

What Food Safety Certificate Do I Need? – Complete Hospitality Training

Canonical: <https://cht.edu.au/news/what-food-safety-certificate-do-i-need/>

Details:

Short answer: it depends on what you do , which state you are in , and which sector you work in . Those three questions have different answers, and people routinely get the wrong certificate because they only asked the first one.

This page is the decision guide. For the standard behind the obligation see Standard 3.2.2A ; for the supervisor role in detail see Food Safety Supervisor certificate ; for the enrolment process see how to get a Food Safety Supervisor certificate .

Start with the role

There are two distinct levels, and conflating them is the most common and most expensive error in this area.

| | Food handler | Food Safety Supervisor | | --- | --- | --- | | Who needs 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 | | Clause | 3.2.2A—10 | 3.2.2A—11, with the currency test in the definitions clause —2 | | Hospitality unit | SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety | SITXFSA005 plus SITXFSA006 | | Skill set | SITSS00068 Food Handling | SITSS00069 Food Safety Supervision | | Must it be accredited? | No — a free, non-accredited course satisfies the law, and no unit code is required | Yes — it must be a certificate from an RTO or a body the state recognises | | Refresher period | None mandated | Five years from issue | | What you receive | Statement of Attainment (if accredited) | Statement of Attainment — plus a state certificate in NSW |

SITXFSA005 on its own does not make you a Food Safety Supervisor in any Australian state. It satisfies the food handler training requirement under Standard 3.2.2A everywhere, and nothing more. If you have done a one-day food handling course and been told you are now your venue's FSS, you are not. The difference between the two skill sets is exactly one unit.

Supervision is not the alternative to training

One widespread piece of misinformation is worth killing early: that an untrained person may handle food so long as a trained colleague is supervising them. Under clause 3.2.2A—10 the alternative to completed training is possessing skills and knowledge commensurate with the specific prescribed activity — not being supervised.

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. That is the trigger for every obligation on this page, and the training must be complete before it starts.

Supervision does appear in the standard, but in the separate Food Safety Supervisor tool, where the FSS must be reasonably available to advise and supervise handlers. That obligation runs alongside handler training; it does not replace it. The "trained or supervised" framing predates Standard 3.2.2A, which commenced on 8 December 2023 .

The one that surprises people: handler training does not have to be accredited

Standard 3.2.2A requires a food handler doing a prescribed activity to have completed training covering four things — safe handling of food, food contamination, cleaning and sanitising of premises and equipment, and personal hygiene — or to possess skills and knowledge commensurate with that activity. It does not require a nationally recognised unit, does not require a named unit code, sets no expiry, and does not require the business to keep records of the training. Only the supervisor needs a certificate from an RTO or a recognised organisation.

Prior learning also counts, 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.

So a free council or regulator course is legally sufficient for a food handler. What an accredited unit like SITXFSA005 adds is portability : a Statement of Attainment sits on your national training transcript against your USI, follows you between employers and states, and credit-transfers into a qualification later. That is an employability argument, not a compliance one — and it is worth knowing which argument you are being sold.

The supervisor level is the opposite. There the certificate is mandatory, it must come from an RTO or a state-recognised body, and it must have been issued within the preceding five years.

And the answer might be "nothing new, but not nothing"

If you conclude that neither tool catches you, there is still a third thing to check, and it predates both. Clause 3 of Standard 3.2.2 has applied to every Australian food business since 2000 : the business must ensure persons undertaking or supervising food handling operations have skills in, and knowledge of, food safety and food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activities .

It names no course, no certificate, no unit code and no refresher period — so it can be satisfied with no certificate at all, provided the competence is genuinely there. Its one 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 added a prescriptive layer on top for categories one and two; it did not replace clause 3. So "we are not category one or two" answers the question about tools, not the question about competence.

