

How Long Does a Food Handler Certificate Last in Victoria? – Complete Hospitality Training

Canonical: <https://cht.edu.au/news/how-long-does-a-food-handler-certificate-last-in-victoria/>

Details:

A food handler certificate does not expire. There is no statutory currency period for food handler training at all, in Victoria or anywhere else in Australia.

That is the whole answer to the question as asked. The rest of this page exists because the question arrives in several wordings that mean different things, because the well-known "five years" belongs to a different document, and because "no expiry date" is routinely misread as "no continuing duty". Those are not the same thing, and the difference is where businesses get caught.

If what you actually want is the full diary of every deadline a Victorian food business is running — the seven-day council request, the three-month records, the Queensland and New South Wales clocks — that is set out on how long does a food handling certificate last in Victoria . This page is about the duties that do not expire , and what each of them actually asks of a person.

The terminology, which is the real source of confusion

Four different things get called some variation of "my food certificate", and only one of them has a clock.

| What people say | What they usually mean | Currency | | --- | --- | --- | | "Food handler certificate" | SITXFSA005 , or any course covering the four required topics | None | | "Food handling certificate" | The same thing | None | | "Food safety certificate" | Ambiguous — could be either level | Depends which | | "Food Safety Supervisor certificate" | SITXFSA005 plus SITXFSA006 , the SITSS00069 skill set | 5 years from issue |

So when someone says a food certificate lasts five years, they are describing the bottom row. The first two rows have no expiry, and no statute sets one.

The distinction, precisely

| | Food handler | Food Safety Supervisor | | --- | --- | --- | | Unit | SITXFSA005 | SITXFSA005 plus SITXFSA006 | | Skill set | SITSS00068 Food Handling | SITSS00069 Food Safety Supervision | | Clause | 3.2.2A—10 | 3.2.2A—11, with the five-year test in the definitions clause —2 | | Currency rule | None | Certificate must have been issued within the immediately preceding 5 years | | Must it be accredited? | No — a free, non-accredited course covering the four required topics satisfies the law, and no unit code is required | Yes — from an RTO, or an organisation the state recognises | | Who holds it | Anyone doing a prescribed activity needs training or commensurate skills and knowledge | At least one appointed supervisor; NSW requires at least one per premises | | Records required? | No — the business need not keep records of handler training | The certificate must be producible, and in New South Wales kept on the premises |

Both codes are on our scope of registration, and have been since 10 June 2022 . They are different things, and the difference is exactly one unit. If someone has been told a one-day handling course made them the venue's supervisor, it did not — and in Victoria it could not, because s 19G of the Food Act 1984 also requires the supervisor to have the ability and the authority to direct other food handlers,

which no course can confer.

Why there is no expiry date: three layers of law, not one

This is the part that explains the answer rather than just stating it, and it is the part almost every page on this subject leaves out.

Australian food safety training law has three layers relevant to a food handler, and they behave completely differently. Only the second one mentions courses at all, and none of the three expires .

Layer one: clause 3 of Standard 3.2.2 — the business must ensure competence

Applies to every Australian food business since 2000 . It requires a food business to ensure that persons undertaking or supervising food handling operations have skills in food safety and food hygiene matters, and knowledge of food safety and food hygiene matters, commensurate with their work activities .

Read what that clause does and does not do. It is outcome-based . It names no course, no certificate, no unit code and no refresher period. It asks whether the person is competent for what they are actually doing. It also expressly reaches supervisors , not only the people with their hands in the food. Its one carve-out is narrow: it does not apply to persons handling food for fundraising events at which the only food sold is food that is not potentially hazardous, or is to be consumed immediately after thorough cooking.

Layer two: clause 3.2.2A—10 — the prescriptive training tool

Standard 3.2.2A commenced on 8 December 2023 and added a prescriptive layer on top of clause 3 for category one and category two businesses only — the three food safety management tools: food handler training (—10), a Food Safety Supervisor (—11), and substantiation records (—12, category one alone). It did not replace or amend clause 3.

The training tool requires completion before the handler engages in a prescribed activity — which is the handling by the business of any unpackaged potentially hazardous food that is either used in preparing ready-to-eat food to be served to a consumer, or is itself ready-to-eat food intended for retail sale by that business. And it mandates no refresher period.

Layer three: clauses 13 to 18 — duties on you personally

This is the layer almost nobody names, and it is the one that most changes what "my certificate never expires" actually means. Standard 3.2.2 puts duties directly on the food handler , not on the business, and they are ongoing rather than one-off.

