

Contact us:

info@primesafe.vic.gov.au

(03)9685 7333

PrimeSafe eNews

Issue | 17 | September 2022



In this Issue

- ▶ [PrimeSafe Leadership Change](#)
- ▶ [Surveillance Programs and Audits](#)
- ▶ [Sulphur Dioxide Testing](#)
- ▶ [Seafood Contaminated with Blue Green Algae](#)
- ▶ [Licensee Management System](#)
- ▶ [Electronic Food Safety Programs and Monitoring](#)

PrimeSafe Leadership Change

PrimeSafe has a new Chief Executive Officer, Michael Coffey who commenced in the role in April 2022.

Michael has a 20-year career in leadership roles across safety and regulatory environments, and a commitment to engaging with and supporting industry sectors across Victoria. He has a strong record of growing high performing teams to deliver efficient and effective safety and regulatory outcomes which keep communities and consumers safe, and industry prosperous. Michael has experience that spans both the Victorian Public Service and the private sector having worked for three ASX 100 companies. Michael's most recent role was leading the regulatory approach for Hazardous Industries at WorkSafe Victoria. He coordinated the WorkSafe-led government taskforce including EPA, fire services, Victoria Police, and local councils to oversee the removal of waste chemical stockpiles in Epping, Campbellfield, and Craigieburn. Michael holds a Bachelor's degree in Science, Master of Arts and a Masters of Business Administration.

Surveillance Programs and Audits

PrimeSafe has developed a range of surveillance programs to assist its objective of ensuring that licensed facilities process meat and seafood in accordance with the requirements of the Meat Industry Act 1993, Seafood Safety Act 2003, Food Act 1984, Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code), Australian Standards and PrimeSafe licence conditions.

During COVID, most surveillance programs were postponed, and most site audits were conducted remotely. All PrimeSafe surveillance programs have been reinstated and audits are now conducted face to face. It is encouraged that personal protective equipment be used by businesses to protect employees as well as PrimeSafe staff and auditors visiting the site. For further COVID information relevant to meat and seafood businesses, please visit the PrimeSafe website which has direct links to specific information on the Victorian Department of Health website. Businesses that require remote audits due to COVID, can contact their Conformity Assessment Body or PrimeSafe regarding their audits. Businesses that have had their last audit done remotely, will need to do their next audit face to face.

Sulphur Dioxide Testing

PrimeSafe undertakes regular, random testing of fresh meat products to detect the use of sulphur dioxide. Under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, only sausage and sausage meat have a prescribed maximum level of sulphur dioxide. As no other fresh meat has a prescribed level, any use renders the product adulterated and unfit for human consumption and is a breach of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

PrimeSafe is committed to a policy of zero tolerance regarding the improper use of sulphur dioxide. Any licensee found in breach of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code for the use of sulphur dioxide is faced with the following sanctions:

- All products identified as containing preservatives beyond any prescribed level are condemned and disposed of under PrimeSafe supervision.
- A prohibition notice under the provisions of Section 74 of the Meat Industry Act 1993 is issued in the interests of public health, prohibiting the facility from operating and, therefore, precluding the sale and storage of meat at the facility.

The notice remains in until:

- The facility amends the food safety program to the satisfaction of PrimeSafe;
- It is demonstrated that all staff have an adequate understanding of safe food handling practice and the capacity to fully comply with the Victorian Standard for Hygienic Production of Meat at Retail Premises;
- The licensee attends a formal interview at the PrimeSafe office; and
- Provides a written submission to PrimeSafe confirming a commitment to the food safety program and a capacity to operate within that program.

Following revocation of the Section 74 prohibition notice, the facility will be subject to one audit a week for a minimum of four weeks. The licensee meets the costs of all audits.

While illegal sulphur dioxide use in fresh meat products has been steadily declining over many years, with usage now very low in Victoria, PrimeSafe did detect a licensed retail butcher shop illegally using sulphur dioxide in fresh meat products in August 2022. That business is now subjected to the above sanctions.

Seafood Contaminated with Blue Green Algae

A harmful blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) bloom has been occurring in the Gippsland Lakes since February 2022. The bloom has now spread into the ocean along the Ninety Mile Beach with movement being influenced by the weather and tidal system. This species of algae cannot survive in the ocean and is actively breaking down due to the saltwater. This bloom has gone on longer than expected and it is unknown how long the bloom will be in the area.

