

# SUITABILITY OF CHEMICALS USED IN FOOD BUSINESSES

Food businesses use chemicals to keep their premises clean and pest free. While there are many chemicals available, not all are suitable for use in the food environment.

## Evidence of suitability of chemicals

All food businesses in NSW are required to have documented evidence that the chemicals they use in their food handling areas are suitable for use in the food environment.

Evidence of suitability includes:

- copies of labels from chemical containers supported by a letter from the manufacturer
- written statements on product information sheets from the manufacturer such as 'suitable for use in kitchens and food preparation areas'
- an approval number from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) where the label or instructions note that the chemical is suitable for use in food preparation areas. Note older registrations may be listed with an 'NRA approval number'

During food safety audits and inspections, businesses may be asked to provide evidence that these chemicals are suitable for use in the food environment. Failure to provide the evidence may result in failure of the audit.

Food businesses must have factsheets or directions for use from the manufacturers and must train staff properly in the effective use of all chemicals. The training will also be assessed for compliance by the food safety auditor.

Chemicals this applies to

Any chemicals that could contaminate food, food surfaces or food in storage must be suitable for use in the food environment. This includes:

- pest control sprays, fumigants and baits
- detergents
- hand sanitisers (e.g. alcohol gel)
- general cleaners.

## Material safety data sheets

Material safety data sheets (MSDS) do not provide proof of suitability for using a chemical in the food environment.

MSDS provide information about safe handling and storage of products. They are an essential part of a business's occupational health and safety program and WorkCover requires them to be on the premises.

## Implementing safe use of chemicals

- Check the chemicals currently in use and replace any that are not suitable or have expired
- Keep the chemicals document file up-to-date
- Train and update staff on chemical use, and maintain training records

## More information

- visit the Food Authority's website at [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry)
- phone the helpline on 1300 552 406



Department of  
Primary Industries  
Food Authority



About the NSW Food Authority: The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled. It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to minimise food poisoning by providing information about and regulating the safe production, storage, transport, promotion and preparation of food.

Note: This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).



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More resources at [foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)



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