Clause 14 — your own reporting duties. A food handler must report to their supervisor any symptoms, foodborne disease, or knowledge or suspicion of carrying a foodborne pathogen; must not handle food where contamination is reasonably likely; and must notify a supervisor if they know or suspect they have contaminated food. That last one is a duty, not a courtesy.

Clause 15 — hand washing, specified rather than implied. Clause 15(2) requires hand washing whenever hands are likely to be a source of contamination, immediately before working with ready-to-eat food after handling raw food , and immediately after using the toilet . Clause 15(4) sets the technical standard: at the hand washing facilities provided — not an ordinary sink — using soap or other effective means and warm running water , and drying on a single-use towel or another method not likely to transfer pathogens. Cold water and a shared cloth do not meet it.

Clause 16 — exclusion and return. A person known to be suffering from or carrying a foodborne disease must be excluded from handling food where contamination is reasonably likely, and may only be readmitted on medical advice . Feeling better is not the test.

Clause 18(1) — and the business must tell you. A food business must inform all food handlers of their health and hygiene obligations under clauses 13 to 18. So if nobody has told you any of the above, that is a compliance failure by the business, not by you.

The three consequences of reading it as three layers

Being outside categories one and two does not release you from a training duty. It releases you from the prescriptive tools. Clause 3 still applies, and it has applied for a quarter of a century. In Victoria that is every Class 3 and Class 4 premises.

A category one business answers to all three layers at once — the tools, the competence duty, and the personal duties of every handler on shift.

And nothing in any of them expires. Clause 3 asks about present competence. Clause 3.2.2A—10 asks whether training was completed before the activity began. Clauses 14 to 16 ask what you do on the day. A certificate is evidence towards the first; it is not the question, and it has no bearing at all on the third.

That is why the honest answer to "how long does it last" is: the document lasts forever, and the duty never stops.

What the four required topics are

If you take the course route, the training must cover:

Safe handling of food

Food contamination

Cleaning and sanitising of food premises and equipment

Personal hygiene

Or, alternatively, the handler may possess skills and knowledge commensurate with the activity. Prior learning counts here, and the recognised routes are wider than most people assume: competency-based training , in-house education , a food safety induction completed at another food business , or relevant previous industry experience in the food industry.

And what the accredited unit actually assesses

Worth setting out, because "completed training" is the phrase the law uses and the accredited version gives it a measurable meaning. SITXFSA005 requires the candidate to demonstrate hygienic food handling in line with organisational procedures, showing each of the following on at least three separate occasions :

correct hand washing

appropriate use of uniform and personal protective equipment

effective personal health and hygiene practices

hygienic food service

Plus the procedures for reporting unsafe hygiene practices — which is the clause 14 duty, taught as a procedure.

Three occasions each is the reason the accredited unit cannot honestly be delivered as a single quiz, and it is the most useful test to apply to any course you are comparing: ask across how many assessment occasions hand washing is observed, not how many hours the course runs. It is also why the permanent record is worth something. What you hold is not a certificate saying you attended; it is a record that four practices were observed twelve times between them.

Why the Statement of Attainment never lapses

A Statement of Attainment records that you were assessed as competent on a date. Records of that kind do not expire. It is linked permanently to your Unique Student Identifier , so it is retrievable for life from your USI transcript regardless of employer, state or country.

What can lapse is a document's ability to satisfy a rule . For the Food Safety Supervisor requirement, clause 3.2.2A—2 asks whether the certificate the business relies on was issued in the last five years . Nothing is taken away from the holder; the business simply needs a more recent certificate.

A worked timeline for the supervisor certificate

| Date | What is true | | --- | --- | | 1 March 2022 | Units completed, Statement of Attainment issued | | 1 March 2026 | Compliant — four years since issue | | 28 February 2027 | Compliant, with days to spare | | 2 March 2027 | Business non-compliant. The Statement of Attainment is still a valid record of competency; it no longer satisfies Standard 3.2.2A |

Nobody writes to you on 1 March 2027. Diarise from the issue date printed on the certificate.

One honest note on where that five years comes from in Victoria. Safe Food Victoria publishes no Victorian renewal or refresher period. Its food safety supervisor page, updated 29 June 2026 , says prior training "does not usually" need repeating and confirms superseded course codes remain valid. The five-year test reaches Victoria through clause 3.2.2A—2 applied by the Food Act 1984 , not through a Victorian instrument. It applies — but if a council cannot show you a Victorian page saying "five years", that is not evidence against it; the Code is the source to cite.

