



With the festive season approaching, this edition of PrimeSafe eNews provides guidance on keeping food safe by ensuring temperature control. Food is processed to kill harmful bacteria and provide shelf life, and is critical to ensuring its continued safety throughout the whole food supply chain. Handling food after processing affects its safety and shelf life and can cause food borne illness, if not done properly.

PrimeSafe's new communication activities including PrimeSafe eNews and licensee forums have been well received, with positive feedback about the information being provided. Audits are a popular topic and in order to ensure consistency, any questions about an audit should be raised with the auditor. If you have queries after a discussion with the auditor, please contact the PrimeSafe Information and Support Team at info@primesafe.vic.gov.au or (03) 9685 7333.

I wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Brendan Tatham
PrimeSafe CEO

Temperature as a risk factor in food borne illnesses

Temperature and time are the two most important factors in the prevention of food borne illness. As summer approaches, potentially hazardous foods such as meat, poultry and seafood should be kept at 5°C or colder or at 60°C or hotter. The 'danger zone' is the temperature range between 5°C and 60°C, where microorganisms can grow and multiply very quickly, causing food to become unsafe.

Cooking and cooling potentially hazardous foods

The temperature and time requirements for cooking and cooling potentially hazardous foods such as meat and seafood are important for food safety and the shelf life of the food. The Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS4696:2007) states that heat treatment of meat products must be 65°C for at least 10 minutes. The Standard also states that cured meat products must be cooled from 52°C to 12°C within 7.5 hours and further reduced to 5°C within 24 hours of completion of cooking. Uncured meat products must be cooled from 52°C to 12°C within 6 hours and reduced to 5°C within 24 hours of completion of cooking. Meat businesses must comply with these requirements unless a validated alternative technique has been approved by PrimeSafe. For more information, contact the PrimeSafe Information and Support Team at on info@primesafe.vic.gov.au or (03) 9685 7333.

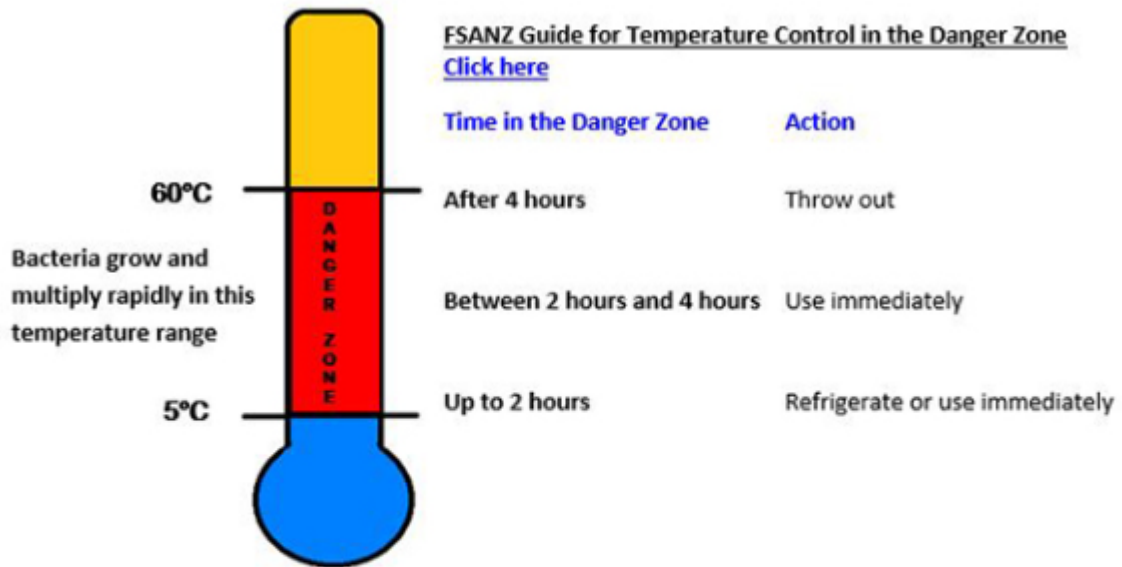
Construction requirements for cooling

All meat and seafood products must be stored and displayed at 5°C or colder. Coolrooms, refrigerators and display cabinets must be able to maintain temperature and cope with the demand of keeping all the products stored inside them cold. Here are some tips for maintaining the correct temperature:

- Ensure door seals are not damaged and doors close properly.
- Keep the doors closed as much as possible.
- Segregate warm stock that is cooling from cold stock that is being stored.
- Ensure the defrost cycle works and there is no ice accumulation on the refrigeration unit.
- Ensure adequate circulation of air to the extreme parts of the room.
- Prevent close and high stacking of products and allow adequate circulation of cold air between products.
- Prevent condensation dripping over product, especially open product.
- Have a contingency plan in case of power or mechanical failure.

