

Guidelines for Food Labelling Requirements

in the City of Kalamunda

As you may be aware food safety legislation has undergone some major changes in recent times. The objectives of the reforms are to provide a consistent, cost effective and efficient legislative approach to food safety throughout the whole of Australia. One of the changes the new Food Safety Standards have introduced is more detailed labelling requirements of packaged foods.

The new food labels are required to contain more information than the labels in the past. Some of the key features of the new food label requirements include:



Food Identification

Labels must identify the food, its batch, the name and address of its supplier or manufacturer and country of origin.

Mandatory Advisory Statements, Declarations and Warnings

Advisory statements and declarations about certain ingredients that may react with some people must be included on labels, for example: quinine, caffeine, aspartame, guarana, unpasteurised egg and milk products, fish, milk, eggs, gluten, nuts, soy beans, and crustaceans. In some cases warnings may be required, such as 'Not recommended for children'.

Ingredients

Labels must list ingredients by weight in descending order. Where there are very small amounts of multi-component ingredients, (under 5%) it is permitted to list the 'composite' ingredient only, for example the chocolate (rather than cocoa, cocoa butter and sugar) in a chocolate chip cookie. As per previous requirements, food additives must be included in the ingredient list, either as the additive name or class number.

Date Marking

Products with a shelf-life of less than two years must display their best before or use by date. A 'best before' date is the date after which the product is no longer at its best but still safe, and a use by date is the date after which a product may be unsafe and cannot be sold. An exception is bread which can be labelled with a 'baked on' or 'baked for' date if its shelf life is less than seven days.



Nutritional Information

Nutrition information panels must now be displayed on most food products, not just those making nutrient claims. There are a few exceptions such as very small packages and foods like herbs and spices, tea, coffee and foods sold unpackaged or foods made and packaged at the point of sale. The panel must provide information on the levels of energy, protein, total fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugar, and sodium in the product as well as any other nutrient about which a claim is made on the label.

Percentage Labelling

Labels must display the proportion of characterising ingredients in a product. For example, strawberries are a characterising ingredient of strawberry yoghurt.

Legibility

All information required by the new code must be displayed prominently, legibly, and in English.

Storage Requirements

Where specific storage conditions are required in order for a product to remain safe until its 'use by date' the storage information must also be included, for example 'keep refrigerated' or 'store below 4°C'.

Exemptions

Some food is exempt from the new labelling requirements, including:

- Unpackaged foods
- Foods packaged in the presence of the purchaser
- Foods in inner packs not available for individual sale eg. potato chips in individual packets contained within a larger 'value packet'
- Unobscured fruit or vegetables
- Takeaway and delivered food
- Food sold at fundraising events

If, however, the food product contains an ingredient that would normally require a warning, the warning must still be displayed on or in connection with the display of the food, or provided to the purchaser on request.

Further information can be obtained from the City of Kalamunda Health Service on 9257 9813. Copies of the Food Standards, the guides to them and other fact sheets on the new standards can be found on the FSANZ website www.foodstandards.gov.au.

