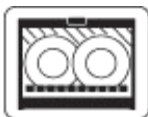




## FOOD-GRADE CONTAINERS

When storing food in vermin proof containers, it is important to utilise food-grade containers for storing food items as these offer the best protection against contamination. A food grade container is one that will not transfer non-food chemicals into the food and contains no chemicals which would be hazardous to human health. Most containers will outline on the label whether or not it is food-grade. If no such indication is made on the label or you are unsure whether or not the container is food-grade, either contact the manufacturer or assume the container is not food-grade. Some containers may make use of the following symbols to indicate the containers suitability:



Dish-washer safe



Freezer safe



Microwave safe



Hygiene storage

# Food Matters

## *Stock Management*

This may be seen as a basic issue, however it is one that can often be neglected. It is important that all food businesses have efficient stock management programs in place.

The following points outline some basic tips in stock management:

- "First in, first out". In other words, ensure that older stock is used before any new stock.
- Regularly check **Use By** and **Best Before** Dates. Ensure that items with expired use by dates are discarded or separated from other stock for disposal. Food that must not be consumed after a certain date for health and safety reasons will be marked with a 'Use By' date. Foods labelled 'Use By' cannot be sold after the date has expired. A 'Best Before' date is used for shelf stable foods, dry goods such as biscuits and confectionery, frozen foods, most raw foods that will be cooked before being eaten (eg. meat, chicken, fish) or foods that will noticeably spoil before becoming a safety issue.
- Follow manufacturer's directions on the label of the food item. For example, some labels indicates to "refrigerate after opening". The food item must be refrigerated as soon as it is opened or the seal is broken.
- Construct a register of all suppliers used by the food business and try to work with the same suppliers where possible. Ensure that all stock received is checked for damage, etc as once the items have been signed for, the food business is responsible for those items.
- Ensure that raw items are always stored on a low shelf in the cold room and cooked items/other items on a higher shelf. This will ensure that raw food does not contaminate cooked/ready to eat foods (i.e. raw meat dripping blood onto cooked foods).
- Ensure all items in cold rooms, dry store etc are stored off the ground in order to facilitate cleaning. If you find you have to store a lot of items on the ground (i.e. drink cartons, etc) this is a good indication that you either need to install more shelving or order stock in smaller amounts.

(Whitsunday Regional Council, Winter 2009)

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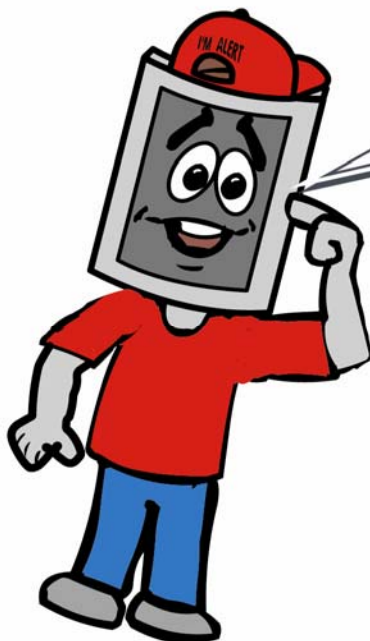




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**I'M ALERT**  
**ARE YOU ALERT?**

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 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](http://www.gladstone.imalert.com.au) or contact Council's Environmental Health Section on (07) 4976 6996.

## Back to Work or School

Approximately 8% of workers who take a packed lunch make no attempt to keep their food cool, and 20% of those with children who take a packed lunch don't provide their children with a frozen drink/ice brick.

According to the Food Safety Councils' Chairman, Dr Michael Eyles, this can be a major food poisoning risk as up to 79% of adult Australian workers say they take a packed lunch and almost all of households with children say their children have a packed lunch.

Food poisoning bacteria can grow quickly during hot weather and in healthier foods, such as salad and cold meat. The risk of food poisoning can be reduced simply by packing a frozen juice box, water bottle or commercial ice pack with the lunch. Place the perishable items such as cheese and sandwiches between the frozen items and leave food refrigerated until just before you leave home.

Children's lunchboxes that are kept inside a school bag will keep cooler longer especially if the bag is kept away from heat sources such as direct sunlight. There is no need to refrigerate school lunches if they are stored with a frozen drink. Adults should store their lunches in a workplace fridge or cooler bag or esky.