The FSANZ 2-hour–4-hour guide

Food safety standards specify that potentially hazardous foods must be stored, displayed and transported at safe temperatures and, where possible, prepared at safe temperatures. Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) has compiled a guidance document for temperature control of potentially hazardous foods and the duration that they can be left unrefrigerated.



When is food not safe to sell or eat?

If received/purchased meat, poultry or seafood has a different appearance, odour and texture than normal, then its safety must be confirmed before selling it. Suppliers and sellers have equal responsibility to ensure safe products enter the food chain. When a product breaches food safety standards (not quality standards), it has the potential to cause illness and must be withdrawn or recalled to prevent further harm to consumers.

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Ready-to-eat (RTE) processed or cooked food (cold roasts, salamis, hams, oysters and prawns) that will not be heated before consumption are within the danger zone must be discarded if they breach the temperature and time requirements provided in the FSANZ guidance document. Some salami products may be shelf-stable and able to be stored at ambient temperature.

If RTE foods are to be re-processed, then sufficient heat must be applied to them and their safety confirmed by microbiological testing of pathogens (harmful bacteria) before they are sold or consumed.



Food withdrawals and recalls

Food that is no longer safe must be recalled from sale. Recalls can happen at the trade or consumer level.

A **trade recall** occurs when food has not been sold directly to consumers so it does not pose an immediate public health risk. It involves recovering the product from distribution centres and wholesalers.

A **consumer recall** occurs when food that has already been sold to consumers is found to be unsafe and there is an immediate public health risk. This recall type is the most extensive and food must be recovered from all points within the production and distribution chain. Information from food businesses and regulators is provided to FSANZ about the recall of unsafe foods. Recalls are usually voluntary and in the best interests of the food business and consumer. If the food business does not carry out a recall, then a mandatory recall may be implemented by Government food safety regulators.

The following are common reasons why food is considered unsafe and recalled:

- Microbial (contaminated with pathogenic organisms such as bacteria, viruses or parasites)
- Labelling (non compliant labels; incorrect ingredients or date marking)
- Foreign matter (contamination with material such as glass, metal or plastic)
- Chemical/other contaminants (contaminated with cleaning products, pesticides)
- Undeclared allergens (contamination with allergenic substances as described in the FSANZ Code)
- Biotxin (biological toxins such as histamine and paralytic shellfish toxin)

Withdrawal of food from sale means that there is no risk to public health or safety and product has a quality issue rather than a food safety concern.

All food manufacturers, importers and wholesale suppliers must have a documented food recall plan in accordance with Clause 12 of [FSANZ Code, Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements](#).

Information and support services

PrimeSafe's Information and Support Team is available to answer your questions and explain how to access reliable information that meets standards. Please contact us by phone on (03) 9685 7333 or [email](#).

Forum

The Listeria Forum that was to be held in Bendigo on 28 November 2017 has been deferred after feedback from licensees requesting another Listeria Forum in Melbourne. This forum is being planned for March 2018, with the date and location to be confirmed.

PrimeNotes

With the Shelf Life and Labelling PrimeNote under review, a final draft of the document has been posted on the [PrimeSafe website](#). Feedback on this draft can be submitted to info@primesafe.vic.gov.au until 31 December 2017, after which the PrimeNote will be finalised.

Do you have your 2018 PrimeSafe licence renewal?

PrimeSafe is mailing renewal notices to Retail Butcher Shop and Seafood Processor licensees this month (November).

The following licence category renewals are being sent:

- Retail Butcher Shop
- Seafood Wholesaler Category A and B
- Seafood Processor Category A and B
- Seafood Further Processor Category A and B
- Seafood Retailer including vehicle/boat.

To remain licensed by PrimeSafe to operate in 2018, existing licensees will need to renew their licences before 31 December 2017. To complete the renewal, **licensees must complete, sign and return the renewal form to PrimeSafe and pay the renewal fee.**

Licensees can pay via BPay, cheque or money order. Cash and credit card payments are only accepted at the PrimeSafe office at 150 Albert Road, South Melbourne. Renewal fees cannot be paid online via the PrimeSafe website.

If you are currently in one of the above licence categories and don't receive your renewal by early December, please contact the PrimeSafe office via info@primesafe.vic.gov.au or 03 9685 7333.

Retail butcher shops processing smallgoods will be charged an increased renewal fee from 2019. This increase will not apply for the 2018 renewal.



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