Toxins produced by harmful algal blooms can impact human and animal health. The species of algae causing the bloom is *Nodularia spumigena*, which produces the toxin nodularin. The toxin concentrates in shellfish, and the internal organs of fish. Any affected seafood should not be consumed. Toxin levels can remain elevated in seafood for several weeks to months after an algal bloom has disintegrated.

High levels of toxin have been detected in seafood caught within the Gippsland Lakes, and more recently in prawns, crabs and finfish caught off the coast of Lakes Entrance. A prohibition on harvesting out to 5 nautical miles remains in place. It is recommended as a precaution that the commercial harvesting of prawns, bugs and crabs cease in the vicinity outside the prohibited area until further notice.

The Victorian Department of Health, the Victorian Fisheries Authority and PrimeSafe continue to work together to manage potential public health risks for seafood from harmful algal blooms in the Gippsland Lakes and in the ocean waters outside of the lakes system where the bloom has spread. For more information please click [here](#).

Licensee Management System

Licensee Portal Access



PrimeSafe has moved on-line to make viewing current licenses, renewing licenses, applying for new licenses and editing existing details quicker and easier. If you have not done so already, please create an account and also request access to your existing PrimeSafe Licence/s via our online portal.

After you have made your portal access request, PrimeSafe will conduct the necessary security checks and then send confirmation of approval. On-line access may take a few days, however, once access is granted you will be able to view your licence/s.

For information about the PrimeSafe online portal please click [here](#) or contact us at info@primesafe.vic.gov.au for more information to assist you with the transition. If you already have portal access, please check all your details to ensure they are current, if any updates are required, please submit an amendment via the portal.

Licensee Portal Revamp and Renewals



PrimeSafe is currently revamping the existing licensee portal to enhance the look and feel and provide a one stop shop for all licensing activities. The first release of the updated portal was launched in April/May 2022 in time for the June renewal period with further upgrades to be released in September 2022. Amongst the exciting new features are the ability to update Company and Personal information, renew all registrations/licences in one go, one single BPAY reference for multiple MTV licence renewals and introducing Bpay as a payment option for new licence applications.

We have also automated our renewal communications and have made them more personalised and have targeted these to the phase the license is at in the renewal journey.

Electronic Food Safety Programs and Monitoring

A Food Safety Program is a document that describes how a food business will control food safety hazards by assessing each of the steps of food production. Each of the steps must be assessed for risk and have documented procedures to manage the critical hazards. Food Safety programs can be kept as an electronic copy; however, it must meet all the requirements of the Australian Standards for meat facilities and the Food Standards Code Australia New Zealand for seafood businesses.

Electronic Food Safety Program

In addition to an electronic food safety program, if critical control points (CCP) and control points (CP) are also monitored electronically then the following requirements must be met:

1. Record of the date and time when the monitoring occurred
2. An explanation when CCPs or CPs were no longer under control
3. What the electronic monitoring was of e.g., temperature of a cool room or of a product
4. Its inclusion in the food safety program and a procedure of how it will be installed, downloaded, and checked. A monitoring backup system if the electronic monitoring and recording fails.
5. Evidence that the food safety data has been checked, dated, and signed.
6. Electronic records are to be kept for the period required by the applicable Standard.

Free Food Safety Program



PrimeSafe offers free Food Safety Programs to Retail Meat and Seafood businesses on request. Other free food safety programs are booklets that can be obtained by licence holders of a meat transport vehicle, a game harvest vehicle, or a wildcatch seafood business.

Food safety programs can also be tailored to include more complex processing activities and these types of programs can be created under a fee for service arrangement with PrimeSafe.

To obtain a free PrimeSafe Food Safety Program or for more information, contact PrimeSafe on (03) 9685 7333 or info@primesafe.vic.gov.au

This message and any attachments may contain information that is confidential, legally privileged and/or copyright. If you are not the intended recipient, the use, disclosure, distribution or reliance on the information contained in this email is unauthorised. You should only retransmit or distribute the information if you are authorised to do so. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify PrimeSafe by return e-mail and destroy any copies printed or held on any computer. PrimeSafe does not warrant that this e-mail or any attachments are free of viruses.

QUICK LINKS

[LICENCE PORTAL](#)

[LICENCING](#)

[STANDARDS
& GUIDELINES](#)

[INFORMATION
& SUPPORT](#)



Copyright © PrimeSafe. All Rights Reserved.

ABN 39 877 327 401

150 Albert Road, South Melbourne VIC 3205

You are receiving this email because you are a PrimeSafe customer or an eNews Subscriber.

Please [click here to unsubscribe](#)