Then the sector

The unit set changes by sector, and in two states the health sector requirement is the published minimum rather than one option among several.

| Sector | Units | | --- | --- | | Hospitality — cafe, restaurant, pub, catering | SITXFSA005 + SITXFSA006 , or SIRRFSA001 in Victoria | | Retail — food retail, supermarket | SIRRFSA001 , or the two hospitality units | | Health and community services — aged care, hospitals, childcare | HLTFS001 + HLTFS005 + HLTFS007 , Release 1 of each — the published minimum in Victoria and QLD | | Food processing | FBPF002 , or FBPF010 in QLD |

So a hospitality FSS certificate does not make someone the Food Safety Supervisor of an aged care kitchen in Victoria or Queensland. That sector needs the HLT units. This catches organisations that run both a cafe and a care facility and assume one supervisor covers both.

Four points of precision, because this table is commonly misstated in a way that sends people to the wrong provider:

Standard 3.2.2A names no sector units at all. Every entry above is a state determination, published by Safe Food Victoria and by Queensland Health.

New South Wales names no sector-specific units in its published supervisor requirements. A page telling you the HLTFS units are mandatory in NSW is telling you something NSW has not published.

Western Australia publishes HLTSS00061 — the same three HLTFSSE units bundled as a skill set — as an accepted equivalent rather than a sector mandate, and does not confine health or childcare businesses to it.

Safe Food Victoria accepts SIRRFSA001 and the hospitality pair as alternatives to each other for both hospitality and retail, so the hospitality pair covers a Victorian deli as well as a restaurant. It also confirms there is no Victorian requirement to train beyond the minimum competencies listed, so an upsell for Victorian compliance is an upsell.

One availability caution: SIRRFSA001 carries an end date of 28 June 2024 on our scope. It is a unit people hold and that Safe Food Victoria still names, not one we enrol anyone in today. A code appearing in a regulator's table is not the same as a course you can book.

Then the state

Before the table, the reason the state column exists at all. 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. Limb (b) is an open door written into the national standard, and New South Wales is the only state that has walked through it. Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia rely on limb (a) alone — which is why in those three the RTO's Statement of Attainment is the certificate, and in NSW it is a second, separate document.

| | What you need | | --- | --- | | Victoria | The nationally recognised Statement of Attainment is the artefact. No state certificate, no state RTO approval. Trigger is your premises class under s 19C — Class 1, most Class 2 and Class 3A need an FSS; Classes 3 and 4 do not. Under s 19G the supervisor needs hazard knowledge for those premises, a competency standard approved in writing by Safe Food Victoria, and the ability and authority to supervise. s 19GA(3) lets the proprietor hold the role; s 19GA(2) exempts premises using a QA food safety program that includes competency-based or accredited staff training. Council may ask in writing for the FSS's name and qualifications, answerable within 7 days, s 19GB. RPL for the five-yearly refresh is actively encouraged, and superseded course codes remain valid | | New South Wales | The Statement of Attainment plus a separate NSW FSS certificate, defined at s 106B(3) and issued by a provider approved by the NSW Food Authority under s 106H — an approved RTO carries a Food Authority approval number separate from its national RTO code, on a list revised at least annually, and must issue the certificate within 10 working days of completion. Statutory 5 years from issue. A copy must be kept on the premises, or at the proprietor's business address for mobile catering, under s 106G — penalties of 25/50 units, with 50/100 for the appointment duty itself. The certificate covers four mandatory key focus areas: allergen management, cleaning and sanitising, safe egg handling and Food Act offences | | Queensland | Trigger is holding a food business licence under s 86, which is broader than Standard 3.2.2A — a licensable food business is one involving food manufacture, retail sale of unpackaged food by an entity other than a non-profit, or sale on at least 12 days each financial year of meals prepared by a non-profit. The supervisor must be in place within 30 days of the licence and continuously after that. Any RTO will do — Queensland Health says it does not matter where the RTO is located. Notify the council of the supervisor's name and contact details within 30 days of licence and 14 days of any change, s 88. RPL is expressly excluded for the five-yearly recertification | | Western Australia | Category one or two per Standard 3.2.2A, applied directly under the Food Act 2008. SITSS00069 is the named skill set, with SIRRFSA001, HLTSS00061 and the superseded SITSS00051 published as accepted equivalents. Five years. Online delivery expressly accepted |

Three NSW rules with no equivalent elsewhere. One person may not be the FSS for more than one premises — s 106B(1)(b) is a statutory bar, not a guideline. Recertification must be done through a single approved RTO within 90 days of expiry, and is available only to someone who already holds or held a NSW certificate; past 90 days the full course applies, and there is a narrow statutory defence allowing not more than 30 days of trading while a replacement is appointed. And NSW is the only one of the four that does not recognise an interstate certificate at all.

