

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

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

Details:

In Victoria the question has two different answers depending on which document is meant. A food handler's Statement of Attainment does not expire at all . A Food Safety Supervisor certificate effectively does, because Standard 3.2.2A requires it to have been issued within the immediately preceding five years.

Most confusion about renewal comes from treating those as the same thing. This page separates them, sets out every other clock a Victorian food business is running at the same time — because there are eleven, and only one of them is the famous five years — and then explains the duty that has no clock at all and catches people precisely because of that.

Three different things get called "a food safety certificate"

| | What it is | Currency | | --- | --- | --- | | Food handler training | SITXFSA005 , or any course covering the four required topics | No expiry, no mandated refresher | | Food Safety Supervisor | SITXFSA005 plus SITXFSA006 , the SITSS00069 skill set | Certificate must have been issued within the preceding 5 years | | The NSW FSS certificate | A separate, state-issued document | 5 years from issue, statutory — and it does not exist in Victoria |

If someone has told you your food handling certificate expires after five years, they have described the second row, or imported the third.

The clause numbers make the separation cleaner still. Handler training is clause 3.2.2A—10 , the supervisor appointment is —11 , and the substantiation records are —12 . The five-year test does not live in any of those: it sits in the definitions clause —2 , inside the definition of "food safety supervisor certificate". That is why it reads as a condition on the document rather than as an expiry date.

Food handler training: no clock, but a duty that never stops

Standard 3.2.2A requires a business to ensure each food handler doing a prescribed activity has completed training before starting it — or that the handler possesses skills and knowledge commensurate with that activity. A prescribed activity 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. The training must cover four things: safe handling of food, food contamination, cleaning and sanitising of premises and equipment, and personal hygiene.

Three features follow, and all three surprise people:

No refresher period is mandated. The standard sets no expiry on handler training.

No accreditation is required , and no unit code. A free, non-accredited course covering those four topics satisfies the law. SITXFSA005 also satisfies it and adds a portable record; that is a portability argument, not a compliance one. Only the supervisor needs a certificate from an RTO or a recognised organisation.

Records are optional. The business is not required to keep records of handler training at all — and a business may recognise prior learning itself, through competency-based training, in-house education, a food safety induction completed at another food business, or relevant previous industry experience.

The duty underneath, which has no expiry because it is permanent

Here is the part that explains why "never expires" is not the same as "nothing to do".

Clause 3 of Standard 3.2.2 has applied to every Australian food business since 2000. It requires the business to ensure that persons undertaking or supervising food handling operations have skills in food safety and food hygiene matters, and knowledge of those matters, commensurate with their work activities .

That clause is outcome-based. It names no course, no certificate, no unit code and no refresher period, and it asks a present-tense question: is this person competent for what they are doing now? Its only carve-out is narrow — it does not apply to persons handling food for fundraising events at which the only food sold is not potentially hazardous, or is to be consumed immediately after thorough cooking. Standard 3.2.2A, which commenced 8 December 2023 , added a prescriptive layer on top of it for category one and two businesses. It did not replace clause 3.

So the accurate answer to "how long does my certificate last" is: the document lasts forever, the prescriptive requirement has no renewal date, and the underlying duty has no end date either. A twenty-year-old certificate is evidence towards clause 3; it is not an answer to it. And a Victorian Class 3 or Class 4 premises with no supervisor duty is not outside this — clause 3 still applies.

The Food Safety Supervisor: five years from issue

Standard 3.2.2A does not say the certificate expires. It says the business must have an FSS whose certificate was issued within the immediately preceding five years . The distinction is not pedantry:

Your Statement of Attainment never lapses . It records that you were assessed as competent on a date, and it stays linked to your Unique Student Identifier for life.

What lapses is its ability to satisfy the standard . Once it is more than five years old, the business relying on it stops complying.

So nothing is taken away from the holder. The business simply needs a certificate issued more recently.

Where the five years comes from in Victoria, stated honestly

This is the one figure on the page that deserves a provenance note, because it is usually asserted with more confidence than the sources support.

Safe Food Victoria publishes no Victorian renewal or refresher period. Its food safety supervisor page — last updated 29 June 2026 — states no expiry interval, notes that prior training "does not usually" need repeating, and confirms that superseded course codes remain valid. Read alone, the Victorian regulator's own published position looks like no clock at all.

