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Reducing the Compliance Burden for Victorian Businesses

PrimeSafe is streamlining compliance requirements to ease the regulatory burden for meat, seafood, and pet meat businesses. There are two stages to the reduction strategy:

Stage 1- Food Safety Programs

- Some businesses will no longer need to maintain a Food Safety Program
- The reduced requirements do not apply to all businesses universally

Stage 2- Reduced Audits

- PrimeSafe is introducing a revised audit schedule for compliant businesses
- Merging of some licence types
- Reduced licence conditions

Stage 1:

Small retail facilities that handle meat, seafood and pet food will no longer be required to conduct internal audits or management reviews as part of their PrimeSafe licensing requirements. This change is only applicable to small retail facilities that includes Retail Butcher Shops (T licences), Seafood Retailers (R licences) and Pet Food Establishments (PF) that have less than 20 workers.

Wildcatch seafood businesses that harvest seafood other than bivalve shellfish will no longer be required to maintain a food safety program, however, they will still be required to monitor the temperature of seafood that is no longer live to a chilled temperature of no greater than 5° C and all frozen seafood must remain frozen. Low risk Wildcatch seafood businesses will also still be subject to periodical vessel inspections to confirm compliance with the Food Standards Code. A

Wildcatch seafood business harvesting bivalve shellfish will still be required to maintain a compliant Food Safety Program.

Meat Transport Vehicles (MTVs) will no longer require a Food Safety Program as part of PrimeSafe licensing requirements and monitoring records will no longer need to be presented for review at annual vehicle inspections. Temperature of meat and seafood must still be monitored during transport so that chilled products have a temperature of no greater than 5°C and frozen products remain frozen during transportation. Licensees must ensure that vehicles continue to meet construction requirements for MTVs which will continue to be assessed at vehicle inspections.

Stage 2:

Reduced Audits

Compliance rates at third party audits has steadily increased up to 97% demonstrating that most businesses are “doing the right thing” and complying with Standards and licensing requirements. In recognition of this, PrimeSafe can reduce the number of audits for most licence types. Table 1 indicates the current and new audit frequencies that will automatically apply to each licensed facility following their final audit conducted in the current schedule after 1 July 2023.

Table 1

LICENCE CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	
	Current	New
Domestic Abattoirs	4 per year	2 per year
Pet meat processor (knackery)	4 per year	2 per year
Further meat processor (smallgoods)	4 per year	2 per year
Game meat processor	4 per year	2 per year
Retail butcher shop (smallgoods)	4 per year	2 per year
Seafood business (smallgoods)	4 per year	2 per year
Poultry processor	2 per year	2 per year
Further meat processor (no smallgoods)	2 per year	annually
Prime tallow processor	2 per year	annually
Inedible renderer	2 per year	annually
Retail butcher shops (no smallgoods)	2 per year	annually
Seafood business (processing meat)	2 per year	annually
Pet food establishment	2 per year	annually
Meat processor (packaged meat only)	annually	*Exempt
Seafood business	annually	annually
Harvest vehicle	annually	annually
Field Depot	annually	annually
Aquaculture (bivalve shellfish)	annually	**2 per year
Aquaculture	annually	annually
Wildcatch (bivalve shellfish)	annually	**2 per year
Wildcatch (non-bivalve shellfish)	every 2 or 3 years	every 3 years
Meat Transport Vehicles	annually	annually
* The handling, storage and transportation of packaged meat is exempt from PrimeSafe licensing as from 1 January 2023, following the passing of Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.		
**Bivalve shellfish harvesting seafood businesses are high-risk and an increase to a biannual		

audit frequency is therefore being applied to these licence type. This is also consistent with the National approach to these activities.

Merging of licences

As of 1 July 2023, PrimeSafe will permit holders of an Aquaculture licence who also hold a licence to operate a Seafood Processing Facility to merge their **Aquaculture licence with their Seafood Processing Facility licence** and operate under the one licence. PrimeSafe will no longer require two separate audits for aquaculture and seafood processing and there will be only one audit required under the Seafood Processing Facility licence. The aquaculture requirements previously audited by PrimeSafe will be covered by a third-party Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) during a seafood processing facility audit.

