

# Food Premises Structural Guidelines for Businesses

## Environmental Health



### General Information structural requirements for a food business In Merri-bek City Council

Effective planning for the design and layout of a food premises can ensure your food business complies with the Australian Food Standards without time consuming and expensive modifications. Whether you are doing a brand-new fit out or upgrading your kitchen, this guide will help you get the foundations right.

### Introduction

These guidelines have been developed to assist new food businesses and existing food business who wish to modify their premises. They have been based on the Food Standards Code Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

When fitting out or altering a food premises, business operators should also contact Council's Planning and Building departments to enquire whether any additional permits are required.

### Plans Assessment Service

Council's Environmental Health Unit offers a plans assessment service to new and existing businesses. An Environmental Health Officer will assess your plans and provide feedback and recommendations to assist your food business in meeting the requirements of the Food Standards Code and relevant standards. It is strongly recommended you take advantage of this service to avoid delays and reworks to your premises when it comes to registration. The Plans Assessment Service cost is already included in the costs for initial registration. Existing food businesses can apply and pay a separate fee for this service.

This guide can assist in the development of plans for your food premises. The more detail you can provide with your submission, the more accurate and tailored feedback can be provided back. It is recommended you seek a professional drafting service to ensure your plans are of a standard that can be easily assessed. Submitted plans should be drawn to a scale and include the following:

- Floor plan of the whole premises including the location of equipment, appliances, benches, toilets, storage areas and waste facilities
- Elevation drawings of food preparation areas
- Specifications of all materials to be used including equipment, benches and shelving
- Table of finishes for floors, walls, ceilings, lighting, etc.

### Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	<b>National Relay Service:</b> 13 36 77 or relay.service.com.au		
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913	नेपाली	Nepali	9280 0751			

## General Requirements

---

### Premises layout and space

---

The layout of the premises should follow a logical flow in one direction from receipt, to storage, to preparation, to packaging/serving/dispatch.

Consideration should be given to the space available. Adequate space should be available to carry out your food business activities without compromising food safety.

Space for the following should be considered:

- Food preparation areas (ensuring preparation of raw and ready to eat food is kept separate)
- Cleaning and sanitising areas for utensils and equipment
- Dry goods
- Chilled and frozen food (consider whether a cool room or walk in freezer is required)
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Returned/recalled food
- Packaging material
- Utensils and equipment
- Cleaning equipment and chemicals
- Clothing and personal belongings of staff
- Garbage and recyclable material
- Hot water service.

Toilets, changing rooms, chemical storage and waste storage (including recycling material) should be located away from food handling and storage areas.

### Handwashing Facilities

---

A dedicated hand wash basin of a suitable size must be installed and easily accessible in any food handling area. The hand wash basin must have liquid soap, paper towel and be provided with warm water through a single outlet tap.

Multiple hand wash basins may be required if the food preparation or food handling area is of significant size or if the hand wash basin is obstructed by a door.

*Tip – Taps do not have to be automatic. A flip mixer is adequate for most premises. A suitable size basin is measured by the ability to wash the hands, forearms and face. As a guide, a hand wash basin should be at least the size of an A4 piece of paper.*

### Storage of Garbage and Recyclable Matter

---

Food premises should have facilities for the storage and disposal of garbage and recyclable matter. These facilities may include the following options;

- keeping commercial bins in an outside area within the property boundary
- garbage rooms
- refrigerated garbage rooms
- garbage chutes
- bins, hoppers, and other storage containers, whether used outside the building or in food handling areas
- compactor systems and the rooms in which they are housed.

### Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	<b>National Relay Service:</b> 13 36 77 or relayservice.com.au		
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913	पंजाबी	Nepali	9280 0751			

---

## Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal

---

Water used for any food business should be potable. A constant supply of warm water is to be provided to all sinks in the premises, including the toilet's hand wash basins and cleaner's sinks.

### Grease traps

Grease traps intercept grease, silt, oil, sludge, and other solids and prevent them entering the public sewerage system. Grease traps should not be located in areas where food, equipment or packaging materials are handled or stored. It is preferable to have these located at the rear or outside of the premises to prevent possible contamination issues resulting from overflow, emptying, and cleaning of the unit.

Yarra Valley Water regulate grease trap requirements in Merri-bek. Please contact Yarra Valley Water on 03 9872 1240 or email [twapplications@yvw.com.au](mailto:twapplications@yvw.com.au) for further information regarding food business trade waste agreements.

### Wastewater

For equipment that produces wastewater such as cool rooms and coffee machines it is recommended that they are connected to sewer to ensure wastewater is disposed of appropriately. Some items must be connected to sewer. Refer to the table below guidance.