The five years reaches Victoria through the Code. Standard 3.2.2A applies in Victoria through the Food Act 1984 as the application Act, and clause 3.2.2A—2 requires the certificate to have been "issued within the immediately preceding period of 5 years". So for a Victorian category one or two business the requirement applies — via the Code, not via a Victorian instrument.

Two practical consequences. Treat the five years as applying , because the Code applies. But if you ring your council and nobody can show you a Victorian page that says "five years", that is not evidence against it; the instrument to cite is the Code. And because Safe Food Victoria's own position is that prior training does not usually need repeating, and it actively points supervisors toward recognition of prior learning, the Victorian route back to currency is genuinely lighter than a full re-sit.

A worked timeline

| 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.

And currency is only one of three tests in Victoria

Worth knowing before you build a system around the date alone. Section 19G of the Food Act 1984 defines a food safety supervisor by three limbs, all of which must be satisfied. The person must:

know how to recognise, prevent and alleviate the hazards associated with the handling of food at, or from, the premises; and

have met an appropriate food safety competency standard for premises of the same nature — meaning a standard approved in writing by Safe Food Victoria or by an equivalent State, national or international body; and

have the ability and the authority to supervise other people handling food, and to ensure that handling is done safely.

The five-year clock attaches to limb 2 only. Limbs 1 and 3 have no clock and no document, and limb 3 is the one businesses fail without noticing: a competent casual with a current certificate but no standing to direct other staff does not satisfy s 19G. Section 19GA(3) expressly permits the proprietor to hold the role, which is often the cleanest answer for a small venue.

Which Victorian premises actually need a supervisor

Victoria classifies food premises under s 19C of the Food Act 1984, and the class is assigned by the local council based on the highest-risk activity carried out there. The class, not the job title, decides the obligation. Safe Food Victoria is the state regulator sitting above the councils; the council is your day-to-day registration authority. Where a s 19C declaration applies, s 19GA(1) puts the duty on the proprietor to ensure there is a supervisor.

| Class | Typical premises | FSS required | | --- | --- | --- | | Class 1 | Hospitals, day procedure centres, multipurpose services, residential aged care, children's services, Meals-on-Wheels-style delivery to aged or frail people at home, supported residential services where residents are mostly aged persons | Yes | | Class 2 | Restaurants, cafes, pubs, hotels, clubs, night clubs, taverns, function centres, mobile vans, sushi, chicken and pizza shops, supermarkets, delicatessens, caterers, canteens, fast food, juice bars | Yes, with a narrow community-group exemption | | Class 3A | B&Bs, farm stays, guesthouses, nature retreats and motels cooking potentially hazardous food served for immediate consumption; and hot-fill acidic products such as chutney, relish, salsa and tomato sauce, heat-treated at 85 °C or above, hot-filled and sealed, pH below 4.6, with salt, sugar or preservative added | Yes | | Class 3 | Unpackaged low-risk food, warehousing and distribution of pre-packaged food, sale of pre-packaged potentially hazardous food, shell eggs, community-group cooked ready-to-eat food, certain baked goods not needing temperature control for 24 hours | No | | Class 4 | Pre-packaged low-risk food, not-for-profit sausage sizzles, packaged cakes at temporary premises, biscuits, tea and coffee, wine tasting with cheese or low-risk ready-to-eat food, whole uncut fruit and vegetables, serving tea, coffee, alcohol, water or soft drink | No — and notifies council rather than registering |

Safe Food Victoria states the rule as Class 1, most Class 2 and Class 3A premises must have a supervisor. Class 2 is the classification that also includes clubs and night clubs, which is worth noting because Victorian premises classes and modern award coverage draw the line in different places: a Victorian Class 2 covers clubs and night clubs together, while the industrial awards separate them.

A restaurant, cafe or pub serving unpackaged ready-to-eat food will normally sit in a class that requires a supervisor. A business selling only pre-packaged shelf-stable goods generally will not.

The Class 2 community-group exemption needs all three of: the proprietor is a community group, it operates no more than two consecutive days at a time, and most food handlers are volunteers. Separately, s 19GA(2) exempts premises using a quality assurance food safety program that includes competency-based or accredited training for staff — the training condition is part of the exemption, not an optional extra.

