

V.1 2020

NOTEBOOK

FOR BUSINESSES MAKING AND SELLING FOOD



This notebook provides help on starting your food business and meeting food safety rules.



New Zealand Food Safety
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

MY CONTACTS

Use this page to add useful contact details once you've registered and found a verifier

My registration contact

Where I need to register (MPI/Local council):

My contact person:

Contact email address:

Contact phone number:

My verifier's contact

My verifier's name:

Verifier's company:

Other contacts

New Zealand Food Safety:

0800 00 83 33

foodactinfo@mpi.govt.nz

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INTRODUCTION

Making and selling safe food for customers is a **priority for all of us – your business **and** New Zealand Food Safety. If you grow, make, store, transport, import, or sell food and drink, there are food **rules you need to follow.****



This notebook gives you a snapshot of what **you need to know and do before you start a food business, and keeps all that information in one place.**

Some processes take time, so we recommend you get started as soon as you can. Then you have more time to focus on making and selling delicious food.

What's New Zealand Food Safety?

New Zealand Food Safety is part of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). They are the government body responsible for food safety for both import, local and export markets.



New Zealand Food Safety and your local council are here to help you set up your business and make safe and suitable food.

The [Food Act 2014](#) contains rules that all food businesses must follow to make safe and suitable food. You must register your business before you start selling food. If you find out that you are exempt, you do not need to register. Exempt businesses are still required to make food that is safe and suitable. (Safe food is food that won't make people sick. Suitable food meets composition and labelling standards and is in the condition the customer expects it to be).

NOTE: If you don't register your food business, you will be operating illegally. This means retail customers may refuse to accept your goods or use your services, and New Zealand Food Safety and local councils may need to take enforcement action.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Starting a new business is exciting – but there are a lot of things to think about.

We have worked with new food businesses to make a list of things to consider.

There is also a *'Guide to starting a business'* available at: www.business.govt.nz.



All food businesses should consider



Will you buy an existing business or start a new one?



Will you hire staff? Will they need to be trained?



Have you got a business plan?



Where will be a good location for you to make and/or sell food?



What will your point of difference be from other businesses in your area?



What products will you sell?
Where will you get your ingredients from?



Can you use your business name? Is it trademarked?



How will you promote your business?



Who is your customer base?



What equipment will you need? Where will you get it from?



Do you need money to start the business? Where will you get it from?



What food information do you need to tell your customers?

WHO MIGHT YOU NEED TO SPEAK TO?

Before you get started making and selling food,
also consider looking at the following:



Business

Accident Compensation

Corporation levies

ACC levies cover injuries and accidents that happen at work or are work-related:

www.acc.co.nz

Business structure

Plan out your business structure:

www.business.govt.nz

Companies Office

The Companies Office enables businesses to form and operate:

www.companiesoffice.govt.nz

First Aid

Staff must be provided with first aid facilities, equipment and access to first aiders.

Lawyers

You are likely to need one of these if you are going to enter into contracts.

Logos and branding

How do you want your business to be seen by customers?

New Zealand Business Number

Get a NZ Business Number:

www.nzbn.govt.nz

Manufacturing or commercial support

Food Innovation Network:

www.foodinnovationnetwork.co.nz

RealMe Account

Get a RealMe account for government websites and processes:

www.realme.govt.nz

Staff

If you need staff, how will you recruit them? How will you pay them? When will you pay them?

www.business.govt.nz

Building

Contact your local council for:

- **Building codes and codes of compliance**
- **Disabled access**
- **Fire and safety requirements**
- **Outdoor dining**
- **Noise control**
- **Ventilation**

Building size and layout

Changing and storage facilities

For staff, personal items and cleaning items.

Location

Will you need to lease a location?

Think about contracts and engaging a lawyer.

Plumbing

Sewage and waste water disposal

Storage of rubbish and recyclable matter

Toilets

Financial

Your bank

Your accountant

Accounting systems

EFTPOS and payments

Insurances

Tax

Inland Revenue Department

www.ird.govt.nz

Licences, Permits, Consents

Contact your local council for:

- **Duty Manager certificates and Alcohol Licences**
 - **Food truck** – Where can you operate?
 - **Parking permission**
 - **Permit to trade in a public place**
 - **Resource consents** – What happens after you have obtained your Resource and Building Consent?
 - **Signage permissions**
 - **Waste water permissions**
-

Water

Water Supply (including hot water)

Contact your local council

Equipment and Fixtures

Dishwashers

Grease traps

Contact your local council

Lighting

Security systems

Sinks

Wash hand basin

INDUSTRY HELP

If you want to start a new business, industry organisations can give you advice and information.

