­­Approved by the Director of Public Health  
under section 86(1A) of the *Food Act 2003*

Food Business

Risk-Classification System

Effective 1 February 2022 (v2.0)



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This document contains the legal framework for councils to classify food businesses  
for registration and notification purposes under the *Food Act 2003*

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# Approval Statement & Version Notes

## Approval statement

I, Dr Mark Veitch, being and as the Director of Public Health, acting pursuant to section 86(1A) of the *Food Act 2003* (the Act)*,* hereby:

1. approve this document, being the *Food Business Risk-Classification System*, as the approved risk-classification system for the purposes of section 86(1A) of the Act; and
2. determine that the *Food Business Risk-Classification System* comes into effect on  
   and from 1 February 2022.

Dated this 13 January 2022

Dr Mark Veitch

Director of Public Health

## Version notes

| Version | Start date | End date | Changes |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.0 | 5 July 2019 | 31 January 2022 | Original version approved under section 86(1A) of the *Food Act 2003* |
| 2.0 | 1 February 2022 | Current | Modifications after use, including:   * additional exemptions included under Part D Clause 2 * new classifications added for retail of frozen food (R12), and manufacture of freeze dried food (M30) and starter cultures (M31) * changes to manufacture of bakery products (M2) and fermented or acidified fruit and vegetables (M29) * minor amendments throughout. |

# Introduction

## This document

This document contains the risk-classification system approved by the Director of Public Health under section 86(1A) of the *Food Act 2003*. Under that section, councils must use this system to classify food businesses for registration and notification purposes under the Act.

## Legal framework

The *Food Act* applies to all Tasmanian businesses that sell food or handle food intended for sale. It:

* ensures food for sale is safe and suitable for human consumption
* creates offences for misleading conduct in the sale of food
* adopts the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.*

Enforcement of the Act is a joint responsibility of the Department of Health and councils. Under the Act, food businesses must either give notice to, or register with, the relevant council.

The Director of Public Health issues a *Gazette* notice setting out which businesses must register (section 86). All other food businesses must notify unless exempt under regulations or the Food Standards Code (sections 84 and 85).

The relevant council is the council for the municipal area where the food business is located (section 87). If the food business is conducted from a mobile structure in multiple municipalities then the business need only notify or register with one council (sections 84 and 88).

Under the current *Gazette* notice, a food business must register if assigned risk category P1, P2, or P3 by a council under the *Food Business Risk-Classification System* approved by the Director of Public Health under section 86(1A) of the Act[[1]](#footnote-1).

## Overview of the system

The *Food Business Risk-Classification System* is a system for classifying food businesses into risk categories based on food types and food handling activities. It is based on the national food safety risk-profiling framework[[2]](#footnote-2).

The system has five categories, ranging from the highest risk category of P1, through P2 and P3, to the lowest risk categories of P3-N and P4 (the letter ‘P’ is used as a shorthand for ‘priority’).

For ease of reference, each category is assigned a colour as follows:



A council will identify the business sector and the types of food sold or handled by the business and then assign a risk category. Businesses classified as P1, P2 or P3 must register, and those classified P3-N or P4 must notify. The Department of Health has developed recommended inspection frequencies for each risk category.

## Acknowledgements

The Department of Health gratefully acknowledges the support and assistance provided by SA Health in developing the risk-classification system and explanatory material.

# Definitions

Unless the contrary intention appears, a word or phrase used in this document that appears in the table below has the meaning given by that table. Any other word or phrase has the meaning given by the *Food Act 2003*.