One sector caution attaches to Class 1. Safe Food Victoria publishes HLTFS001 + HLTFS005 + HLTFS007, Release 1 of each, as the minimum competency standard for health and community services — hospitals, childcare centres, nursing homes and Meals-on-Wheels-style delivery. Those are exactly the Class 1 premises above, so the hospitality units are not the right units there, and the five-year clock in that sector runs on a different set of codes. Only HLTFS001 is on our scope, so we cannot complete that set.

This is also why the answer changes at the border. Victoria triggers the duty on premises class; New South Wales on the food being handled; Queensland on holding a food business licence. See why there are so many certificates and regulations in the food industry.

Every clock you are actually running

This is the part no single page usually sets out, and it is where businesses get caught. Read it as a diary rather than as a list of rules.

| Clock | Period | Applies to | | --- | --- | --- | | Food handler training | None | Everyone — no statutory refresher | | Clause 3 skills and knowledge | Continuous | Everyone handling or supervising food handling, since 2000 | | FSS certificate currency, cl 3.2.2A—2 | 5 years from issue | Class 1, most Class 2, Class 3A | | Council request for FSS details, s 19GB | 7 days from a written request | Any Victorian premises with an FSS duty | | Category one substantiation records, cl 3.2.2A—12 | 3 months, accessible at the premises | Businesses that process unpackaged potentially hazardous food into ready-to-eat food | | Notification of a change of premises or activity, cl 4 of Standard 3.2.2 | Before it happens | Every food business | | QLD: supervisor in place after a licence issues, s 86 | 30 days, then continuously | Queensland licensees | | QLD: notify the council of the supervisor's name and contact details, s 88 | 30 days of licence issue, then 14 days of any change | Queensland licensees | | NSW: trading while a replacement supervisor is appointed | Not more than 30 days — a statutory defence, not an entitlement | NSW businesses | | NSW: recertification after a certificate expires | 90 days, then the full course | NSW certificate holders | | NSW: RTO must issue the state certificate after completion | 10 working days | NSW approved RTOs | | Victorian RSA currency | 3 years, for every certificate holder | Venues serving alcohol | | Employee records | 7 years | Any employer |

Section 19GB is worth knowing by number. The proprietor must provide written details of the name and qualifications of the current food safety supervisor to the registration authority within seven days of being asked in writing. The maximum penalty is 20 penalty units for a natural person and 100 penalty units for a body corporate; the infringement penalty in the schedule is much smaller, 2 and 3 penalty units respectively. Practically, that turns supervisor currency into a filing problem as much as a training one — you have a week to find the certificate.

The Victorian inversion worth noticing

Victoria attaches penalty units to the paperwork duty and none at all to the substantive one. Section 19GB carries the penalties above. Section 19GA — the requirement to have a supervisor in the first place — carries no monetary penalty. Its sanction is registration-based: failing to comply is a ground for refusal of registration or renewal, or for revocation or suspension of the registration of the premises.

That is not the lighter outcome. New South Wales and Queensland both fine you for the same failure — NSW up to 50 penalty units for an individual and 100 for a corporation, Queensland up to 50 under s 86. Victoria goes for the registration the business trades on. Penalty unit values are indexed annually, so confirm current amounts with the regulator rather than converting them to dollars here.

The substantiation row catches people who assume food safety record-keeping is a long-term obligation. Category one — a caterer or food service operation that processes unpackaged potentially hazardous food into ready-to-eat food, which is most Class 2 premises — must keep substantiation records across eight practice areas for three months, accessible at the premises. Category two, which only slices, weighs, repacks, reheats or hot-holds, carries no records duty at all. The whole difference between the two categories is that one clause. See how long do I need to keep records for.

One duty with no clock but a hard trigger: under clause 4 of Standard 3.2.2 a food business must notify the enforcement agency before commencing food handling operations — contact details and the proprietor's business address, the nature of the business, and the location of all premises in that agency's jurisdiction — and must notify changes before they occur. Since Victorian councils classify on the highest-risk activity, a change of menu can be a change of class, and that is one of the changes this clause wants notified in advance.