Baking Industry Association of New Zealand

www.bianz.co.nz

Brewers Guild

www.brewersguild.org.nz

Care Association of New Zealand

www.careassociation.co.nz

Cider New Zealand

www.cidernz.com

Clubs New Zealand

www.clubsnz.org.nz

Apiculture New Zealand

www.apinz.org.nz

Food and Grocery Council

www.fgc.org.nz

Horticulture New Zealand

www.hortnz.co.nz

Hospitality New Zealand

www.hospitality.org.nz

New Zealand Aged Care Association

www.nzaca.org.nz

New Zealand Association of Convenience Stores

www.nzacs.com

New Zealand Chefs Association

www.nzchefs.org.nz

New Zealand Flour Millers Association

www.flourinfo.co.nz

NZ Fruit Wine Association

www.nzfruitwines.org.nz

New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association

www.nzgsta.co.nz

New Zealand Specialist Cheesemakers Association

www.nzsca.org.nz

New Zealand Winegrowers

www.nzwine.com

Olives New Zealand

www.olivesnz.org.nz

Restaurant Association of New Zealand

www.restaurantnz.co.nz

Retail Meat New Zealand

www.rmznz.co.nz

Seafood Industry Council

www.seafood.org.nz

Transporters or distributors of food products

www.cilt.co.nz

Note: If you want to see your industry association listed here, contact foodactinfo@mpi.govt.nz

GET STARTED MAKING & SELLING FOOD

If you want to start a new business or take over an existing food business, there are food rules you need to follow. Here are **6 easy steps** to get your food business up and running.



1.

Find out which food rules apply to you

Use the '[My Food Rules](#)' tool.



2.

Download or print your plan/programme

You need this to ensure you make safe and suitable food.



3.

Find a verifier

Find a verifier who can check your food business. *Find out more on [page 14](#).*



4.

Get registered

You'll need to register your plan with either MPI or your local council. *Find out more on [page 15](#).*



5.

Make safe & suitable food

Use your plan or programme to make safe and suitable food.



6.

Get checked

Get checked by your verifier within 6 weeks of registration.

1. FIND OUT WHICH FOOD RULES APPLY TO YOU



Use the **My Food Rules** tool to find the rules your business will need to follow to make safe and suitable food.

Food rules help everyone make and/or sell safe and suitable food. This will help stop people getting sick from eating your food.

Depending on how you want to trade in food and/or drinks, you may need to operate under the Food Act, Animal Products Act or Wine Act.

To find which Act you need to operate under, and the plan or programme you need, visit foodsafety.govt.nz/myfoodrules and complete the easy online questionnaire – **My Food Rules**.

To-Do Notes

What I need to do:

Complete the My Food Rules tool. You can save the results for your business on your personal computer or device.

How do I do it:

Visit foodsafety.govt.nz/myfoodrules

My notes:

After using My Food Rules, if you need Food Act registration, tick which plan or programme you need to register under. *Find out more on [page 22](#).*

My Plan or Programme

What plan or programme are you on?

- No registration
- National Programme 1
- National Programme 2
- National Programme 3
- Simply Safe & Suitable
- Winemakers template
- Cheesemakers template
- My Food Plan
- Custom Food Control Plan

2. DOWNLOAD OR PRINT YOUR PLAN OR PROGRAMME

My Food Rules will give you a plan or programme that is right for your business.

If you need Food Act registration, the next step is to download and print your plan and follow the rules.

In some situations you may not need to use a plan or a programme, but you still need to make safe and suitable food. **My Food Rules** will tell you if you are exempt from registration. *Find out more on [page 23](#).*



To-Do Notes

What I need to do:

Download your plan or programme from My Food Rules.

If you have staff, train them to use your plan or programme, making safe and suitable food.

If you prefer hard copies, print your plan or programme. You can also order a hard copy of the Simply Safe & Suitable from the [BlueStar shop](#). Put your plan/programme in a place where it's easily accessed, so it's used regularly. Plans and programme are available to download in eight non-English languages from www.mpi.govt.nz/forms-and-templates/

Know which records you need to keep. You can keep these any way you want. Some examples can be found at: mpi.govt.nz/forms-and-templates/

3. FIND A VERIFIER

You will need to arrange for someone to come and **check your business.**



We call this 'getting verified'

The type of plan or programme you need will determine who can come and check that your business is making and/or selling safe and suitable food.