| Word or phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Act | means the *Food Act 2003* |
| cook-chill food | means food (often meals) that:   1. has been fully cooked, then cooled by controlled chilling (eg blast chilling), then stored at a temperature above freezing point (≤5°C) prior to regeneration and/or serving; 2. is typically reheated prior to consumption; 3. is not sterile and its safety is based on a combination of:  * a minimal heat treatment (usually at 70-75°C) intended to minimise loss of sensory and nutritional quality; * refrigerated storage; * limited shelf life; * packaging (eg vacuum or modified atmosphere packaging); * in some cases, the intrinsic properties of the foods (eg low pH or water activity, addition of bacteriocins etc)   (examples of cook-chill processing include:   * cooking individual components, chilling and then packing in the final container; * cooking individual components, packaging and sealing in the final container, then chilling; * sous-vide – packing meal components, then pasteurising which provides for a longer shelf life under cold storage because of the reduced risk of post-process recontamination) |
| council | means a council within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993* |
| food | has the meaning given by the Act |
| food business | has the meaning given by the Act |
| food education or training activity | means an activity where food handling, preparation, hospitality or catering is taught |
| food transport vehicle | has the meaning given by the Act |
| handling | has the meaning given by the Act |
| high risk | in relation to food, means the food may contain pathogenic microorganisms and will support formation of toxins or support growth of pathogenic microorganisms  (examples of high risk foods appear in Part F) |
| hot-held | means previously cooked RTE food held at a temperature at or above 60ºC |
| low risk | in relation to food, means the food:   1. is unlikely to contain pathogenic microorganisms and will not support their growth; and 2. is unlikely to contain harmful natural toxins, chemicals or foreign matter   (examples of low risk foods appear at Part F) |
| medium risk | in relation to food, means the food:   1. may contain harmful natural toxins or chemicals introduced at steps earlier in the food supply chain; or 2. may contain pathogenic microorganisms but will not normally support the formation of toxins or growth of pathogenic microorganisms due to food characteristics; or 3. is unlikely to contain pathogenic microorganisms due to food type or processing but may support the formation of toxins or growth of pathogenic microorganisms   (examples of medium risk foods appear at Part F) |
| municipal area | means a municipal area within the meaning of the [*Local Government Act 1993*](https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/2019-06-07/act-1993-095) |
| non-perishable | means food that:   1. does not support microbial growth and so is shelf stable; and 2. does not require refrigerated storage; and 3. includes low risk food and some medium risk food |
| PHS | means Public Health Services within the Department of Health |
| perishable | means food that:   1. supports microbial growth and so will eventually deteriorate and spoil; and 2. typically requires refrigerated or frozen storage to extend shelf life; and 3. includes high risk food and some medium risk food |
| potentially hazardous food | means food that must be kept at certain temperatures to minimise the growth of any pathogenic microorganisms that may be present in the food or to prevent the formation of toxins in the food |
| processed | in relation to food, means activity to prepare food for sale including chopping, cooking, drying, fermenting, heating, pasteurising, thawing, washing, or a combination of these activities |
| ready-to-eat food | 1. means food that is ordinarily consumed in the same state as that in which it is sold (without further cooking or similar processing); 2. it does not include:  * nuts in the shell; * whole, raw fruits and vegetables that are intended for hulling, peeling or washing by the consumer |
| RTE | means ready-to-eat food |
| sell | has the meaning given by the Act |

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# Classifying a food business

## Clause 1. Council to classify

1. Where a council has been notified or otherwise becomes aware that -
   1. a food business is located in its municipal area; or
   2. a food business located in its municipal area has changed, in whole or in part, its food handling activities or the types of food it sells or handles -

the council must:

* 1. in accordance with clause 2, determine whether the business can be classified under the *Food Business Risk-Classification System*; and
  2. where a business can be classified, classify it according to clauses 3, 4 and 5; and
  3. where a business cannot be classified because one or more of the matters in clause 2(1)(a)-(g) are present, remove any risk category previously assigned to a business by a council under the *Food Business Risk-Classification System*.

## Clause 2. Determine if business can be classified

1. A food business can be classified by a council under the *Food Business Risk-Classification System*unless:
   1. the business handles food only by transporting or delivering it in a food transport vehicle;
   2. the business handles food only as part of a food education or training activity and the prepared food is not for further sale;
   3. the business involves the handling of only live animals;
   4. the business involves the handling of food only by an in-home care provider and the food is prepared in the client’s residence or in the presence of the client;
   5. the business involves the handling of food only by a family day care educator within the meaning of the *Education and Care Services National Law (Tasmania);*
   6. the business operates as part of or in connection with dairy premises to which a licence under the *Dairy Industry Act 1994* relates and does not involve the sale or handling of food other than dairy produce (the underlined words have the meaning given by the *Dairy Industry Act 1994);* or
   7. the business operates as part of or in connection with another business to which a food safety scheme applies under the *Primary Produce Safety Act 2011* and the other business does not involve the substantial preparation and service of food for immediate consumption.

