

Food News

November 2008



Welcome to Food News, a quarterly bulletin produced by the City of Geraldton-Greenough to keep businesses informed on current food safety news and health requirements.

Have your say.

What are you interested in reading about?

Topics may include:

- Food Safety Training information
- New legislation updates
- Clean Slate Program and FoodSafe Program

Please let us know by contacting Environmental Health and Sustainability Services

The City of Geraldton-Greenough offices are located on

Cathedral Avenue -(08) 9956 6600

PO Box 101 Geraldton WA 6531

Email: council@cgg.wa.gov.au

Website: www.cgg.wa.gov.au

Food Business Licence Renewal

The new licence period for 2008/09 begins on the 1st January 2009. Renewal invoices for the new licence year are being sent out to all food businesses in the city.

Please ensure you check the details on the renewal invoice and return it to us with the required fee as soon as possible.

REMEMBER

- You must display a current licence visible to the public at all times you are open.
- It is an offence to operate an unlicensed food business, with penalties of up to \$75000.

Quick Quiz

What is the difference between cleaning and sanitizing?

Quick answer: Cleaning with a detergent will remove visible food waste and grease. Sanitizing is the application of heat or chemicals to reduce food poisoning bacteria. However, it will not kill all bacteria.

Food Sampling and Swabbing Surveys

Sampling of food from food premises is a legal requirement for the City. Food sampling is designed to ensure that all food being prepared and sold from food premises complies with the requirements of the Food Safety Standards.

In March 2008 the City participated in a regional sampling to check for the meat content in pies and to test for preservatives in raw meats. Random sampling of pies and raw meats were collected from manufacturers and sent for analysis. The results were all satisfactory.

In July 2008, 15 samples of fruit and vegetables were sampled for microbiological analysis as part of the Western Australian Food Monitoring Program. The fruit and vegetables were purchased from various supermarkets in the City and tested for the presence of disease causing bacteria to ensure they are safe to eat. This program was carried out to reemphasize the importance of washing fruit and vegetables before they are used. Satisfactory results were obtained from all the samples.



A random survey of the effectiveness of cleaning and sanitizing of work benches in food premises was done in September. Around half of the swabbing samples were unsatisfactory. Poor results showed high bacterial count. One result in particular was well below standard, there was faecal bacteria (E.coli) detected and this led to the closure of the business. The survey found that some premises did not apply both detergents and sanitisers, used dirty cleaning cloths and did not have adequate cleaning processes.

More sampling to be done in the new year so **BE CLEAN** and **BE FOODSAFE**.

Effective cleaning of your food premises

As a food business you have an important role to make sure your food is not only tasty but also safe. Safe food cannot be prepared in a dirty food premises.

Food spills, dirt, dust and grease all have the potential to contaminate food, and can attract insects and pests.

Customers also see the front of house as a reflection of what happens behind the kitchen door.

Effective cleaning is essential to get rid of bacteria that can cause food poisoning.

The City's Environmental Health Officers have identified common areas that are often missed and need regular attention. These include:

- the drip tray of the exhaust canopy;
- behind shelving in the cool room ;
- underneath the bottom shelf of the cool room;
- in grooves of refrigerator door seals;
- underneath cooking equipment;
- inside microwaves; and
- in between two pieces of equipment (if the equipment isn't on wheels they should be far enough apart to clean in between).



Cleaning tips

- Clean spills when they happen.
- Where possible air dry crockery and equipment.
- Make sure the surface is clean before applying sanitizer.
- Ensure cleaning products and equipment are stored separately away from food.
- Use sanitizers in accordance with the manufactures instructions.
- Ensure cleaning products and equipment are stored separately away from food.

It is strongly recommended that you have a documented cleaning schedule. It should show what to clean, how to clean, and who and how often it should be done.

Contact the City for an example cleaning schedule. Once you have one of your own, you can show it to your Environmental Health Officer to prove you are keeping the premises clean.

Remember to make sure your cleaning equipment is in good condition, kept clean and regularly sanitized. Dishcloths can spread harmful bacteria if not properly cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.

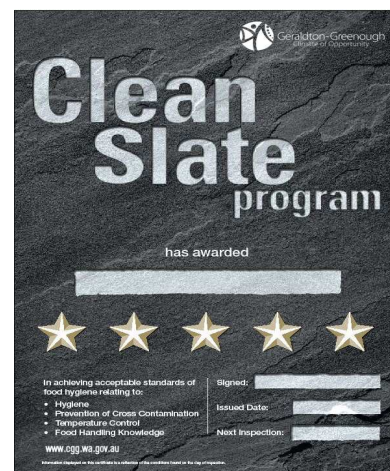
Effective cleaning is essential to running a successful food business.

Advice from your EHO

Sometimes it can be quite dark under the bottom shelf or oven and it seems clean. Place a camera on the floor and take a photo. You may be surprised by what the camera and flash picks up. A digital camera is best because the image can be viewed immediately.

Clean Slate Program in 2009

The City will be introducing a food standards system in 2009 similar to that used by hotels for local eateries to help ensure basic hygiene and cleanliness standards are maintained.



The system would mimic one pioneered in Melville City– which uses stars to rate a food outlet's hygiene, cross contamination and temperature control standards. The program would provide consumers with an easy to follow indication of a business's standards.