

Food Licensing

If you conduct a business that prepares or handles for sale to the public, you may require a licence under the Qld Food Act 2006. Licensable food businesses are required to follow regulations as prescribed in the legislation and Food Standards Code to ensure only safe food is provided for sale. There are significant penalties for operating a food business without a food licence

Which food businesses require licensing in Qld:

Do I need a licence if I....	Yes	No
Only sell hot coffee, hot tea, water*, soft drinks		No
Sell packaged snack foods		No
Sell freshly prepared juices	Yes	
Manufacture cakes, biscuits, bread, confectionery, or snack foods*	Yes	No, if you only sell unpackaged low risk snack food purchased from a licensed manufacturer.
Repack spices, tea, confectionery, snack food**	Yes, for retail distribution	No, if packaged at the place of retail sale
Run a mobile food van	Yes	No, if only selling pre-packaged and labelled food
Run a restaurant, café or takeaway outlet	Yes	
Run a bakery	Yes	
Have a home-based food business	Yes	
Run a catering business	Yes	
Run a market stall or temporary food stall	Yes	
Roast coffee	Yes	

*Water carriers selling potable water by retail and manufacturers of bottled water are required to have a food business licence. The sale of bottled water and water by the glass does not require a food business licence.

**Snack food is defined as any of the following food that is not potentially hazardous, a) biscuits or cakes; b) confectionery, corn chips, potato chips or nuts; c) dried or glazed fruit; d) other food prescribed under a regulation.

To make an application for a Food Business Licence please contact one of Council's Environmental Health Officers on 4945 0242 or email info@whitsundayrc.qld.gov.au.

Applying for a food business licence

When starting a food business there are a number of Council Departments that need to be consulted. Follow the guide below to ensure your business is permitted at your selected location and that you have completed all the required applications.

Providing you supply all requested information, and you have all the required approvals in place, it will take an Environmental Health Officer approximately 20 business days to process your application.

We encourage all businesses to arrange a pre-lodgment meeting with one of Council's Environmental Health Officers. At the meeting we discuss your proposal, identify any possible food compliance issues and answer any questions you may have. This makes the whole process a little less daunting and easier to understand. A pre-lodgment meeting can be requested by contacting Environmental Health Services on 4945 0242.

Step one

1. Check with Council's Town Planning Services to determine if a food business is a permitted use in the area.
2. Check with Council's Plumbing Services to determine whether a plumbing permit is required, especially if making changes to existing fixtures, fittings or drainage.
3. Check with Council's Trade Waste Officer to determine if a trade waste approval is required for disposal of waste water to Council's Sewerage network. Most food businesses will require a waste water pre-treatment system (grease trap) before being approved for sewer connection.
4. Check with Local Law Services for other permits, such as footpath dining and portable signage).

Step two

1. Read the [Food Premises Construction and /or Refit Guide](#)
2. Fill out a [Plan Approval Application](#)
3. Provide two copies of the required plans together with payment of the application fee.

Step three

1. An Environmental Health Officer will assess your application against the Food Standards Code and contact you if any further information is required.
2. Once assessed, you will receive a plan approval letter that details the conditions of approval for your proposed food premises.
3. Once approved you can start your construction/refit. Starting fit out prior to obtaining plan approval can often lead to frustration when plans have to be changed to meet the requirements of the code.

Step four

1. Fill out an Application for a food business licence. This will be forwarded with your plan approval.
2. Nominate a competent Food Safety Supervisor for your business. Please read the [Qld Health Fact Sheet on Food Safety Supervisors](#).
3. Lodge the application together with payment of the applicable licence fee.
4. Please contact an Environmental Health Officer to arrange the final inspection. To avoid delays to your opening date, please allow a minimum of 48 hours notice for the final inspection.

Step five

1. An Environmental Health Officer will conduct a final inspection of the premises. If the Environmental Health Officer is satisfied with the premises, the Environmental Health Officer will issue your food licence.
2. Your food licence must be displayed to the public when the business is operating.

Step six

1. Congratulations – you can commence trading in your new food business.
2. Council's Environmental Health Officer's will conduct regular unannounced inspections of your food business to check compliance with the food standards code.

Taking over an existing licensed business

You need a food licence to operate any food premises in Whitsunday Regional Council Area. This includes taking over an existing business. Food licenses are not transferrable under the Food Act 2006.

Follow this three-step guide to ensure you have all the information and forms needed to make your application.

Step one

Before you purchase a business, we recommend that you organise a Health search. An Environmental Health Officer can perform a desk top audit of previous inspection and licensing records, or conduct a physical inspection to identify any compliance issues.

Complete the [Health Search Request](#) form

To authorise the release of information, Council must have permission from the current business owner (this authorisation is contained on the last page of the search request form)

Step two

If you plan to make changes to equipment, kitchen layout or structures you will need to submit a Food Plan Approval Application, to ensure your changes comply with the Food Standards Code.

Step three

If you don't plan on making changes to the existing premises, you may apply directly for the Food Licence. Please contact one of Council's Environmental Health Officers to obtain a copy of the Food Licence Application