## Clause 3. Determine the business sector

1. A council must identify which business sector or business sectors in clause 3(2) apply to the food business.
2. The business sectors are:
3. Retail sector:
   * 1. a food business is in the retail sector if it sells food to the public that is not processed on the business premises other than being sliced and/or weighed (eg delicatessen products); repacked; or reheated and  
        hot-held(eg RTE cooked foods); and
     2. the food is generally not intended to be consumed on the business premises.
4. Service sector:
5. a food business is in the service sector if it makes and/or serves RTE food for immediate consumption, whether consumed at the business premises or elsewhere, and whether or not delivered (by the food business or otherwise).
6. Manufacture sector:
7. a food business is in the manufacture sector if it:
   * + 1. physically or chemically transforms one food type into another food type or food product; and
       2. for the avoidance of doubt:
          1. the repacking of food from bulk into smaller amounts does not itself physically or chemically transform food for the purposes of clause (A); and
          2. food may be sold by the business via wholesaler, direct to other businesses, or direct to the public.
8. Wholesale sector:
9. a food business is in the wholesale sector if it sells food primarily to businesses in the retail and service sectors or is otherwise involved in pre-retail distribution activities such as importing and wholesale storage; and
10. business activities may or may not involve food packing.

## Clause 4. Determine the types of food and food handling activities

1. For each business sector in clause 3 that applies to the food business, a council must refer to the corresponding table or tables in Part E and, having regard to the descriptions in the second column of those table(s) and examples in the third column, identify:
   1. which of the food types listed in the first column of the table(s) the business sells or handles; and
   2. the corresponding risk category listed in the fourth column of the table(s), being either P1, P2, P3, P3-N, or P4.

## Clause 5. Assign the risk category

1. The risk categories are, in descending order of risk:
   1. P1
   2. P2
   3. P3
   4. P3-N
   5. P4.
2. From all the risk categories identified in clause 4, a council must identify the highest risk category.
3. Subject to clause 5(4), a council must assign to the business the highest risk category identified in clause 5(2)
4. Where the highest risk category identified in clause 5(2) relates to an industrial scale food type, a council must, before acting under clause 5(3), consult with Public Health Services within the Department of Health.

# Risk-classification tables

*Note – the alphanumeric reference (ref) in column 1 of the tables is for navigation purposes and cross references the quick reference guide at Part G.*

## Retail sector

Sells food to the public that is not processed on the premises other than being sliced/weighed (eg at deli); repacked; or reheated and hot-held (eg RTE cooked foods). Food is generally not intended to be consumed on the premises.

