



Licence Renewals

The annual licence renewal period has come around again. You should now have received correspondence from Council with a letter explaining the adopted new fee structure, an invoice for payment of your annual licence fees and a compulsory renewal form to be completed and returned to Council.

Payment of fees and submission of the renewal form are due by 30 June 2011.

Payments can be made either using BPAY with details on the invoice, cheque in post or in person at a Council office.

You may have noticed there is an increase in fees this year. The fees adopted are as follows:

Low Risk Premises	\$350
Medium Risk Premises	\$425
High Risk Premises	\$500

These fees have been adopted by Council to ensure full cost recovery for the licensing and annual inspection program undertaken by Council Environmental Health Officers.

A further reminder letter will be sent in June for those businesses who have not yet renewed their licence.

DID YOU KNOW?

A bad batch of eggs is all it took for a home cook to be hit with a legal bill of more than \$20,000 and a place on the NSW Food Authority's name-and-shame list for a case of mass food poisoning, after more than 50 people fell ill with salmonella poisoning at a barbecue.

More than 5 million Australians are diagnosed with food poisoning each year, according to the NSW Food Authority.

FOOD MATTERS

Rice is a Potentially Hazardous Food

Few people realise that cooked rice can be responsible for their foodborne illness. Some food producers prepare large quantities of rice a day ahead of use and leave it to cool slowly at room temperature, before heating and serving the next day. Such temperature abuse allows pathogenic bacteria to grow, some of which produce toxins.

What can go wrong?

Uncooked rice frequently contains bacteria called *Bacillus cereus*. These bacteria can form protective spores that survive the cooking process. If cooled slowly, these spores can germinate, grow and produce a toxin. Reheating rice before serving will not inactivate the toxin or kill all the bacterial cells, so the rice may not be safe. If you consume cooked rice that is contaminated with the toxin you are likely to experience symptoms of nausea and vomiting within 1 to 6 hours. The illness is short lived with recovery within 12-24 hours.

contaminated?

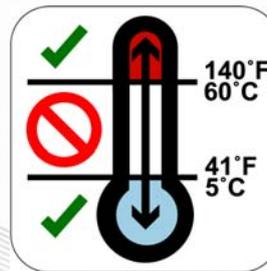
There is no way of telling that cooked rice is contaminated. Cooked rice that contains toxin produced by *Bacillus cereus* will not look, taste or smell off or any different to normal rice.

What can I do to protect the customer?

To ensure that cooked rice is safe for eating, appropriate controls are needed to reduce the risk of illness.

- If rice has to be cooked in advance, do not cook too much at one time as large amounts take too long to cool.
- Either, keep cooked rice hot (>60°C) or cool rice quickly. Rice will cool more quickly if removed from the hot container and divided into clean shallow containers (<10cm deep) that are kept separate, not stacked. Alternatively, cool in a clean colander under cold running water.

- Cover cooked rice and store in a refrigerator (<5°C).
- Use a stock rotation system to ensure that the oldest rice is used first ("first in, first out" rule).



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How can I tell if product is



**I'M ALERT
ARE YOU ALERT?**

Food businesses are encouraged to embrace the opportunity to develop essential skills and knowledge in food safety by jumping online and taking part in Gladstone Regional Council's new free training tool I'M ALERT. Produced by Environmental Health Australia, I'M ALERT allows participants to select up to 24 different topics to learn more about safe food handling practices. A training acknowledgement form can also be printed upon completion, which can be kept as part of businesses staff records. For more information, visit www.gladstone.imalert.com.au or contact Council's Environmental Health Section on (07) 4976 6996.



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Food Handling - Skills & Knowledge

Food businesses must ensure that persons undertaking or supervising food handling operations have the relevant skills in food safety and food hygiene matters as well as the knowledge in food safety and food hygiene matters.

Such skills and knowledge must be appropriate for the work activities of the person involved in the food business. That is, a kitchen hand will be required to possess a different level of skills and knowledge than a head cook or a cleaner.

For example:

- ⇒ Knowledge required in food safety is a food handler must be aware of the potential for cross contamination between raw foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- ⇒ Skills required in food safety is food handlers dealing with potentially hazardous food must be able to accurately

check the temperature using the appropriate thermometer.

- ⇒ Knowledge required in food hygiene is that the food handler must be aware of the potential for contamination if they were to use unclean hands when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- ⇒ Skills required in food hygiene are that the food handler must be able to adequately wash their hands.

There are a variety of ways staff can obtain the required skills and knowledge, including:

- * "in house" training by other staff
- * providing staff with accurate food safety and food hygiene information or them to read, DVDs, workbooks, I'M ALERT

- * operating rules that set out the responsibilities of food handlers
- * sending staff to food safety courses run by reputable organizations
- * hiring a qualified food safety consultant to run a course for the staff of the business
- * recruiting staff with formal industry-based training qualifications

The requirement for skills and knowledge is to ensure that safe and suitable food is produced from your business.