If you need to register with MPI:

My Food Rules will give you a list of verifiers that you can contact and arrange a time to check your business.

If you need to register with your local council:

Your local council will provide you a verifier to arrange a time to check your business.

It costs to get checked

Verification will cost. Costs will vary depending on who you use. Get quotes from different verifiers. *Find out more on [page 26](#).*

To-Do Notes

What I need to do:

Find a verifier using the list provided by My Food Rules.

Get a letter from the verifier to provide to the Registration Authority (MPI or local council) confirming they can check your business.

Once your business is registered, contact your verifier to book a time to check your business.

Take time to prepare and make sure you have everything they need to check.

My notes:

Once you've found a verifier, note down below their name and what time they'll check your business.

My Verifier
Verification Date
Verification Cost

4. GET REGISTERED

My Food Rules will tell you whether you need to register with MPI or with your council.



Most food businesses need to be registered

To run a business under the Food Act, you need to register with your local council or MPI to let them know you are operating and using a plan or programme. The organisation you register with depends on where you operate, and what type of plan or programme you need.

Scope of operations

The term 'Scope of Operations' is used to describe the activities of your food business.

My Food Rules will provide you with your Scope of Operations. Download and print this as you will need it to register your food business.

It costs to get registered

If you're registered with MPI, these costs can be found on mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-act-2014/fees-and-charges/

Council charges vary so check with your local council. It also costs to renew your registration.

To-Do Notes

What I need to do:

- Download or print your Scope of Operations from My Food Rules. This is provided at the back of your food plan/programme at the end of My Food Rules.
- Make sure you have your letter from your verifier confirming they can check your business.
- Complete the registration form.
- Pay the registration fee.

My notes:

After using My Food Rules, note down your registration information.

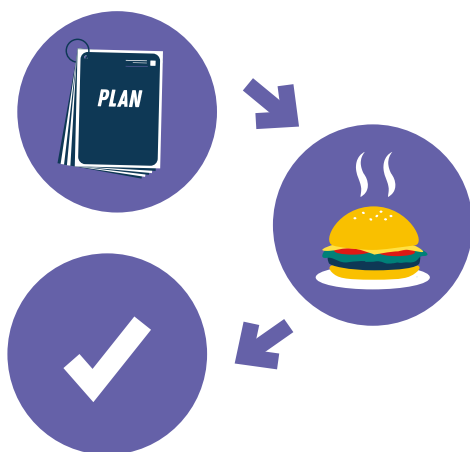
I need to register with:

Date I need to re-register:

(Note: 12 months for Food Control Plans and 24 months for National Programmes)

5. MAKE SAFE & SUITABLE FOOD

You MUST follow your plan or programme from My Food Rules. It's your blueprint to success.



Once you have registered your plan or programme, you need to start putting it into action.

Make sure you read through the plan or programme before you start making food or drink. You need to follow the 'Do' sections, fill in the blanks and keep the necessary records.

Regularly check that your staff are following the rules. Your plan is a living document, so keep it in a place where your staff can access it easily. Keep training and checking any staff who are involved with food to ensure it is safe and suitable.

If you want to make any changes to your business, have another go on [My Food Rules](#) to see how it might affect your business. Or talk to your verifier, council, or New Zealand Food Safety.

To-Do Notes

What I need to do:

- Start operating.
- Keep your plan or programme visible within your operation.
- Teach your staff how to use your plan or programme.
- Ensure you keep your records up-to-date.
- Note down any questions you have for your verifier.

Note: You need to use your plan or programme immediately. If you are unsure how to use your plan or programme, contact your local council or New Zealand Food Safety for help.

6. GET CHECKED (VERIFIED)

Now that you are operating, you will need a verifier to **check your business.**



Show

Make sure you are prepared for your verification. The verifier will be making sure you are following your plan and will ask you about the **SHOW** sections in your plan/programme. *Find out more on [pages 24-25](#).*

For new businesses, your first verification will take place within the first 6 weeks of registration.



To-Do Notes

Step 1

What I need to do:

- Contact your verifier and agree a date for them to come and check on your business.
- Have your plan or programme, records and other documentation prepared.
- Make sure you and your staff have been following your plan or programme to ensure you are making safe and suitable food.
- Keep your records up-to-date as your verifier will be checking these. The records you need to keep can be identified next to the pink pencil icons in your plan/programme.