| **Food Type**  Ref | **Description** | **Example**  **foods / business** | **Risk category** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Alcoholic beverages**  R1 | Business sells alcohol to the public for consumption off the premises only. | * Bottle shop | **P4**  Notify | Products are usually pre-packaged. An exception is port from a port barrel. |
| **Bakery products – high risk fillings**  R2 | Business sells baked goods containing high risk fillings. Food may be reheated or hot-held. | * Cakes filled with fresh cream * Custard-filled pastries * Meat pies * Egg-based fillings | **P2**  Register | High risk fillings may allow pathogen growth but the retail outlet does not contribute significantly to the safety of the product. |
| **Bakery**  **products –**  **low risk or medium risk fillings or no filling – unpackaged**  R3 | Business sells unpackaged bread and baked goods that are not filled or have low risk or medium risk fillings only. | * Unpackaged bakery products filled with jam or mock cream * Unpackaged bread * Unpackaged biscuits | **P3-N**  Notify | Food is unpackaged so the risk of recontamination needs to be considered. |
| **Continental-type delicatessen food**  R4 | Business sells delicatessen foods that are high risk, processed (heat or non-heat treated), RTE, requiring refrigeration or reheating. Business may be portioning, slicing and weighing. | * Antipasto * Caviar * Cheese * Cured meats * Fermented or smoked products * Pate | **P2**  Register | Many of the foods sold in a delicatessen require refrigeration for control of microbial growth. Prevention of recontamination by the business is critical to product safety. |
| **Frozen food**  R12 | Business sells frozen packaged food. | * Frozen fruit and veg * Frozen fish * Frozen ready meals | **P3-N**  Notify | Packaging protects food from contamination. Frozen storage and display reliably controls pathogens in food. |
| **High risk food**  R5 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business sells high risk foods that are generally RTE and packaged. Refrigerated storage. | * Sandwiches * Fruit salad * Cut fruit * Cut vegetables that won’t be cooked (eg carrot sticks) * Supermarkets that are not processing foods (eg no instore bakery) | **P2**  Register | Many of these foods require refrigeration for control of microbial growth. Prevention of recontamination by the business is critical to product safety. |
| **Low risk food – packaged**  R6 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business sells only low risk food that is pre-packaged. Does not repack food. | * Packaged bread * Soft drinks * Chemist * Vending machine * B&B providing packaged UHT milk and cereal | **P4**  Notify | Packaging provides protection against recontamination. Foods do not require refrigeration for safety. |
| **Low risk or medium risk food – unpackaged**  R7 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business sells only low risk or medium risk foods that are unpackaged. May include repacking bulk ingredients into smaller units for sale. | * Dried fruit and nuts * Repacking dry ingredients from bulk (eg grains, flour, spices, nuts, tea) * Self-service of bulk dry ingredients | **P3-N**  Notify | Risk of recontamination needs to be considered. Some foods may be refrigerated for quality or to extend shelf life. |
| **Medium risk food – packaged**  R8 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business sells only medium risk food that is pre-packaged. Does not repack food. | * Pasteurised milk * Chocolate * Canned food * Newsagent * Vending machine * B&B providing pasteurised milk | **P3-N**  Notify | Packaging provides protection against recontamination. Some foods may be refrigerated for quality or to extend shelf life. |
| **Raw meat and poultry**  R9 | Business sells raw meat and poultry (high risk food). Refrigerated, not intended to be eaten raw. | * Beef * Fresh chicken | **P2**  Register | Classified P2 as the retail outlet does not contribute significantly to the safety of the product. |
| **Seafood**  R10 | Business sells fish and shellfish (high risk food). Raw or processed. Refrigerated or frozen storage. | * Fish * Molluscs * Crustaceans * Fishmonger | **P2**  Register | Classified P2 as the retail outlet does not contribute significantly to the safety of the product. |
| **Whole fruit and vegetables or cut non-RTE vegetables**  R11 | Business sells fresh (unprocessed), whole (uncut) fruit and vegetables or cut vegetables that are typically cooked before eating. Ambient or refrigerated storage. Packaged or unpackaged food. | * Whole fruit * Potatoes * Cut pumpkin * Stir-fry vegetable packs * Green grocer * Roadside fruit and vegetable stall | **P3-N**  Notify | For whole fruit and vegetables, the surface of food may be contaminated but will not support pathogen growth due to food surface characteristics. |

## Service sector

Makes and/or serves RTE food for immediate consumption, whether consumed at the business premises or elsewhere, and whether or not delivered (by the food business or otherwise).

| **Food Type**  Ref | **Description** | **Example**  **foods / business** | **Risk category** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **High risk food –****prepared in advance**  **(˃4 hrs)**  S1 | Business makes and/or processes (eg cooks) and serves food. Time delay (>4 hours) before serving (possible cooling, refrigerated storage, reheating, or hot-holding).  **Or** business makes raw egg products in advance (regardless of product pH). | * Sushi * Raw egg sauces * Hot BBQ chicken * Soft serve ice cream (not from self-pasteurising machine) | **P1**  Register | Risk of cross-contamination from ingredients. History of outbreaks where meals are prepared in advance (eg *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*).  Hot-holding or poor cooling of foods supports growth of spore-forming pathogens. Carefully consider use of leftovers. |
| **High risk food –****express order (˂4 hrs)**  S2 | Business makes and/or processes (eg cooks) and serves food. Direct make/serve operation, intended for immediate consumption.  **Or** business makes soft serve or hard frozen ice cream in advance. | * Fast food * Juice bar * Hot BBQ chicken * Soft serve ice cream (from self-pasteurising machine) * Ice cream (hard frozen) | **P2**  Register | Cross-contamination risk from preparation of food.  Ice cream (hard frozen) might be prepared in advance but frozen storage reduces risk. Self-pasteurising soft-serve machines apply a regular heat treatment to reduce pathogen load. |
| **High risk food –** **no processing**  S3 | Business serves high risk food that it did not make and/or process. Can be refrigerated or warmed and hot-held prior to sale. | * Hot dogs/dim sims * Soup * Sandwiches | **P2**  Register | Could also be a P2 Retail of high risk food if food is not intended to be consumed within a short period of time (<4 hrs). |
| **Low risk food – packaged**  S4 | Business serves packaged low risk food. The business may open the package. 1 | * Bar serving canned beer | **P4**  Notify | Packaging provides protection against recontamination. |
| **Low risk food – unpackaged**  S5 | Business makes and/or serves unpackaged low risk foods. 1 | * Bar serving drinks in glassware * Wine tasting * Popcorn/fairy floss | **P3-N**  Notify | Food is unlikely to be contaminated and will not support pathogen growth. |
| **Medium risk food**  S6 | Business makes and/or serves medium risk foods. May use refrigerated storage. 1 | * Ice cream vans (not making ice cream from ingredients) * Bubble tea * Slushies * Coffee vans | **P3**  Register | May contain pathogenic microorganisms but will not normally support their growth or the formation of toxins due to food characteristics. |