Where a Victorian clock does exist

Handler training has no clock. Several things around it do. The three that matter most to an individual rather than to a business:

| Clock | Period | Whose problem | | --- | --- | --- | | Food handler training | None | Nobody's — there is no statutory refresher | | Clause 3 skills and knowledge | Continuous | The business's, for everyone handling or supervising food handling, since 2000 | | Food Safety Supervisor certificate currency | 5 years from issue | The business's, for Class 1, most Class 2 and Class 3A premises | | Council request for the supervisor's details, Food Act 1984 (Vic) s 19GB | 7 days from a written request | The proprietor's |

Victoria's registration authority is your local council , which registers and classifies premises on the highest-risk activity carried out there under s 19C . Safe Food Victoria sits above the councils as the state regulator. Class 1, 2, 3 and 3A premises register; Class 4 premises notify rather than register .

One contrast worth carrying away from this page: in Victoria the paperwork duty at s 19GB carries penalty units, and the substantive duty at s 19GA — actually having a supervisor — carries no monetary penalty at all . Its sanction is registration-based: refusal of registration or renewal, or revocation or suspension of the premises' registration. That is the larger exposure, not the smaller one.

The full Victorian class table, the complete list of every clock including the Queensland and New South Wales ones, and which classes carry a Food Safety Supervisor duty, are set out on how long does a food handling certificate last in Victoria and who needs a food handling certificate in Victoria . There is no point repeating them here.

The contrast that proves the point: New South Wales

Victoria has no state food safety certificate at all. New South Wales does, and its rules show what a real expiry regime looks like — which is useful, because it is the regime people are unconsciously importing when they tell you your Victorian handler certificate has expired.

The reason only NSW has one is a single line of the national standard. Standard 3.2.2A defines a food safety supervisor certificate as certification by either (a) a registered training organisation or (b) an organisation recognised by the relevant authority under that state's own Act. NSW is the only state that has exercised limb (b). Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia rely on limb (a), which is why the Statement of Attainment is the whole answer there.

The certificate must come from a training organisation approved by the NSW Food Authority under Food Act 2003 (NSW) s 106H . The Authority maintains a publicly available list of approved organisations, revised at least annually, and the approval extends to trainers and assessors , not only the organisation. Each approved RTO also carries a Food Authority approval number separate from its national RTO code .

The approved RTO must issue the certificate within 10 working days of successful completion.

A copy must be kept on the premises — or at the proprietor's business address for mobile catering — and produced on request under s 106G , with a maximum penalty of 25 penalty units for an individual and 50 for a corporation. The appointment duty itself carries 50 and 100 penalty units.

When a certificate expires, a recertification course may only be offered up to 90 days after the expiry date . After that window closes, the whole Food Safety Supervisor course must be completed again. Recertification is available only to someone who already holds or held a NSW certificate, and must be completed with a single approved RTO.

There is a narrow statutory defence allowing food to be processed and sold by retail on not more than 30 days while a replacement supervisor is appointed.

Not every approved organisation offers the recertification pathway; the Authority's list marks which ones do.

New South Wales does not recognise an interstate Food Safety Supervisor certificate.

None of that touches handler training. NSW imposes no state layer on the handler obligation at all, which is why a Victorian handler certificate travels there without qualification — and it is the cleanest illustration that the five years and the handler certificate are two different subjects.

We are not on the NSW Food Authority's approved provider list , so we cannot issue the New South Wales certificate. That is stated plainly here because it is the kind of thing worth knowing before you enrol rather than afterwards.

Queensland and Western Australia both accept an interstate Statement of Attainment. Queensland, however, expressly excludes recognition of prior learning for the five-yearly supervisor recertification, where Victoria actively encourages it. Western Australia names SITSS00069 by code and publishes a provider table that is a convenience listing of self-notified RTOs, not an approval register — so "WA-approved" describes a scheme that does not exist.

Should you refresh anyway?

No statute requires it at handler level. There are still good reasons, and reading the law as three layers sharpens each of them.

Food law changes. Standard 3.2.2A itself only commenced on 8 December 2023 , so anyone trained before that date learned a framework that has since had a prescriptive layer added to it.

Allergen management practice has moved considerably, and someone trained years ago may be working to superseded guidance.

Clause 3 asks about present competence, so a business relying on a very old certificate and nothing else is relying on weak evidence.

The clause 14 to 16 duties are things you do on shift rather than things you once demonstrated, and they are the ones people forget first — particularly clause 16, which requires medical advice before returning to food handling after a foodborne illness.

Employers and councils reasonably expect current knowledge.

