POLICY/PROCEDURE

Food Sampling Procedure

1 Purpose

This procedure describes the process of conducting food sample program in Hindmarsh Shire.

2 Scope

The procedure covers the food premises which are registered with Hindmarsh Shire Council under the *Food Act 1984*.

3 Definitions

Council means Hindmarsh Shire Council

AO means Authorised Officer

Act means *Food Act 1984*

4 Responsibility

Environmental Health Officer

5 Policy / Procedure

5.1 Decide what food is to be sampled, which should be based on local Councils food sampling program.

5.2 Arrange with the Public Analyst for receipt of the samples/s clarifying any issues with them at this time including confirming what the sample is to be examined for i.e. micro, chemical, biological or physical contamination

5.3 Ensure appropriate (if necessary sterilised) equipment is available such as jars, chopping boards, utensils etc. and sufficient pre-frozen ice packs.

5.4 Pre-cool the cool box/esky by placing ice bricks in the esky and taking a temperature to ensure it is 5 degrees Celsius or below.

5.5 Gather the following items:

- Food Microbiological Sample bags – various sizes if available
- Sample containers – for liquid samples (including water and juice)
- Swabs
- Approved Authorised Officer Sampling tape
- Probe thermometer and alcohol swabs
- Ice bricks / sheets
- Insulated containers
- Disposable gloves
- List of required sample quantities from analyst
- Analyst contact details
- Money / receipt book
- Camera
- Sampling forms

5.6 On arrival at the premises:

- Introduce yourself by showing your official Identification card;
- State the purpose of your visit; and
- Explain why the samples are being taken i.e. routine sampling or investigational sampling.

5.7 Procuring the samples

The technique of actually procuring the sample will vary depending on the circumstances and the nature of the food that is to be sampled. If in any doubt as to which method to use contact your analyst for the appropriate approach.

5.8 Collection of samples

- Sample bags or containers used to collect samples must be clean, sterile, dry and leak-proof;
- To prevent physical contamination of the food sample it is important to undertake thorough hand-washing prior to handling samples. Disposable gloves or clean / sanitised utensils (tongs or spoons) are recommended to transfer food to sampling containers without causing contamination;
- To avoid physical contamination, the food sample must not have direct contact with any person's hands (food handlers or AO's), unclean benches or unclean equipment;
- It may be necessary to take the temperature of the sampled food product to demonstrate compliance with temperature requirements. If the core temperature of a potentially hazardous food product is required, it is important that the probe thermometer is thoroughly clean and sanitised prior to use; (see monitoring of food temperature procedure)
- Samples must be adequately sealed in the sample containers to prevent spoilage or contamination from occurring;
- Swab samples are recommended to be taken over a 10cm by 10cm area if possible. Analysis of a swab sample is undertaken based on this size area. If the sample swab size is smaller than the recommended 10cm by 10cm it is pertinent that the area size

swabbed is outlined on the sampling form to advise the analyst. Outlining the sample size obtained using the swab will provide more accurate sample results; (see Environmental Swab sampling of a Food Premises Procedure)

- All samples need to be appropriately labelled including the sample number, sample description (for example, meat pie or chicken fillet) as well as the date and time that the sample was collected. It is prudent to include additional information for the analyst where relevant (for example, when the sample has been collected as part of a regional state-wide sampling program or a complaint);
- Ensure the sampling label is protected from environmental exposure (for example, damp / wet surfaces (such as ice-sheets) to avoid identification issues when samples arrive at the analyst;
- If the food is to be sampled as a customer, then the AO should permit the food handlers to serve them as if they were a normal customer ensuring they have over 200g of the food. Serving it in whatever packaging they use, using their own equipment. The procedure with regards to labelling and sealing the food should then be carried out.

5.9 Temperature control of potentially hazardous foods

- Potentially hazardous foods obtained for sampling must be kept under temperature control – maintained below 5ºC (when storing or transporting to the analyst) to minimise bacterial growth;
- Samples can be refrigerated if taken at a time when there is a delay between the collection of the sample and transportation to the analyst (collection of a potentially hazardous food sample at the weekend, on a public holiday or an evening sampling session);
- Samples of potentially hazardous foods requiring temperature control should be sent to the analyst within 24 hours of collection. If these samples cannot be sent to the analyst within this time constraint it is highly recommended that the analyst be contacted. The analyst should be able to provide additional information as to the storage of the sample (for example, freezing the food sample in certain circumstances) or whether the integrity of the sample has been compromised and analysis will not provide reliable results and therefore re-sampling is required;
- It is important to monitor the temperature of the refrigeration unit to ensure that the food sample has been maintained under temperature control during storage (chain of custody requirements);
- To maintain potentially hazardous food samples under temperature control it is recommended that ice-sheets are placed on the bottom of the insulated container with food samples placed evenly on the ice-sheets. Additional ice-sheets are to be placed on top of the food samples.

5.10 Completion of sampling form:

- Council name;
- Premise registration number;
- Date and time of sample collection;
- Whether the food sample is pre-packaged or un-packaged at the time of collection;

- Temperature of the food when sampled (for example, frozen, ambient or stored hot - 60ºC+);
- Testing purpose – routine monitoring, complaint, regional sampling or state-wide sampling;
- Testing required – microbiological, chemical, physical, labelling or presence of allergens;
- Sample descriptors:
- Ready-to-eat /composite foods – for example, a cooked pizza containing meat, herbs / spices, dairy and vegetables; or
- Beverages – fruit / vegetable juice or formulated caffeine drinks.
- Name of the Environmental Health Officer submitting the sample – including a contact telephone number;
- Seller / manufacturer name and address – if different from where food sample was obtained;
- Food description –may assist in microbiological analysis of the sample (for example, meat pie – reheated); and
- Major ingredients – may assist with determining microbiological analysis of the sample.

5.11 Results and Follow up:

- Results may indicate that the sample obtained was satisfactory, marginal or unsatisfactory.
- Satisfactory result – for example, 'satisfactory with respect to FSANZ guidelines for the microbiological analysis of ready-to-eat foods'.
- Marginal result – for example, 'the above standard plate count (Total Viable Count 10,000 coliform forming units/gram) is marginal with respect to FSANZ guidelines for the microbiological analysis of ready-to-eat foods'.
- Unsatisfactory result – for example, 'the high standard plate count of this swab sample indicates ineffective cleaning or sanitation. In this respect the sample does not comply with Section 20 of Standard 3.2.2 of the Food Standards Code'.

5.12 Follow up with the proprietor should be performed in the following manner:

- Satisfactory results – a telephone call or letter to the proprietor outlining that the sample results are satisfactory;
- Marginal results – may need to discuss with the proprietor / food safety supervisor / person in charge the nature of the results and procedures that may be implemented to improve results:
- Training / monitoring of staff – hand-washing, safe food handling practices, temperature controls.
- Review of cooking procedures / process temperature logs; and
- Review of cleaning and sanitising of food contact surfaces.
- Unsatisfactory results – visit to the food premise to discuss results with proprietor / food safety supervisor / person in charge:
- Training / monitoring of staff – hand-washing, safe food handling practices, temperature controls;
- Review of cooking procedures / process temperature logs;
- Review of cleaning and sanitising of food contact surfaces; and

- Organising a re-sample of the food that returned an unsatisfactory result.

6 References

Related documents	Legislation
Food Safety Management Policy Assessment of Food Premises Procedure	*Food Act 1984*

7 Document Control

Food Sampling Procedure			**Policy Category**	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
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