



PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS: TRAIN YOUR STAFF NOW

One of the most common questions I am asked is "Do my staff have to have a food handling certificate?" From a legislative point of view, there is no regulation that states staff must attend a formal food safety training course. The FSANZ Food Standards Code (3.2.2 Div. 2, Section 3) states:

A food business must ensure that persons undertaking or supervising food handling operations have:

- (a) Skills in food safety and food hygiene matters; and
- (b) Knowledge of food safety and food hygiene matters, commensurate with their work activities.

It does not state that they must attend a food handling course. In Victoria, it is a legislative requirement that each food premises must have one person that has obtained a recognised "Statement of Attainment" to be the designated Food Safety Supervisor. This requirement is being introduced throughout Australia; however other food handlers do not need to attend external food safety training (unless it is stated in their Food Safety Program). As a specialised food safety provider, we do deliver food safety training, so I do have a vested interest to declare, however you don't have to use my company or other Registered Training Organisations...if you can provide the appropriate "skills" and "knowledge" to your employees. Over the past 20+ years, I have come across many different means of imparting these skills and knowledge to employees. These include:

- Making all new employees watch a food safety training DVD that has been purchased by the food business and then giving the employee a test to see if they have paid attention.
- Giving them an induction manual that must be read prior to commencement and signing a "declaration of compliance" indicating that they will comply with the contents of the induction manual.
- A suitably trained employee deliver training for new employees in the areas that they will be working (i.e. cleaning, receipt, kitchen duties, food service etc.)
- Filming an induction training session and then getting new employees to watch the film.
- Providing posters, pamphlets and other information from food safety regulators such as the Victorian Department of Health or the NSW Food Authority.

- Asking all new employees to have an external food handling certificate prior to commencing.
- Participating in FREE online training like that offered by www.primeskills.com.au

Whatever you do, you need to make sure that your employees know what is required. If your food safety program has a training form, make sure that it contains a section where the employee can sign off on the training. If you are giving them materials as part of the training, attach a copy to the training form as well. Then if there is a problem that arises that has been covered by the training, you can remove the possibility of the employee saying "I was never told that."

All new employees need to be trained in how you make sure the food you serve is safe, but this should not be the only training you do. You should continually participate or conduct training so that key points are not forgotten, new practices are implemented (such as new chemicals), emerging hazards (such as allergens) are discussed or new requirements (such as Food Safety Programs or Food Safety Supervisor training) are covered. You should never stop attending or delivering training. It needs to be a continual improvement process.

In the very first article I wrote for Food 4 Thought, I mentioned the Seven Deadly Sins series of emails that you can subscribe to on our website. Many of our clients use these emails as part of their training by putting them on noticeboards or discussing them at staff meetings. They are free. All you need to do is enter your details on our website.

Eat well. Eat safe!

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References:

<http://www.exponentialprograms.com/business/blog/its-not-about-the-food-but-the-bathrooms>
<http://www.PositiveTraining.com.au/blog>

Food Safety Resources on Bathroom Hygiene:

<http://www.AustralianFoodSafety.com.au/articles/bathroom-hygiene.php>



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