In Victoria, recognition of prior learning and recognition of current competency are actively encouraged, and superseded course codes remain valid — so refreshing rarely means starting from scratch. Recognition of prior learning is offered under Standard 1.6 of the Outcome Standards for registered training organisations and is a genuine assessment against the same evidence, not a waiver. Credit transfer is the separate process under Standard 1.7 : a unit already completed at any RTO is recognised with no reassessment at all. Both are raised at the pre-training review, required under Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs. See skills assessment. We first verify the evidence and equivalence, check that the units fit your training product, and check for licensing or regulatory restrictions before granting credit. See ASQA's credit-transfer guidance.

The thing your handler unit quietly unlocks

Worth knowing, because it is a permanent benefit of a permanent credential and almost nobody mentions it.

SITXFSA005 is a prerequisite for nine units in the current food and beverage stream. The national register lists it against:

| Unit | Prerequisite | | --- | --- | | SITHFAB022 Clean and tidy bar areas | SITXFSA005 | | SITHFAB023 Operate a bar | SITHFAB021 and SITXFSA005 | | SITHFAB024 Prepare and serve non-alcoholic beverages | SITXFSA005 | | SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee | SITXFSA005 | | SITHFAB026 Provide room service | SITXFSA005 | | SITHFAB027 Serve food and beverage | SITXFSA005 | | SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails | SITHFAB021, SITHFAB023 and SITXFSA005 | | SITHFAB034 Provide table service of food and beverage | SITHFAB021 and SITXFSA005 | | SITHFAB035 Provide silver service | SITXFSA005 |

Keep that figure scoped to the food and beverage stream: across the wider SIT package SITXFSA005 also gates cookery, patisserie and kitchen units, so a package-wide total would be a different number about a different set.

SITHFAB034 is one of four units in that stream carrying two or more prerequisites. SITHFAB023 Operate a bar carries the same pair of two; SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails carries three, adding SITHFAB023; and SITHFAB039 Manage the sale or service of wine carries three of its own, being SITHFAB021, SITHFAB032 and SITHFAB033. In every one of the four, one of the prerequisites is RSA. That surprises people, because RSA is normally thought of as a liquor-licensing matter — here it is an academic prerequisite, blocking a table-service unit regardless of the venue's licence or the state regime, and it stands in front of nine units in its own right, exactly as many as the food safety unit. The register's own explanation is that SITHFAB034 covers higher-order service techniques for senior food and beverage attendants, while SITHFAB027 covers fundamental technical skills for casual dining, and the alcohol prerequisite reflects that difference.

Because your Statement of Attainment never expires, a prerequisite you satisfied years ago stays satisfied. That is the practical value of a permanent record, and it is a better argument for the accredited unit than any claim about compliance — a free non-accredited course satisfies the law and unlocks none of these, because a prerequisite can only be met by the unit itself. See restaurant waiting and barista coffee course.

If you have lost it

Keep your certificate and ask the issuing RTO for a replacement if needed. A USI transcript can help verify reported training, but it is not a guarantee that every credential will appear. For nationally

recognised training, a Unique Student Identifier (USI) is generally required before a qualification or Statement of Attainment can be issued, unless an applicable exemption applies. See the official USI exemption guidance. A USI is free at usi.gov.au. If you already have one, recover it rather than creating another.

If you have studied since 2015 you almost certainly already have a USI — recover it rather than creating a second, because duplicates split your training history across two records and can make a credit transfer look as though it never happened. The Act also places statutory limits on who may collect or use your USI.

One verification wrinkle specific to this provider. We have operated under six trading names on the national register, five of them current. The sixth, Complete Healthcare Training, ran from 24 October 2023 to 19 April 2025. Anyone holding a certificate issued in that name is holding an RTO 3722 credential, even though the name is no longer in use — useful if an employer cannot match the name on your paperwork to anything they can find.

A related Victorian point: a lost RSA certificate is replaced free by completing the RSA Refresher, which is required every three years of every Victorian certificate holder anyway — see [can I renew my RSA online in Victoria](#).

About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training, RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E. Level 3, 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, and 410 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. Contact melbourne@cht.edu.au or +61 3 9654 1554.

We have been a registered training organisation since 1 June 1994 and our current registration, exercised by the Australian Skills Quality Authority, runs to 30 June 2032. Both SITSS00068 Food Handling and SITSS00069 Food Safety Supervision sit on our scope of registration at the extent "Deliver and assess", and have done since 10 June 2022, verifiable on training.gov.au.

See also what is a food handling certificate, who needs a food handling certificate and all courses.

We link to the relevant course and regulatory sources in this guide. Check those sources for current requirements, and confirm course availability, delivery, fees and entry requirements with us before enrolling.

So it never expires?

