

Guide for community and not-for-profit groups

The Victorian *Food Act 1984* and food safety regulation

Contents

Food fundraisers	1
Safe food handling	1
Community and not-for-profit food premises classes	2
What class is your community group?	2
Food activities	2
Class 2 premises	2
Class 3 premises	3
Class 4 premises	3
A note about uncooked eggs	3
Obtaining permission to operate – registering your group’s food activities	4
Further information	4
Free food handler online learning program	4
Community groups fundraising events video.....	5
Food Safety Unit, Department of Health and Human Services	5

Food fundraisers

This guide is for community and not-for-profit groups organising fundraising activities that involve the sale of food. It explains ‘food premises classification’ under the Victorian *Food Act 1984* (the Act), and your role in keeping food safe.

It covers your group if you sell food solely for the purposes of raising funds for charity and where those handling the food are mostly volunteers.

If a volunteer makes food at home and donates it for sale at a community fundraiser, that person is not selling the food. While everyone is encouraged to handle food safely, volunteers do not need to register their homes as food premises with their local council.

If most people working at your fundraiser are paid – not volunteers – you will need to contact your local council for advice.

Safe food handling

Certain foods – known as high-risk, or potentially hazardous foods – need to be handled carefully to keep them safe. If something goes wrong during the food handling process, harmful bacteria can grow and multiply and food can quickly become unsafe to eat.

The main purpose of the Act is to protect people from food borne illnesses and ensure that the food sold in Victoria is safe to eat.

The Act covers what is done at a food premises; whether it is a market stall, a community hall with kitchen facilities, a food van, or a permanent site.

The Act groups food premises into separate 'classes', and sets out different food safety requirements for each class based on its food safety risks. There are four classes – from highest risk (class 1) to lowest risk (class 4).

As you'd expect, premises carrying out only low-risk food handling activities must follow simpler safety rules than those handling foods that are more likely to make people sick.

Community and not-for-profit food premises classes

Community groups can sell food to raise funds at fairs, fêtes, dinners, cake stalls, sausage sizzles, and at a range of other events.

The risk of food becoming unsafe at one of these events depends on the type of food and how and where it is stored, prepared, handled and transported by volunteers and staff members. Because these activities involve different levels of risk, community food activities may fall within class 2, 3 or 4 under the Act.

Your group's classification will depend on the food safety risks involved in handling the type of foods you plan to sell. For example, selling pre-packaged foods that don't need refrigeration, such as packaged biscuits (class 4), is less risky than selling scones with jam and cream, which need refrigeration (class 2), or preparing and serving casseroles or chicken salad (class 2) which need correct temperature control at all times to keep them safe.

Of course, your group is free to run any kind of food activity, as long as you meet the food safety requirements that apply to that class of food.

What class is your community group?

The Act covers what is done at a 'food premises'. Whether your group operates from a permanent site, a temporary premises (such as a market stall), or a mobile premises (such as a food van), it is considered a food premises under the Act.

Consult your local council environmental health unit who can advise you of your food premises' classification after considering the following questions:

- Who is the food being served to?
- Is the food packaged or unpackaged?
- Is the food high-risk (potentially hazardous)?
- Will the food be cooked on site and served immediately?
- Are most people involved in handling the food volunteers?
- Over how many days will the food activities take place?

Food activities

Class 2 premises

Ready-to-eat foods

Community groups that prepare and sell ready-to-eat foods on site at a food premises fall into class 2. This includes making sandwiches containing cheese, smallgoods, sliced vegetables or salad at the venue at which they are sold — or handling any other potentially hazardous foods at that venue.

'Cook and hold before serving' activities

Community groups selling unpackaged, high-risk foods are generally operating a class 2 food premises if the process involves:

- cooking the food at the venue, holding it (for example, in a bain-marie) and then serving it hot throughout the day

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- cooking the food beforehand and storing it under refrigeration, and then reheating and serving it later at the venue.

For example, curries or other meals prepared the night before, stored in the refrigerator, and reheated later at the venue, are class 2.

Food premises undertaking these kind of activities require a food safety program. You can use the Food Safety Unit registered food safety program template, which is available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-safety-information-for-community-groups/community-group-food-fundraisers/food-safety-template-community-and-mobile-premises>

Community groups running these activities as fundraisers are exempt from the need to have a food safety supervisor if:

- those handling the food are mostly volunteers
- the food activity takes place at the site for a maximum of two consecutive days at any one time.

If your class 2 food handling activities do not meet both of these requirements, you must have a food safety program and a food safety supervisor for your premises.

You must obtain approval from your local council to run these activities.

See the Department of Health and Human Services' Food Safety Unit website for more information: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.aupublic/-health/food-safety>.