If your business is located in a remote part of New Zealand and you have a Food Act National Programme, you may be eligible for Remote Verification. Instead of travelling to your business location, your verifier can connect with you via Skype on your phone or laptop, saving you the cost of the verifier's travel.

For more about verification, visit www.mpi.govt.nz/food-biz-verification.

EXTRA INFO

PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

Examples of the different types of food safety plans for different businesses are:

Custom Food Control Plans (including My Food Plan)	Businesses who make high-risk food or food for vulnerable people. Businesses who use technically-challenging processes to make food. Businesses who want to create their own unique plan tailored to their way of doing things.
Template Food Control Plans (including Simply Safe & Suitable)	Restaurants, cafes, takeaways, caterers, or residential care facilities (for example hospitals, hospices, rest homes, prisons and education providers). Retail butchers, bakers, fishmongers, delis, and supermarkets. Cheesemakers and cheesemongers. Winemakers.
National Programme 3	Brewers and businesses that make non-alcoholic drinks. Retailers that handle food, but don't prepare or make food. Businesses that make herbs or spices.
National Programme 2	Retailers of chilled or frozen food. Processors of nuts and seeds. Businesses that make dehydrated fruit.
National Programme 1	Retailers of hot drinks and shelf-stable packaged foods. Transporters. Retailers of packaged ice-cream. Growers of fruit and vegetables.
When you don't need to register (see page 23)	You may not need to register if: you sell food for charity less than 20 times a year; you only sell packaged food; or you provide accommodation for less than 10 guests.

Note: These are only a few examples. Use My Food Rules to work out which plan or programme you need. Visit foodsafety.govt.nz/myfoodrules

WHAT ARE THE PLANS?

Food Control Plans

A Food Control Plan is a template of written processes for a business making or selling higher-risk food.



Cafes, restaurants, mobile food vans, shops, butchers, bakeries, delicatessens and fishmongers usually need a Food Control Plan, since they make high-risk food.

If you are eligible to operate under a Food Control Plan, My Food Rules will provide you with a plan which you can download and print.

You can also get a Food Control Plan at mpi.govt.nz/food-control-plans or your local council.

If the type of food and the way you make it isn't covered by a Food Control Plan, you might be able to use a **My Food Plan** (a Custom Food Control Plan with free pre-evaluated content). Alternatively, you can develop your own **Custom Food Control Plan**. Find out more at: mpi.govt.nz/custom-food-control-plans

Businesses using a Template Food Control Plan must:



Register with their council or MPI **annually**



Get checked (verified) by the council or New Zealand Food Safety recognised agency – usually every **3-18 months**

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAMMES?

National Programmes

National Programmes are for medium to low-risk businesses. There are three programmes, depending on the food safety risk of your business activities.



Businesses that manufacture, transport, store, grow, and import food usually need a National Programme as they make low-medium risk food.

If you are eligible to operate under a National Programme, My Food Rules will provide you with the programme your business needs (which you can download and print).

To operate under a National Programme, you need to make safe and suitable food and drink (or make sure it stays safe and suitable) and keep some records (e.g. daily temperature record).

For more information about National Programme, visit mpi.govt.nz/national-programmes/

Businesses with a National Programme need to register with their local council or MPI.

Registration lasts for two years. You will also need to get checked (verified).

You need to choose a verifier and get a letter from them saying they will verify your business. This letter needs to be included with your registration application.

WHERE TO REGISTER?

Who you need to register with depends on your plan, the type of business you run and the location of your business.

Type of plan or programme	Where is your business based?	Who to register with?
National Programme (any sector)	Based in one local council area, operating a mobile food business or selling online	Local council
National Programme (any sector)	Based in more than one local council area	You can either register each site with the local council in each area, or register all sites under one multi-site registration with MPI
Template Food Control Plan issued by MPI (Section 39)	Based in one local council area, operating a mobile food business or selling online	Local council
Template Food Control Plan issued by MPI (Section 39)	Based in more than one local council area	You can either register each site with the local council in each area, or register all sites under one registration with MPI
Industry developed Template Food Control Plan (Section 40)	Anywhere	MPI
Custom Food Control Plan (inc My Food Plan)	Anywhere	MPI

SITUATIONS WHERE YOU MAY NOT NEED TO REGISTER

If My Food Rules shows your activities are **exempt**,
you do not need to register.