Correct. The food handler Statement of Attainment does not expire, and Standard 3.2.2A mandates no refresher period for handler training. What continues is the duty, not a countdown.

My employer says mine has expired.

They are applying the Food Safety Supervisor rule, or an interstate rule, or their own internal policy. Ask which — all three are possible and only one of them is Victorian law.

If it never expires, is there nothing to worry about?

There is, and there are three separate things. Clause 3 of Standard 3.2.2 has required every Australian food business since 2000 to ensure people undertaking or supervising food handling have skills and knowledge commensurate with their work activities — a present-tense test. Clause 3.2.2A—10 requires training to have been completed before the activity began. And clauses 14 to 18 put duties on you personally, every shift.

What are my own duties, as opposed to my employer's?

Under clause 14 you must report symptoms, foodborne disease or suspected carriage to your supervisor, not handle food where contamination is reasonably likely, and tell a supervisor if you know

or suspect you have contaminated food. Clause 15 sets when and how you wash your hands. Clause 16 means you only return to food handling after a foodborne illness on medical advice. Clause 18 obliges the business to have told you all of that.

When exactly must I wash my hands?

Clause 15(2): whenever your hands are likely to be a source of contamination, immediately before working with ready-to-eat food after handling raw food, and immediately after using the toilet. Clause 15(4) adds the standard — at the facilities provided, with soap or other effective means and warm running water, dried on a single-use towel or another method that will not transfer pathogens.

Is "food handler" different from "food handling"?

No. Same credential, two phrasings. The Victorian premises classes, and the full list of deadlines a business is running, are covered on how long does a food handling certificate last in Victoria ([/news/how-long-does-a-food-handling-certificate-last-in-victoria/](#)).

Does it have to be accredited?

No. A non-accredited course covering safe food handling, food contamination, cleaning and sanitising, and personal hygiene satisfies the law, and no unit code is required. SITXFSA005 adds portability and verifiable proof, not extra compliance.

What does the accredited unit actually assess?

Four practices — hand washing, uniform and PPE, personal health and hygiene, and hygienic food service — each demonstrated on at least three separate occasions, plus the procedures for reporting unsafe hygiene practices. A course that ends in a single quiz has not met that.

Does it work in another state?

Yes at handler level — it is a nationally recognised unit, and no state adds a layer to the handler obligation. Supervisor requirements differ, and New South Wales issues its own certificate and does not recognise interstate ones.

How do I find the issue date?

It is printed on the Statement of Attainment and appears in your USI transcript.

What does have a five-year rule, then?

The Food Safety Supervisor certificate, under clause 3.2.2A—2 — see how long does an FSS certificate last in Victoria ([/news/how-long-does-a-food-safety-supervisor-certificate-last-in-victoria/](#)).

Does Safe Food Victoria publish that five-year rule?

No. Its supervisor page, updated 29 June 2026, states no Victorian renewal or refresher period and says prior training does not usually need repeating. The five years reaches Victoria through the Code, applied by the Food Act 1984.

Can I use recognition of prior learning to refresh in Victoria?

Yes, and Victoria actively encourages it for the five-yearly supervisor renewal. Queensland expressly excludes it for the same renewal, so this is one to check if you move.

What is the seven-day rule I have heard about?

Section 19GB of the Food Act 1984 (Vic). If the council asks in writing, the proprietor has seven days to provide written details of the current food safety supervisor's name and qualifications.

Is my Victorian certificate enough in New South Wales?

At handler level, yes. For the supervisor role, no — New South Wales requires its own certificate from a provider approved under s 106H, and we are not on that list.

Does a prerequisite I satisfied years ago still count?

Yes. The Statement of Attainment is permanent, so SITXFSA005 keeps unlocking all nine of SITHFAB022, SITHFAB023, SITHFAB024, SITHFAB025, SITHFAB026, SITHFAB027, SITHFAB030, SITHFAB034 and SITHFAB035 indefinitely.

Could a handler course ever make me the supervisor?

No, and in Victoria not even the right units would be enough on their own. Section 19G requires hazard knowledge for those premises, an approved competency standard, and the ability and authority to supervise others. A course can only answer the middle limb.

Who decides whether my premises needs a supervisor at all?

Your local council, through the premises class it assigns under s 19C of the Food Act 1984 (Vic). Councils classify on the highest-risk activity conducted at the premises.

Where do I go if I need the supervisor level?

Food Safety Supervisor (/courses/food-safety-supervisor/) covers the SITSS00069 skill set. Food handling (/courses/food-handling-course/) and virtual food handling SITXFSA005 (/courses/virtual-food-handling-sitxfsa005/) cover the handler level.