

# Food Safety

## Study Shows How to Keep Home Deliveries Cool & Safe

Simple packing and storing methods can reduce the need for refrigeration of food packed for home delivery and ensure that home delivery services are convenient and safe, a recent study identified.

The study across three states highlights food safety issues in relation to home delivery services, provides valuable information for service providers and gives health authorities a scientific basis for developing controls to reduce food safety risks.

Home delivery of food has, for many years, been an important service for people without access to cars, those who are frail or aged and people with disabilities. Demand for these services is expected to rise as the elderly population living independently in the community grows. Increasingly, home delivery is also being provided as a service of convenience as the use of 'on-line' shopping gathers momentum.

The home delivery service generally runs like this—orders are taken or food is selected by the consumer, food is packed from the shelf into bags and these are placed on trolleys awaiting pick up by a contracted courier and delivery to the home. In most cases, there is no chilling or refrigeration of the packed food and the time from packing to delivery can extend to more than five hours.

Clearly these practices raise issues for the safe handling, storage and delivery of perishable foods. The National Food Safety Standards (Chapter 3 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code) allow perishable food to be outside temperature control providing the food business can demonstrate that food safety has not been compromised (Standard 3.2.2 25 (d) Alternative methods of compliance).

To understand the safety issues and inform the industry of implications for delivery methods, the Microbiological Diagnostic



Unit at the University of Melbourne undertook a study of nine supermarkets, funded by the Victorian Dept of Human Services. The study identified risks posed by unrefrigerated delivery of perishable foods and presented findings that will help organisations formulate food safety programs. The research may also contribute to the development of uniform transport requirements across the nation.

The study monitored the temperatures of eight foods, cheese, fish, fruit, milk, mince, pie, deli meat and peas, from the time they were selected from the shelf until they were delivered to the customer.

While the findings show that for most foods non-refrigerated delivery did not appear to increase the food safety risk, some foods did record a significant rise in temperature and therefore pose an increased risk of food poisoning.

### The general recommendations for food delivery are:

- Refrigerating packed foods or using cold packs is effective in limiting temperature rises and also allows stores to extend the time from packing to delivery to up to 24 hours if the final temperature does not exceed 10°C.
- If foods are not refrigerated after they are packed, they should be:
  - packed appropriately
  - kept on storage trolleys in the coolest part of the store
  - placed away from heat sources and from windows exposed to the sun
  - delivered within four hours.
- Refrigerated delivery vehicles are not necessary if stores can ensure that:
  - foods are kept as cool as possible
  - the time spent on the road is kept under 30 minutes.

The Food Safety Unit is working to develop guidelines for home delivery of perishable foods. For more information contact Gary Smith, Food Safety Unit on (03) 9637 4211 or email [gary.smith@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:gary.smith@dhs.vic.gov.au).

## Food Safety for Food Handlers. Free Training CD

Food safety legislation requires that you, as an employer, provide all of your staff with at least basic food safety instruction. Many employers are sending staff off site for this training.

This CD will take a rank and file staff member through the basics of food handling. It will still be your responsibility to train your staff in regard to your own in-store Food Safety Plan.

*The union, the chains, the ARAV and Master Grocers have all signed off content.*



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## FOOD SAFETY TRAINING

Food Safety Supervisors' Workshop at MGA V

- Saturday 26 February 2005
- Saturday 30 April 2005
- Saturday 28 May 2005
- Saturday 25 June 2005

9am - 4pm Cost \$200 (inc. GST)  
Includes all materials and lunch.



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