Must be connected to sewer	Recommended to be connected to Sewer
Dishwasher	Condensate from cool room
All sinks	Overflow from coffee machines
Toilets	

### Cleaner's Sink and Chemical Storage

A cleaner's sink (mop sink) must be provided for the purpose of filling and emptying mop buckets, washing mops and disposing of mop wastewater. This sink is to be provided with hot and cold water and must discharge to the sewerage system. It is recommended that you provide an area for the storage of mops and chemicals. A splashback extending behind the cleaner's sink is required.

*Tips – Cleaners sinks are best located outside the premises or in a cleaning/storage room, away from food preparation and storage areas.*

---

## Ventilation and Lighting

---

All food premises should have either natural or mechanical ventilation in accordance with the Building Code of Australia.

### Mechanical Ventilation

A Mechanical Exhaust Canopy is required over cooking equipment with an output greater than 8 KW for electrical appliances and 29 MJ for gas appliances. Deep fryers and grills will all require a mechanical exhaust canopy. The canopy must comply with Australian Standard AS 1668.2—2002 The use of mechanical ventilation and air-conditioning in buildings, Part 2.

### Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	<b>National Relay Service:</b> 13 36 77 or <a href="http://relay.service.com.au">relay.service.com.au</a>		
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913	नेपाली	Nepali	9280 0751			

*Tips –Inappropriate siting of flues and vents may result in odour or other problems from extracted air that may cause a nuisance to others. You may require a Building or Planning permit for the installation of the canopy. Contact Council on 9240 1111.*

## Lighting

Lighting must be adequate for the activities being carried out. Artificial lighting must comply with the requirements of AS 1680.1 Part 1 - 1990 Interior lighting: General principles and recommendations and AS/NZ 1680.2.4. 1997: Industrial tasks and processes.

Lights in food handling and storage areas should be flush mounted or recessed into the ceiling and fitted with shatterproof covers or diffusers. Light fittings must also be easily cleanable.

*Tip – Pendant lights are not suitable over food handling areas as they may harbour dirt, dust or insects and are difficult to clean.*

---

## Floors, Walls and Ceilings

---

### Floors

All floor surfaces must be smooth, impervious, easy to clean and laid in such a way that there is no ponding of water or harbouring of pests.

Floor waste drains are only recommended in larger premises where wash down with a hose is necessary. Floors must be suitably graded towards floor waste drains with no dips or hollows where water can collect. In smaller premises where wash down is not necessary, floor waste drains are not recommended as they may accumulate dirt and create a possible harbourage point for pests.

*Tips - Ceramic Tiles sealed with epoxy grouting and Commercial Grade Vinyl are generally acceptable. Unfinished timber floors and carpets are not suitable in a food premises. Polished concrete will be accepted only if it is finished as per the above requirements as some 'non-slip' finishes can be difficult to clean.*

### Walls

All wall surfaces must be smooth, impervious, and easy to clean.

*Tips – Glazed tiles and stainless-steel panels are generally accepted in food handling areas. Plasterboard and wooden surfaces are not suitable in areas which may be splashed by water or food. Any plaster or wooden surfaces in the premises must be effectively sealed with a gloss paint. Exposed brick is not suitable in food handling areas.*

### Floor and Wall Junctions

The junction of the floor and wall is to be constructed in a way that allows for easy and effective cleaning. Where coving is installed, it must be integral to the surface finish of both floor and wall to form a continuous uninterrupted surface.

*Tip – Prefabricated coving is not recommended as it creates gaps. Council recommends flush joining walls and floors or calking.*

### Ceiling

A ceiling is required above all food preparation areas. All ceiling surfaces must be smooth, impervious, and easy to clean.

*Tips – Plaster sealed with a washable paint, or a similar material is generally accepted. Drop panel ceilings are not permitted in food handling areas. Where service pipes, conduits etc. are exposed on the ceiling over food preparation areas, a bulkhead or suspended ceiling will be required to encase these.*

### Pipes, Conduits and Electrical Wiring

All service pipes, conduits and electrical wires must either be:

## Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	<b>National Relay Service:</b> 13 36 77 or relay.service.com.au		
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913	नेपाली	Nepali	9280 0751			

- a) concealed in floors, walls or ceilings; or
- b) fixed on brackets and provide clearance from wall and floor.

*Tips – Special consideration should be given to essential services such as fire sprinklers.*

---

## Equipment for Cleaning and Sanitising

---

### Cleaning and Sanitising

All food premises should have adequate and appropriate facilities for the effective cleaning and sanitising of all appliances, equipment, and fittings.