Class 3 premises

'Cook and serve' activities

Community stalls selling ready-to-eat, high-risk foods that are cooked on site and served immediately are class 3, as long as:

- all of the food is cooked on site and served immediately
- those handling the food are mostly volunteers
- the food activity takes place at the site for no more than two days in a row.

An example of a class 3 'cook and serve' activity is a barbeque over one or two days serving hamburgers, or other meat or eggs, which are cooked and served to be eaten immediately.

However, if the only cooking on site is a simple sausage sizzle as described below, the activity will be class 4.

You must obtain approval to run class 3 activities from your local council.

Class 4 premises

Sausage sizzles

Due to the low food safety risks involved, if you are running a sausage sizzle (sausages, onions, sauce and bread only) as a fundraiser, you need to inform council by completing a notification on the online registration platform, Streatrader, which can be found at: <https://streatrader.health.vic.gov.au/>.

Community cake stalls

To sell packaged or covered cakes, which do not contain fillings made from fresh cream or uncooked eggs, you need to inform council by completing a notification on Streatrader.

A note about uncooked eggs

Some eggs can be contaminated with bacteria. The Department of Health and Human Services' Food Safety Unit recommends that community groups do not serve desserts or any other foods that contain uncooked eggs in the

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finished product – such as tiramisu, mousse, or homemade mayonnaise or aioli – at community fundraisers or stalls. There is a higher risk of such foods causing food poisoning. For further information, go to: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-businesses/egg-safety>. This advice does not apply to cakes that contain cooked eggs, as thorough cooking will kill the bacteria.

Obtaining permission to operate – registering your group’s food activities

If your community or not-for-profit group operates a mobile food premises (such as a van or trailer) or a temporary food premises (such as a stall), from which it sells food, you are required under the Act to register or make a notification to your local council on the Food Safety Unit’s state-wide online registration platform, [Streatrader](#).

Your local council is the council in whose district your group routinely prepares or stores the food you sell. If you do not have such a place (for example, because food is prepared by volunteers at home and donated to the group or is purchased beforehand), it is where your group usually stores the equipment for the stall, or garages the van. If none of these apply to your group, it will be the council in which your group’s contact address is located. Your local council may – or may not – be the district in which you trade.

Whether you operate at a single site or have multiple food vans, stalls or vending machines at different locations, a registration granted by your local council will allow you to operate on one or more occasions any time within a 12 month period (class 2 and 3), unless you choose to apply for a shorter registration period.

Registration or notification on the Streatrader registration platform means that your organisation can operate your temporary or mobile class 2, 3 or 4 food premise in any council district in Victoria, provided that you lodge a ‘statement of trade’ (via Streatrader) advising that council about where and when you will be operating in their area.

Your state-wide, single registration/notification can include all your temporary or mobile food premises.

If your stall or van is assessed as class 4, you can operate anywhere in Victoria on an ongoing basis once your local council acknowledges your free, once-off notification via Streatrader. You will only need to lodge a ‘statement of trade’ (SOT) on Streatrader, with the date and time and place you will be trading in. If you are unsure, call your local council environmental health officer for more information or assistance.

The same arrangements apply if you occasionally use a building that you do not own or lease, such as a community hall. This is also a temporary food premises.

Class 2 and 3 activities must be registered annually on Streatrader; class 4 activities only need notification to your local council once.

If your group conducts food fundraisers or sells food only from permanent premises (such as the group’s canteen or kiosk that operates regularly, or which it owns or leases) the Streatrader system does not apply to your activities. A class 2 or 3 permanent premises must be registered with the council in which it is located, usually for a 12 month period. If your permanent premises is assessed by your local council as a class 4, you will only need a one-off notification to council.

Further information

Local council environmental health officers are your best source of advice on running a safe community food fundraiser or stall.

To find your local council (for permanent premises) or your ‘registering’ council (for food vans and stalls) contact: <https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils>

Free food handler online learning program

Community volunteers are encouraged to complete the Food Safety Unit’s free, online learning program, DoFoodSafely, to improve their knowledge of safe food handling techniques. This informative and fun program takes about an hour to complete and includes seven topics on food safety and a final quiz. Participants who score

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more than 90 per cent on the quiz receive a certificate. You can find the program at:
<https://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au>.

Community groups fundraising events video

The 'Community groups fundraising events food safety obligations' video outlines community and not-for-profit groups' food safety obligations and is a simple tool to help identify what classification your groups' activities fall into. The video is available in English, Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese languages. You can find the video at:
<http://communityfood.health.vic.gov.au/>

Food Safety Unit, Department of Health and Human Services

Visit the Food Safety Unit website for helpful food safety tools and information at:
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety> or contact the Unit by email at:
foodsafety@dhhs.vic.gov.au

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 364 352, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email foodsafety@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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Available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/publications-guides-resources>