One Queensland rule worth knowing. RPL will not be accepted for the five-yearly recertification, even though it is accepted for initial competency and encouraged in Victoria.

And one Victorian rule that surprises people. No monetary penalty attaches to s 19GA, the duty to have a supervisor at all. The Victorian sanction is registration-based: refusal of registration or renewal, or revocation or suspension of the premises' registration. NSW and Queensland both fine you instead. Victoria is not the lenient jurisdiction; it prices the failure as the business rather than as a sum of money.

A note on the other four jurisdictions

The comparison above covers Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, because those are the four whose requirements have been verified against the regulators' own material. South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory apply Standard 3.2.2A through their own food law as well, and this page does not state their positions rather than guess at them. If you are in one of those four, confirm with your state or territory health department or local council before relying on anything here.

Does the business need a supervisor at all?

Both category one and category two businesses do. The distinction decides something else — the records, at clause 3.2.2A—12. That one clause is the whole difference in obligation between the categories.

Category one is a caterer or food service operation that processes unpackaged potentially hazardous food into food that is both potentially hazardous and ready to eat. Restaurants, cafes, pubs, fast food, bakeries, hospitals, aged care, childcare, school canteens, mobile vendors, and any supermarket or service station that makes and serves food. In practice: if you have a kitchen and you cook, you are category one.

Category two is retail sale of ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food the business did not make — with slicing, weighing, repacking, reheating and hot-holding expressly not counting as making it. Delicatessens, butchers, seafood retailers, some supermarkets and convenience stores.

Only category one carries the third management tool: records substantiating compliance across eight practice areas, kept three months and accessible at the premises. See how long do I need to keep records for.

Food handling at fundraising events raising funds solely for community or charitable purposes is exempt from Standard 3.2.2A — but not from state law that uses a different trigger, so a Queensland non-profit selling prepared meals on at least 12 days a financial year is a licensable food business and still needs an FSS. And clause 3 of Standard 3.2.2 has its own, narrower carve-out, so the two exemptions are not interchangeable.

How to check a course is what it claims

This is where money gets wasted, and the checks take a minute.

Does it name the unit codes? A real FSS course names SITXFSA006 (with SITXFSA005), or the sector equivalents above. A course that only promises a "food safety certificate" is not telling you what you will hold.

Does it name an RTO number? Only a Registered Training Organisation can issue a nationally recognised Statement of Attainment. Search the RTO number on training.gov.au and confirm the units are on its current national scope, then confirm delivery in your state and suitability for your sector directly with the provider.

What document will you receive? A Statement of Attainment is the nationally recognised outcome. A "Certificate of Achievement" or "Certificate of Completion" with no unit code and no RTO number is not — and for a supervisor it will not satisfy a regulator. In Victoria it will also fail the s 19G test, because limb 2 requires a standard approved in writing and a document naming no unit cannot evidence one.

If NSW, is the provider on the NSW Food Authority's list? That list, not the provider's own marketing, is the authority. ASQA registration is not the same as NSW Food Authority approval, and the two numbers are different.

But check whether the state list is an approval scheme at all. This is the mirror-image trap. NSW's list is an approval scheme, under s 106H. Western Australia's is not — WA Health publishes a table of RTOs offering food safety supervision training, including interstate providers, but it is a convenience listing of self-notified providers. WA requires national registration, not WA approval. A provider absent from WA's table is not disqualified, and a provider claiming to be "WA-approved" is describing a scheme that does not exist.