One-off events

You only sell food for personal profit once a year.



Homegrown food

You only sell home-grown fruit and vegetables directly to consumer.



Fishing vessel

You are a fishing vessel operator who only supplies food to your crew.



Packaged food

You only sell packaged food that doesn't need to be kept in a fridge to be safe to eat.



Fundraising

You are fundraising and you sell food less than 20 times a year.



Small-scale catering

You are a small-scale caterer, only selling food occasionally to be eaten straight away.



Organisations

You are a club, organisation or society that sells food to members or guests at events, where the trade in food is not the purpose of the event.



Accommodation

You are an accommodation provider that provides food for up to 10 guests per night, OR only provide snacks or breakfasts.



Early childhood

You are a home-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) service that provides food OR you only provide limited, minimally-handled foods.

Note: Even if you don't need to register, the food you sell must still be safe and suitable. For more information, check out the exemption guidance on foodsafety.govt.nz/toolkit

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET CHECKED (VERIFIED)?

A verifier will visit you to make sure you are doing the right things to make safe and suitable food.



Show

The things you need to show your verifier are highlighted under the **SHOW symbol in your plan/programme.**

A verification gives you the opportunity to describe to someone, who is an expert in food safety, all the things you do to make the food you sell safe and suitable.

If you are following your plan/programme you don't need to worry. This will be an opportunity to receive feedback and continuously improve on the things you already do to keep your customers safe.

Verifiers will also look at the records that you are required to keep to make sure that these are up-to-date and complete.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU NEED TO BE CHECKED?

High-risk businesses need to be checked (verified) more often than low-risk businesses.

Plan or Programme	Verification frequency	
	Maximum frequency	Minimum frequency
Custom Food Control Plan (including My Food Plan)	3 months	18 months
Template Food Control Plan	3 months	18 months
National Programme 3	3 months	2 years
National Programme 2	3 months	3 years
National Programme 1	3 months	One time verification

Some circumstances in your business may mean that you need to be verified more often. It will depend on certain factors:

- If there are improvements you need to make to ensure the safety and suitability of your food after being checked.
- How your staff use the plan/programme you have in place.
- How well you follow the processes you have to make sure food is safe and suitable.
- How well you are managing the environment you work in. For example, if your business was clean and pest free.
- If you have had any complaints.
- If you have fixed any issues in the past in the agreed time frame.

HOW MUCH DOES VERIFICATION COST?



Verifiers are experts in food safety. They may charge between \$115 and \$210 per hour.

It is a good idea to get quotes from more than one verifier if there are others in your area. Your quote may also include reasonable travel and administration costs. Please ask your verifier to explain these costs to you if you don't understand them.

Check out our guide with information on how long a typical verification takes and how much it is likely to cost on: mpi.govt.nz/getting-your-food-business-verified

There are three main parts to the verification. These are **preparation, on-site assessment and reporting**.

The food safety risk, the size of your business, the types of processes you use, and how well prepared you are can affect how long your verification will take.

HOW LONG DOES VERIFICATION TAKE?



It may take **longer** if:

- There are special conditions on your registration.
- Action required from previous checks has not been done.
- New issues are found at your business.
- There have been significant changes since your registration or last verification.

It may take **less time** if:

- You are prepared and your records are well organised, complete and available on the day of verification.
- Your staff are available to talk with the verifier and answer questions.

EXTRA INFO:

Food Act info:

foodsafety.govt.nz/foodact

My Food Rules:

foodsafety.govt.nz/myfoodrules

Food Control Plans:

mpi.govt.nz/food-control-plans

National Programmes:

mpi.govt.nz/national-programmes

Verification:

mpi.govt.nz/getting-your-food-business-verified

Free training resources and guidance (including posters, videos and *Food Safety Buddy* magazines):

foodsafety.govt.nz/food-safety-toolkit/

CONTACT US:

For general food safety questions:

Contact your local council,
or New Zealand Food Safety at:

Phone: 0800 00 83 33

Email: foodactinfo@mpi.govt.nz

Web: foodsafety.govt.nz/foodact

For questions around importing food:

Email: Imported.Food@mpi.govt.nz

Web: mpi.govt.nz/importing/food/

For questions around exporting food:

Phone: 04 894 0269

Email: exporterhelp@mpi.govt.nz

Web: mpi.govt.nz/exporting/food/