The minimum requirements are either a double bowl sink or a single sink with a dishwasher.  
Adequate space must also be provided to allow equipment to air dry after it has been cleaned and sanitised.

*Tip – An adequate size is measured by the ability to wash your largest piece of equipment. If you frequently wash fruits or vegetables, a food preparation sink may also be required.*

---

## Design and construction of Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment

---

### Benches, Shelves, Equipment etc

All fixtures and equipment must be adequate for the production of safe food and fit for their intended use. All surfaces must be smooth, impervious, and easy to clean.

*Tips – Stainless steel, plastic and laminate are generally accepted. Unsealed wooden surfaces are not to be used in areas frequently cleaned with water or in contact with food. Any other wooden surfaces must be effectively sealed.*

### Equipment

All cooking or food preparation equipment must be adequate for the production of safe food and fit for their intended use. Equipment can be installed on flexible connections to allow it to be moved for cleaning purposes. Alternatively, if equipment is installed on a fixed connection the installation should allow enough space to back and sides of equipment and floors for cleaning.

### Cool Rooms

Cool rooms may be necessary in larger premises where standard refrigeration units are not adequate for the cold storage needs of the food business. Cool rooms should be designed and constructed so they are appropriate for use and can be easily cleaned. All condenser units in cool rooms and walk in freezers must be properly drained to sewer. Cool room shelving must be designed to allow air to circulate freely around it and must be appropriate for use. Cool rooms should be effectively sealed to wall and ceilings to allow for easy cleaning.

### Pest Proofing

The premises should be adequately pest proofed with no gaps where pests can enter (e.g., where pipework penetrates walls) and no harbourage points (e.g., spaces between cool rooms and walls/ceilings). All entrances to the premises, including all doors and windows should be adequately pest proofed. Doors should be fitted with a self-closing device, if not, they may require an air curtain or plastic strips.

*Tip – Gaps under doors can allow the entry of pests. Ensure all gaps are sealed or blocked.*

### Food Displays

Food displays must be designed to prevent food contamination. Screens, tongs, enclosed cases, and sneeze guards are appropriate means of preventing food contamination. Food display units for high-risk foods should be refrigerated.

### Food Transport Vehicles

Food transport vehicles should be designed and constructed so they can be easily cleaned and protect food from contamination. Refrigerated units in food transport vehicles should be capable of maintaining food at a temperature below 5°C.

---

## Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	<b>National Relay Service:</b> 13 36 77 or relayservice.com.au		
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913	पंजाबी	Nepali	9280 0751			

## Food Storage

Adequate storage space should be provided for both dry store, as well as refrigerated and frozen items. All finishes are required to be of the same standard as food preparation areas.

*Tips – All shelving is to be smooth, impervious, and easy to clean.*

---

## Toilet Facilities

Toilets should be located, designed, and maintained to enable and encourage food handlers to use them whenever they need to.

Toilets must not open directly onto any area where food is prepared or stored. They should be fitted with an airlock or in the absence of an airlock, a self-closing doors and adequate ventilation will be required. They must also be provided with a hand wash basin in the immediate area, with a supply of warm water through a single outlet, soap and paper towel.

*Tip – Fixed dispensers are recommended for liquid soap and paper towel. Contact Councils Building Department on 9240 1111 to discuss your potential need for customer and ambulant or accessible toilets based on the number of customer seats provided.*

---

## How to Submit your Plans

When you apply for registration through Merri-bek's online system you are given the opportunity to attach plans. The plans assessment service is included in the registration fee for new businesses, therefore it is strongly recommended new business operators submit plans.

More information about registering your business can be found on Merri-bek Council's Website – [Food businesses \(merri-bek.vic.gov.au\)](http://merri-bek.vic.gov.au).

If you are a brand-new business owner in Merri-bek, you may need to seek approval from Council's Planning and Building departments as well as obtain your health license. If you wish to attend a pre-application meeting with all relevant departments, please visit [Business \(merri-bek.vic.gov.au\)](http://Business (merri-bek.vic.gov.au)) to find out how.

If you already have a current registration and are submitting plans to upgrade or modify your premise, please contact the Environmental Health Unit directly to discuss and request this service.

The Environmental Health Unit can be contacted on the details below;

### Environmental Health Unit

90 Bell Street Coburg 3058

Phone: 9240 1111

Email: [environmentalhealth@merri-bek.vic.gov.au](mailto:environmentalhealth@merri-bek.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.merri-bek.vic.gov.au](http://www.merri-bek.vic.gov.au).

## Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	<b>National Relay Service:</b> 13 36 77 or <a href="http://relay.service.com.au">relay.service.com.au</a>		
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	Nepali	9280 0751			