Refreshing when nothing forces you to

Food handler training has no renewal requirement, which is not the same as saying nothing changes. Standard 3.2.2A itself only commenced on 8 December 2023, and allergen management practice in particular has moved considerably — a person trained years ago may be working to superseded guidance. Clause 3's present-tense test is the reason that matters.

Victoria is the most accommodating of the four states on this. Recognition of prior learning and recognition of current competency are actively encouraged, superseded course codes remain valid, and Safe Food Victoria's own page says prior training does not usually need repeating. So a refresh often does not mean repeating everything from scratch.

The two mechanisms are different and it is worth using the right word:

| | Recognition of prior learning | Credit transfer | | --- | --- | --- | | Standard | 1.6 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs | 1.7 | | Recognises | Skills gained without formal training | A unit already certified at any RTO | | Assessment? | Yes, against the same evidence | None |

Both are raised at the pre-training review, required under Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for registered training organisations — which is a different instrument from the National Code 2018, whose own Standard 2.2 deals with overseas students' course entry. See skills assessment.

Compare, because people move: Queensland expressly excludes RPL for the five-yearly FSS recertification, where Victoria encourages it. Queensland Health states it flatly — the complete course must be repeated every five years, or a refresher taken where an RTO offers one. Those are opposite answers to an identical question, and a group operating in both states cannot run one model.

Victorian RSG is free approved training: online modules through RSG Online and venue-arranged sessions with venue support workers. National SITHGAM training does not replace it. See the official training requirements and our RSG guide.

Crossing the border into New South Wales

A Victorian FSS moving to NSW is not automatically compliant, and the NSW regime is the clearest illustration of what a real expiry rule looks like.

There is a reason only NSW is different, and it is one 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).

The certificate must come from a training organisation approved by the NSW Food Authority under Food Act 2003 (NSW) s 106H . The Authority must prepare and maintain 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 carries a Food Authority approval number separate from its national RTO code , so verifying a NSW course means checking two registers and two numbers.

The certificate itself is defined at s 106B(3) : a document stating the holder is qualified to be a food safety supervisor, issued in accordance with the regulations by an approved training organisation.

Four mandatory key focus areas are prescribed: allergen management, cleaning and sanitising, safe egg handling, and Food Act offences . The Authority also caps what an approved RTO may charge to issue the certificate , separately from the training fee — confirm the current cap with the Authority rather than relying on a figure printed anywhere, including here.

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.

A recertification course may only be offered up to 90 days after the certificate's expiry date. After that window closes, the complete Food Safety Supervisor course must be done again. Recertification is available only to someone who already holds or held a NSW certificate, and it must be completed with a single approved RTO rather than split across providers.

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

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.

One person may not be the FSS for two premises — s 106B(1)(b).

NSW permits eligible temporary interstate workers to use approved interstate RSA certification if they remain resident outside NSW, can produce the required evidence and understand NSW liquor obligations. Permanent movers and people performing security or RSA marshal duties must meet NSW training and competency-card requirements; eligible holders can use bridging instead of the full NSW RSA course. Bridging eligibility requires certification within five years for QLD, WA, SA or TAS, or a national Statement of Attainment or RSA refresher within three years for VIC, ACT or NT. See the NSW recognition and bridging rules .

Going the other way is simpler: a NSW-trained person arriving in Victoria relies on the underlying Statement of Attainment, subject to the same five-year currency test.

We are not on the NSW Food Authority's approved provider list , so we cannot issue the NSW certificate. Queensland and Western Australia both accept an interstate Statement of Attainment; Western Australia names SITSS00069 by code, and its published provider list is a convenience listing of self-notified RTOs rather than an approval register — so a claim to be "WA-approved" describes a scheme that does not exist.

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 and make an issue date harder to prove.

One verification wrinkle: we appear on the national register under six trading names, five current. The sixth, Complete Healthcare Training , ran from 24 October 2023 to 19 April 2025, so a certificate issued in that name is still an RTO 3722 credential even though the name is no longer in use.

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 .

Registered since 1 June 1994; current registration, exercised by ASQA, runs to 30 June 2032. SITSS00068 Food Handling and SITSS00069 Food Safety Supervision are both on scope at the extent "Deliver and assess", and have been since 10 June 2022 . Of the Victorian health sector units, only HLTFS001 is on our scope.

