

February Food Safety News: Training Volunteers in Food Safety

Do volunteers need formal training?

People who are preparing, handling or transporting food in a Meals on Wheels service must have skills and knowledge in safe food handling that is relevant to their responsibilities. This may include a range of training activities such as;

- ◆ Formal training off-site (for example at the local TAFE college);
- ◆ Formal on-site training by an external training provider;
- ◆ Formal on-site training by the Supervisor;
- ◆ Distribution of food safety videos, DVDs or handouts to volunteers; or
- ◆ Distribution and discussion of Meals on Wheels food safety handouts which is documented in meeting minutes or in the manager's diary (e.g. a short 10 minute hygiene talk as part of a meeting);
- ◆ Using resources such as Glitterbug cream and lamps which highlights how easy it is for cross contamination to occur.

What should volunteers be trained in?

Based on their responsibilities, volunteers might be trained in topics such as:-

- ◆ Time and temperature controls
- ◆ Cleaning / wash up procedures
- ◆ Safe transport of food
- ◆ Personal hygiene
- ◆ Cross contamination
- ◆ Safe food storage
- ◆ Separation of raw and cooked foods
- ◆ Potentially hazardous food types
- ◆ Safe handling of cleaning chemicals

Which volunteers should receive more training?

Food handlers should have knowledge and skills appropriate to the type of food they are preparing, particularly if it is potentially hazardous or is not going to be thoroughly cooked immediately prior to consumption.

Some volunteers will only need to receive very basic information on food safety while others will need more extensive training.

Examples of the types of training required by volunteers

For instance:-

- ◆ A volunteer who is receiving and delivering hot or cold meals will need to be trained in safe food transport and time and temperature controls;
- ◆ A volunteer making low risk vegemite sandwiches would not require any formal training but would have to understand how to prevent cross contamination, personal hygiene, cleaning procedures etc.;
- ◆ A volunteer making high risk meat or egg based sandwiches would have to be trained in temperature controls, personal hygiene, safe cleaning methods and how to avoid cross contamination; and
- ◆ A volunteer who was making a large number of hot meals with numerous ingredients would need to understand temperature control and how to avoid cross contamination.

How can you assess volunteer's skills and knowledge?

It is important to record each volunteers training in different areas on the site Training Record. This will assist when the NSW Food Authority visit to conduct an audit to prove that your organisation has evidence that there is a system for training staff and volunteers in food safety.

For Further Information

Refer to the NSW Meals on Wheels web site for further information on food safety training options and information.

The NSW Food Authority and FSANZ (Food Standards Australia New Zealand) web sites have useful handouts for training staff:

www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumer/c-factsheets.asp

www.foodstandards.gov.au/newsroom/factsheets/foodsafetyfactsheets/