

Information document on food control functions included under municipal health services to be rendered by metro and district municipalities as provided for by the National Health Act, 2003 (Act No. 61 of 2003)

Food Control is described by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a mandatory regulatory activity of enforcement by national or local authorities to provide consumer protection and ensure that all foods during production, handling, storage, processing and distribution are safe, wholesome and fit for human consumption; conform to quality and safety requirements; and are honestly and accurately labelled as prescribed by law

Food Control as included in the definition of 'municipal health services' in the National Health Act, 2003 (Act 61 of 2003), *inter alia*, includes:

- Enforcement of the food related provisions of the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act 54 of 1972) and Regulations.
- Enforcement of the food hygiene and safety related provisions of the Health Act, 1977 (Act 63 of 1977) and Regulations.
- Comment on draft new/amendment legislation and national guidelines made available by the National Department of Health or other Departments relevant to their food control function.

- Monitor on behalf of the provincial departments of health the provision of foodstuffs at designated ports of entry and on aircraft in terms of the provisions of the International Health Regulations Act, 1974 (Act 28 of 1974).
- Implement control programmes for specific high risk foodstuffs such as milk, meat, eggs, sea foods fresh produce and prepared foods, including street foods.
- Investigate outbreaks/ incidences of food borne diseases (infections and poisonings) and introduce appropriate preventative control measures.
- Carry out routine inspections of food handling establishments (premises) and of foodstuffs covered by the relevant legislation.
- Present food safety related education/training programmes and conduct community development programmes for, *inter alia*, food handlers (formal and informal sector), schools, industry, consumers, etc.
- Implement national and local food monitoring and sampling programmes, with specific reference to the Primary School Nutrition Scheme, aflatoxin and Food Fortification Programme.
- Implement measures for the recall and/or condemnation and proper disposal of foodstuffs unfit for human consumption in accordance with applicable legislative procedures.
- Investigate all food quality and safety related complaints received from consumers and introduce appropriate remedial measures.
- Ensure effective inter- and intra-sectoral co-operation with other competent food control authorities, such as Department of Agriculture, SABS, PPECB, etc, and components within the health system such as nutrition, primary health care services, communicable disease control, etc.

- Provide information and advice to consumers, industry and other Departments and health workers on all food safety related matters.
- Support industry with regard to the health certification of consignments of foodstuffs destined for export and with special monitoring programmes implemented by approved certifying authorities, (Agriculture, SABS, etc) aimed at promoting the export of foodstuffs to other countries.
- Support Port Health Services regarding the monitoring of imported foodstuffs for which an extended detention order has been issued, or which have been released by Customs prior to clearance by the mentioned services.
- Support through monitoring activities the promotion of better nutrition for the South African population as part of the National Food Fortification Programme of the Department of Health.
- Promote the utilization of the HACCP and other quality assurance management systems aimed at enhancing food safety within the food industry.
- Implement an appropriate food control programme management information system as part of a national information system for Environmental Health Services.