See also food handling , Food Safety Supervisor , how long does an FSS certificate last in Victoria and who needs a food handling certificate in Victoria .

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.

Does a Victorian food handling certificate expire?

No. The Statement of Attainment does not expire and Standard 3.2.2A mandates no refresher for handlers. The five-year window applies to Food Safety Supervisor certification.

My employer says mine has expired after five years.

They are applying the FSS rule, an interstate rule, or their own policy. Ask which — handler training has no statutory currency period in Victoria.

Which clause sets which clock?

Handler training is clause 3.2.2A—10 and sets none. The supervisor appointment is —11. The three-month records duty is —12. The five-year currency test sits in the definitions clause —2.

Does Safe Food Victoria publish the five-year rule?

No. Its food safety 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 clause 3.2.2A—2 applied by the Food Act 1984. Treat it as applying, but cite the Code rather than a Victorian page.

If it never expires, is there really nothing to renew?

Nothing to renew, but clause 3 of Standard 3.2.2 has asked since 2000 whether people undertaking or supervising food handling are competent now. That is a present-tense test, not a document check.

Does handler training have to be accredited?

No. A free, non-accredited course covering the four required topics satisfies the law, and no unit code is required. The accredited unit buys portability and verifiable proof.

Who decides my premises class?

The local council, based on the highest-risk food activity conducted there. Safe Food Victoria sits above the councils as the state regulator.

Does every staff member need to be a Food Safety Supervisor?

No. Food handler training applies broadly; the supervisor is a single nominated role, who must also be reasonably available to advise handlers and, in Victoria, must have the authority to direct them under s 19G.

Is a current certificate enough to make someone the supervisor in Victoria?

No. Section 19G sets three tests: hazard knowledge for those premises, an approved competency standard, and the ability and authority to supervise. Currency attaches to the middle one only.

Is a refresher enough for the FSS, or do I redo the course?

In Victoria a refresher or RPL pathway is available and Safe Food Victoria says prior training does not usually need repeating. In Queensland the complete course must be repeated and RPL is excluded. Do not carry one state's answer into the other.

Can I use RPL to renew in Victoria?

Yes, and it is actively encouraged. Superseded course codes also remain valid. Queensland excludes RPL for the same renewal.

What is the difference between RPL and credit transfer?

RPL, under Standard 1.6, assesses prior skills, learning and experience. Credit transfer, under Standard 1.7, recognises a unit already certified at any RTO with no reassessment. 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 (<https://www.asqa.gov.au/for-providers/standards-for-RTOs/practice-guides/quality-area-1-training-and-assessment/RPL-and-credit-transfer-practice-guide>).

How long do I keep temperature records?

Three months, if you are category one, accessible at the premises. Category two businesses have no records duty.

What is the penalty in Victoria for having no supervisor?

There is none in money. Section 19GA carries no monetary penalty; the sanction is refusal, revocation or suspension of the premises' registration. The penalty units in Victoria attach to the s 19GB paperwork duty instead, which is the inversion worth knowing.

Is a Victorian certificate valid in New South Wales?

The nationally recognised units are, at handler level. The NSW Food Safety Supervisor certificate is a separate document that must come from an NSW Food Authority approved provider — we are not on that list.

What happens in NSW if a certificate lapses?

A recertification course can only be offered up to 90 days after the expiry date; after that the whole course is repeated, and it must be delivered by an approved RTO that offers recertification. The NSW Food Authority (<https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/fss-food-safety-supervisors>) says some approved RTOs offer that pathway. There is also a statutory defence covering not more than 30 days of trading while a replacement supervisor is appointed.

What are the Queensland clocks?

Section 86 requires a supervisor within 30 days of the licence issuing, and continuously thereafter. Section 88 requires the council to be told the supervisor's name and contact details within 30 days of licence issue, and within 14 days of any change. Each carries up to 50 penalty units.

How do I check the issue date?

It is printed on the Statement of Attainment, and appears in your USI transcript. If the paper is lost, the issuing RTO can reissue.

What happens the day after five years?

The business is non-compliant. Your credential is unaffected as a record of competency.

Do I get a reminder?

Not from the regulator. Diarise from the issue date, and leave a few months' margin to book a course. In Victoria, remember the council can ask for the supervisor's details in writing and you have seven days to answer.