Does the assessment look plausible? The units are assessed by demonstration — SITXFSA005 requires four practices shown on at least three occasions each, and SITXFSA006 requires hazard control at nine critical control points plus temperature probe calibration. A supervisor course advertised as a 30-minute quiz is not delivering that. The useful question is not how many hours the course runs but across how many assessment occasions hand washing is observed.

What the units actually assess

Knowing this also tells you whether a course is real.

SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety — hygienic food handling in line with organisational procedures, demonstrating each of the following on at least three occasions : correct hand-washing procedures; appropriate use of uniform and personal protective equipment; effective personal health and hygiene practices; hygienic food service. Plus the procedures to report unsafe hygiene practices.

SITXFSA006 Participate in safe food handling practices — the correct methods of controlling food hazards at each of nine critical control points : receiving, storing, preparing, processing, displaying, serving, packaging, transporting, disposing. Plus the procedure to calibrate a temperature probe, and the procedure to report incidents of food contamination.

The first is about your own conduct. The second is about the whole system, HACCP-style — which is why it is the supervisor's unit. Probe calibration is the practically important one: every temperature record on a premises depends on the probe being accurate.

What we can issue you

We hold both skill sets on our scope of registration, since 10 June 2022, and deliver the underlying units.

Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia — our Statement of Attainment is the compliance artefact for the hospitality pathway, and in Victoria for the retail sector too, because Safe Food Victoria accepts the hospitality pair and SIRRFSA001 as alternatives to each other.

New South Wales — we provide the correct national units and a valid Statement of Attainment, but we are not on the NSW Food Authority's approved provider list, verified by reading that list in full on 1 September 2026. We cannot issue the NSW FSS certificate, and the four NSW mandatory key focus areas are not certified through us. If you need to comply in NSW, you need a provider from the Authority's list.

Health and community services, and food processing — we are not the right provider either. Of the three health units Victoria and Queensland publish for that sector, only HLTFSE001 is on our scope. HLTFSE005, HLTFSE007 and FBPFSA2002 are not. A hospital, aged care, childcare or food

processing business needs a provider whose scope carries all the units its sector requires.

Both limits are worth stating directly rather than leaving you to discover them at an inspection.

Quick decision guide

| If you are | You need | | --- | --- | | A kitchen hand or waiter handling food | Food handler training — SITXFSA005 , or any course covering the four required topics | | A food handler who wants the credential to travel with you | The accredited unit SITXFSA005 , for the Statement of Attainment | | An experienced cook who has never done a course | Possibly nothing — commensurate skills and knowledge can satisfy the handler requirement. The accredited unit still gives you a record | | Outside categories one and two altogether | No tools, but clause 3 of Standard 3.2.2 still requires commensurate skills and knowledge | | The nominated supervisor in a VIC, QLD or WA hospitality venue | SITXFSA005 + SITXFSA006 | | The nominated supervisor in a NSW venue | Those units and a NSW FSS certificate from an approved provider | | The nominated supervisor for two NSW venues | Two people. One person cannot cover both | | The nominated supervisor for two Victorian venues | One person can, if each relevant council is satisfied — and each council separately where the venues are in different municipalities | | Running food service in aged care, a hospital or childcare in Victoria or QLD | The three HLTFSSE units, from a provider that holds all three | | In food retail | SIRRFS001 , or the two hospitality units | | The owner of a small venue | Consider being the supervisor yourself — Victoria's s 19GA(3) expressly permits it | | A category one business | Both tools plus the substantiation records, three months, on premises | | A category two business | Both tools, no records obligation | | Renewing after five years | Check your state — QLD will not accept RPL, VIC encourages it, NSW has a 90-day window and a single-RTO rule |

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 .

Two limits stated plainly: we are not approved by the NSW Food Authority and cannot issue the NSW FSS certificate; and of the health sector units only HLTFSSE001 is on our scope.

See also Food Safety Supervisor , food handling , virtual food handling , Standard 3.2.2A explained 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.

Is a food handling certificate enough?

