

Food safety and quality assurance for SMEs

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No matter the size of the business, red meat processing companies are required to comply with legislation, standards and regulations imposed by Government. This SnapShot is designed to assist small to medium sized businesses meet the hygiene requirements set out in the AS 4696:2007

Australian Standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption.

There are multiple aspects of food safety and quality assurance that need to be maintained to ensure the commercial success and regulatory compliance for a SME. This SnapShot looks at two of these critical aspects with the main elements being summarised below.

Personal hygiene

- You must start work with clean outer protective clothing. If they become excessively dirty during the day, they must be changed.
- Footwear must be cleaned whenever entering or leaving the production area.
- Hair nets and snoods are compulsory in all processing areas of meatworks.
- Hand washing is one of the most important hygiene tasks you perform. Hands must be washed with soap and warm potable water at the start of work or whenever they become contaminated e.g. after going to the toilet, coughing or sneezing, wiping your nose.
- If you are sick you can contaminate the meat. You should wait until you are well or depending on the illness you may require a Doctor's certificate before recommencing work.
- All cuts and abrasions must be cleaned and dressed with a brightly coloured waterproof dressing.
- Personal equipment including knives, steels, pouches, hooks and mesh gloves must be cleaned and sanitized before commencing work each morning and at the end of production each day.
- Equipment must be washed or sterilised when it comes into contact with contaminated items such as after sticking and after each hide/skin opening cut.
- All jewellery including watches and earrings, must be removed. Difficult to remove wedding bands must be covered with an impervious dressing.
- Spitting, urinating or defecating in any place other than the sanitary facilities provided, is not permitted.



Cleaning

The meatworks must be clean prior to the commencement of any work at the beginning of the day. The following daily cleaning steps will help achieve this.

- After production, and before cleaning starts, all unused production materials, equipment and product must be removed to storage.
- Start with a dry clean. This involves cleaning as much fat, meat, blood and any waste by sweeping and shoveling without using water.
- Commence cleaning using warm (not hot as hot water bakes blood onto surfaces) high pressure water, hose and soak the area to remove or soften water-soluble materials from the surfaces. Start at the top of walls, working down the floor and across the drains. This will allow waste removal to take place from a clean area to the dirty area.
- Apply the detergent by scrubbing and/or spraying or foaming. Rinse using extremely hot water –above 82°C. Make sure you follow the directions and precautions given on the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).
- Apply sanitiser to all surfaces, rinse where required using extremely hot water –above 82°C. Make sure you follow the directions and precautions given on the MSDS.
- Remove excess water from the area so that there is less available moisture for bacterial growth, e.g. invert edible tubs and bins and stack them off the floor to drain.

Employee/trainee sign off

Trainees and existing employees that read and follow the information outlined in this SnapShot are adhering to the requirements of the Australian Standard AS 4696:2007.

I have read and understand the information contained in this document. I am committed to ensuring that I meet the requirements for my company
..... to achieve regulatory compliance with the Australian Standards. Signed,

Employee/trainee

Employer



Further information

Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand, AS 4696:2007
Australian Standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption, CSIRO publishing, Collingwood, Vic.

Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand, AS 4464:2007
Australian standard for the hygienic production of wild game meat for human consumption, CSIRO publishing, Collingwood, Vic.

MINTRAC training and assessment materials for hygiene, sanitation and quality assurance. Contact MINTRAC for more information mintrac@mintrac.com.au or 02 9819 6699.

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