us!

Ready or not - it's game time

The World Cup countdown is nearing its end, and overseas visitors are have started to hit our shores. No one knows quite how many of these visitors are going to be heading our way, but we are likely to experience some increase in visitor numbers. World-wide focus will be on NZ over the next few weeks – let's make sure that the focus stays on the games and not on food related incidents.

During busy periods there may well be extra pressure on kitchen space. Make sure that you are always preparing and storing raw foods well separated from cooked or ready-to-eat foods and that you are thoroughly cleaning and sanitising work surfaces and equipment between uses. If you are cooking large batches of food in advance be sure to cool these quickly and reheat them thoroughly. Don't be rushed when cooking poultry, and if possible use a probe thermometer to check that it is always cooked to at least 75°C at the thickest part. Any extra staff brought in must be trained in all areas that they will be working in, but as a bare minimum all staff must know how and when to wash their hands, and to let you know if they have experienced any vomiting and diarrhoea. Sick food handlers are still one of the main sources of foodborne illness in New Zealand and one sick worker in the kitchen can pass on bacteria and viruses to hundreds of customers.



Ready, steady.....grading!

To achieve a B, or maybe even an A grade, you will need to be operating your premises to a higher than average standard and be taking control of food safety in your premises. We would expect you to have identified risks to food safety and to have implemented procedures that reduce the risk of food becoming contaminated.

In regards to **temperature control** this means that you will need to know at what temperature your hot and cold units are operating, by regularly checking, and hopefully recording, temperatures so that you can be certain that food is being kept hot/cold enough. We will also want to know how you are making sure that the risks associated with food being cooled down or re-heated are being addressed. Do you have a procedure that speeds up the cooling process for large batches of food? How do you know whether food is being heated to a sufficiently high temperature?

Looking at **food protection** we will expect to see an effective stock rotation system including date marking of readily perishable foods. You should have procedures for preventing cross-contamination – separation between cooked and raw foods at all times, suitable storage containers for all food, a rodent and insect control system etc.

As well as having a clean kitchen you must be using appropriate chemicals for **cleaning and sanitising**. A documented cleaning schedule will be able to demonstrate that staff know when and how all areas of the food premises need to be cleaned.

The Bylaw requires that all food handlers are trained commensurate to their roles. Supervisors must be trained in all aspects of food safety and must be able to train and supervise staff. We strongly recommend you implement a documented **training** programme showing how staff are trained and what aspects of food safety each food handler has been trained in.

When assessing **personal hygiene practices** the standard of hand washing facilities, as well as any procedures relating to hand washing, will be paramount. Other risks that must be identified and addressed include contamination of food via sick staff, staff clothing, cuts and sores, and so on.

The Food Control Plan (see overleaf) provides procedures and documentation for all the above aspects of food hygiene, so if you have already implemented an FCP and are following the procedures you are going to be likely to achieve a high score. If you are still thinking of moving onto the new system, now is a good time to get things rolling!



Labelling

A number of restaurants, cafes and takeaways seem to be branching out and are offering their produce for sale so people can enjoy them at home. Mueslis, relishes, chutneys, biscuits and confectionary are some of the types of product that are on offer for retail purchase. We would like to remind you that all packaged food has to be labelled as required by the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

The Code prescribes requirements for labelling in regards to storage conditions, shelf life, ingredients, allergen warnings, batch number and the producers contact details for trace back. Once customers get the food home they need to know how they should store it once opened, how long they can keep it for, what is in the food and how they can get in touch with you if there is something wrong with the food. For more information on labelling can refer to the NZFSA website at <http://www.foodsafety.govt.nz/industry/general/labelling-requirements/> or contact a Health Protection Officer at Southland District Health Board.

Hair control

A couple of months ago we wrote about the importance of wearing appropriate clothing in the kitchen. Clothing can be a source of contamination and it is important that clothing is clean and made of suitable material. A hat, hairnet or similar is required to prevent hair from falling onto work surfaces or



into food. We have recently noticed that food handlers are wearing beanies in the kitchen and in the summer caps are popular. Both of these contain the wearer's hair but it is important that they are only worn at work and not up the ski field and out on the town. Pieces of dirt or fluff, dog or cat hair, etc can easily become attached, especially to the sticky, woolly texture of beanies, and may then end up contaminating food in your kitchen.