Reduced licence conditions

PrimeSafe has undertaken a review of existing licence conditions for each licence category for all meat processing facilities and seafood businesses in the PrimeSafe system. This review has resulted in a reduced number of licence conditions for each category which refined the conditions and produced far more user friendly, contemporary, and easy to understand sets of licence conditions. The new licence conditions will be applicable on renewing licenses for the next licence period and for all new licenses issued effective immediately.

Additional Verification Activities

With reduced food safety monitoring requirements as described above, unannounced inspection programs are being implemented to ensure that businesses are still focussed on food safety. During these inspections PrimeSafe officers may assess general hygiene and sanitation of a facility, review Process Hygiene Criteria (PHC) and Critical Control Points (CCPs). There will be no cost to licensees for conducting these inspections however enforcement action will be taken as per the PrimeSafe Compliance and Enforcement Policy where serious non-compliance is identified at these inspections. A copy of this policy can be viewed via the PrimeSafe website [click here](#)

Changes to Australian Standards AS 4696

Post-mortem inspection and disposition of meat in Australia is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Standard for Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (2023). Over the last 50 years or so, there has been continual improvement in animal health and hygiene practices, but review and amendment of the Australian Meat Standard has not been undertaken, particularly revision of the sections that are relevant to post-mortem inspection. AS 4696 was last reviewed in 2007 but Schedules 2 and 3 were not revised in line with risk-based principles.

Review and amendment of the Australian Meat Standards is the responsibility of the Australian Meat Regulators Group (AMRG), which prior to 2016 was known as the Meat Industry Working Group of the Implementation Sub-committee for Food Regulation. The AMRG comprises representatives from each state/territory food regulatory agency, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

The revised Schedules 2 and 3 has been published in the new AS 4696:2023 Standard which is available from the Standards Australia website [click here](#)

MTV Renewals and Inspections

Renewals

The following licence categories are required to be renewed before **30 June 2023**:

- Meat Transport Vehicle
- Abattoir
- Further Meat Processing Facility
- Poultry Processing Facility
- Prime Tallow Processing Facility
- Inedible Rendering Facility
- Pet Meat Processing Facility
- Pet Food Establishment

If you operate any of these PrimeSafe licensed businesses, you need to renew your licence/s before **30 June 2023**.

Renewal reminders were sent out via email and text prior on **20 April 2023** for MTV's and on **25 May 2023** for other license categories.

To complete the renewal, you must:

1. Check and complete the renewal form

Renewal Forms were sent to licensees who do not have licensee portal access. You can complete the paper form and send it to PrimeSafe.

For Licensees that have access to the portal, please complete your renewal online through the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal. Guides for how to use the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal are available [here](#).

2. Pay the licence fee

If you are using the paper form, follow the payment instructions on the back of the renewal form. If you use the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal, you can pay with a credit card or BPAY. Follow the instructions provided in the portal.

MTV Renewals and Inspections 2023

Meat Transport Vehicles (MTV) licensees are encouraged to renew their licence by **26 May 2023** to allow time for PrimeSafe to mail out the new MTV labels that are required to be placed on the vehicles by **30 June 2023**.

All MTVs and fleets must be inspected as part of the licence renewal. For further information regarding construction inspections, [click here](#)

Information on the approved locations for Meat Transport Vehicle Inspection Locations 2023 has been published on the website, [click here](#)

***Note:** Inspections will also be conducted at the PrimeSafe office in South Melbourne during the 2023 renewal period. We will be taking bookings for inspection slots via the licensee portal during the online renewal process. [click here](#)

On Site inspections commenced from **April 20, 2023**. Please note there could be construction affecting access to the service road next to the PrimeSafe office, larger vehicles are encouraged to

source alternative inspection sites.

If you haven't received your renewal by **June 2023**, please contact the PrimeSafe office on info@primesafe.vic.gov.au or 03 9685 7333.

QUICK LINKS

[LICENSEE PORTAL](#)

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