For a food handler, yes. For a Food Safety Supervisor, no — that needs SITXFSA006 as well, and the difference between the two skill sets is exactly that one unit.

Can an untrained person work under a trained colleague's supervision?

Not as the stated alternative. Clause 3.2.2A—10 offers completed training or commensurate skills and knowledge. Supervision sits in the separate Food Safety Supervisor obligation and does not substitute for handler training.

Does food handler training have to be accredited?

No. Standard 3.2.2A accepts a non-accredited course covering the four required topics, requires no unit code, and free options exist. An accredited unit adds portability rather than compliance.

What exactly is a "prescribed activity"?

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. It is the trigger for all three of the standard's tools.

We are not category one or two. Do we need anything?

Not the three tools. But clause 3 of Standard 3.2.2 has applied since 2000 and requires skills and knowledge commensurate with the work, for anyone handling or supervising food handling. No course is prescribed, and no certificate — only the competence.

Does food handler training expire?

Standard 3.2.2A mandates no refresher period for handlers. The duty on the business is to keep handlers' skills and knowledge current. The five-year clock applies to the supervisor's certificate.

Does my supervisor certificate expire?

A Statement of Attainment does not expire as a record of competency. But clause 3.2.2A—2 requires the certificate the business relies on to have been issued within the preceding five years, so it stops satisfying the standard. In Victoria an RTO may recognise prior learning or current competency. In Queensland a new certificate is required at least every five years and RPL is not accepted (<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/food-pantry/running-a-food-business/other-requirements/food-safety-tools-standard>); the RTO may use a full course or an available refresher pathway.

Why does only New South Wales issue its own certificate?

Because Standard 3.2.2A allows it. The Standard defines a supervisor certificate as certification by either a registered training organisation or an organisation recognised by the relevant authority under the state's Act, and NSW is the only state to have exercised that second limb.

In Victoria, is the right course enough to make someone the supervisor?

No. Section 19G of the Food Act 1984 requires three things: knowing how to recognise, prevent and alleviate the hazards at those premises; having met a competency standard approved in writing by Safe Food Victoria or an equivalent body; and having the ability and the authority to supervise other food handlers. The course answers only the middle limb.

I hold a Victorian certificate and I am moving to NSW.

You will need the NSW state-issued FSS certificate from an approved provider. The Victorian Statement of Attainment does not substitute for it, though it is a prerequisite.

I hold a NSW certificate and I am moving to Victoria.

That direction works. Victoria, Queensland and WA all recognise a Statement of Attainment from any Australian RTO.

Can I do this online?

Food handling, commonly — see virtual food handling (/courses/virtual-food-handling-sitxfsa005/). For supervisor level, WA expressly accepts online delivery and publishes an online-course column in its provider table, and Victoria and Queensland impose no restriction; NSW certification has additional constraints, so check before enrolling.

Is the WA provider list an approval scheme?

No. It is a convenience listing of self-notified providers. WA requires national registration, not WA approval, so a Statement of Attainment from any nationally registered RTO is valid there whether or not the provider appears on the list. NSW is the opposite case.

Do I need a USI?

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 (<https://www.usi.gov.au/students/create-your-usi/exemptions-usi>). A USI is free at [usi.gov.au](https://www.usi.gov.au) (<https://www.usi.gov.au/>). If you already have one, recover it rather than creating another.

We only reheat and slice. Do we still need a supervisor?

Yes. That makes you category two, which requires both trained handlers and a supervisor. What you avoid is the category one records obligation at clause 3.2.2A—12.

Who has to hold the certificate — me or my employer?

The credential is yours and stays on your national transcript against your USI. The compliance obligation is the business's.

How many supervisors does a business need?

One, who must be reasonably available — on site or genuinely contactable. In NSW that person cannot also cover another premises, so a multi-site NSW group needs one per site; in Victoria one person can cover several if each council is satisfied. A seven-day operation should think about coverage on the supervisor's days off.

What if my state is not in your table?

South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the ACT are not covered here because their positions have not been verified against their regulators' own material. Confirm with your state or territory health department or council.