

# Displaying food

If you're a food business that displays food, it's important to protect it from contamination and keep it at the right temperature so it stays safe to eat.



SAFE FOOD AUSTRALIA  
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## What are the requirements?

Under Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements, food businesses need to make sure they display food in a safe and suitable way.

## Reduce the risk

- make sure potentially hazardous food is displayed at a safe temperature
- use cabinets or wind shields
- keep food away from open windows, doors, fans and insect sprays or zappers
- keep food out of reach of children
- protect food with food-grade cling wrap, bags, paper strips or containers
- separate ready-to-eat foods from raw foods
- avoid topping up dishes to prevent cross-contamination between batches
- use platters, containers and benches that are easy to clean and sanitise
- use signs to help customers use serving utensils
- keep unpackaged, ready-to-eat food (e.g. muffins) that is displayed on counters behind a barrier.

## Displaying hot food

**EXAMPLE:** A takeaway stall displays hot curries and rice using bain-maries. The food is kept at 45°C to stop the food from drying out too quickly.

This temperature is unsafe as it can allow harmful bacteria to grow in the food.

Ideally, the temperature should be raised to 60°C or hotter and checked regularly unless the stall holder can prove it is safe, e.g. by only displaying the food for a short period of time (using time as a control).

## Self-serve displays

You need to take extra care when displaying unpackaged food for self service (i.e. salad and sushi bars, smorgasbords, bakery displays).

You must provide separate serving utensils and barriers to protect food from people's hands, sneezes, coughs, etc as well as supervision so you can act quickly if someone contaminates it.

## Potentially hazardous food

Potentially hazardous food must be displayed in a way that prevents harmful microorganisms growing to unsafe levels or producing toxins. This means:

- food should be displayed at 5°C or below or 60°C or above
- frozen food on display must stay frozen hard.

If you are worried that food may lose quality at these temperatures you can use another temperature if you can show it is safe e.g. by using time as a control.

You need to have the right skills and knowledge to ensure the food on display remains safe to eat.

**TIP:** Keep records of the times and temperatures that food is displayed at to make sure your display equipment is working properly and temperatures are safe.

## Need more information?

*Safe Food Australia* is a guide to the food safety standards in Chapter 3 of the Food Standards Code. Food display is covered under Standard 3.2.2 clause 8. Using time as a control is explained in Appendix 2.

Copies of the guide, some translated fact sheets and other information is available at [www.foodstandards.gov.au/safefood](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/safefood) or by emailing [information@foodstandards.gov.au](mailto:information@foodstandards.gov.au).