1 If the food service business handles low or medium risk food only and the food is provided complimentary as part of another service (eg hair dressing, car servicing, art event), the business may be excluded from risk-classification at the discretion of the regulator, with consideration of the type and amount of food served and the way it is provided.

## Manufacture sector

Physically or chemically transforms one food type into another food type or food product. Does not include repacking from bulk into smaller amounts. May be sold via wholesaler, direct to other businesses, or direct to the public.

*Note – a heavy line at the beginning of a row indicates there are both industrial scale and non-industrial scale options in the table. Clause 5(4) requires consultation with PHS before a council assigns a risk category to industrial scale activities.*

| **Food Type**  Ref | **Description** | **Example**  **foods / business** | **Risk category** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bakery products – high risk fillings**  M1 | Business makes baked goods that contain high risk fillings. Includes fresh and frozen products. Factory-based or home-based premises. | * Cake or pastry with high risk fillings or decorations (eg custard, fresh cream, mousse) * Pie or pastie (meat, fruit or vegetable) * Quiche | **P1**  Register | Controls are unreliable as evidenced by repeated problems with *Salmonella.* Product requires refrigerated or frozen storage to minimise pathogen growth and toxin formation. |
| **Bakery products – low risk or medium risk fillings or no filling**  M2 | Business makes baked goods with no filling or with low risk or medium risk fillings or decorations.  **Or** business makes icing or decorations that contain raw egg.  **Or** business makes lemon curd.  Does **not** include plain bread/rolls (see M3). | * Pizza bread * Fruit mince pies * Christmas cakes or puddings * Cakes with low or medium risk fillings (eg jam, cream cheese icing) * Royal icing * Lemon curd | **P3**  Register | Pathogens are unlikely to be present or to grow. Decorations, fillings and icing that have a low water activity do not support the growth of pathogens. |
| **Bakery products – plain bread products**  M3 | Business makes baked plain bread products (ie with no fillings or toppings). | * White, wholemeal or wholegrain bread * Sourdough bread * Hamburger rolls | **P3-N**  Notify | Baking and low water activity mean pathogens are unlikely to be present or to grow. |
| **Beverages – alcoholic**  M4 | Business makes alcoholic beverages including beer, wine, spirits and any other alcoholic beverage. | * Beer * Wine * Spirits | **P3-N**  Notify | Chemicals that cause acute illness (methanol) are unlikely. Alcohol supply regulated under the *Liquor Licensing Act 1990.* |
| **Beverages – non-alcoholic**  M5 | Business makes non-alcoholic beverages including fermented/brewed soft drinks, carbonated and bottled water. Also applies to ice making.  Does **not** include manufacturing milk and milk products (generally not applicable under the risk-classification system), fruit and vegetable juices (see M17 or M18) or unpasteurised nut-based milks (see M23). | * Soft drink, cordial and syrup * Packaged water * Purified water * Powder flavour * Kombucha * Water-based or nut-based kefir * Ice making | **P3**  Register | Carbonated beverage manufacture and acidity means pathogens are unlikely to be present or to grow. Acidity of fermented beverages prevents pathogen growth. Chance of acid burns to mouth if acidity is too low. Uncontrolled fermentation may increase alcohol content (relevant to licensing requirements under the *Liquor Licensing Act 1990).* For ice, main risk is physical contamination. |
| **Canned food**  M6 | Business commercially sterilises food such as fish, meats, fruits and vegetables, soups and sauces in metal or glass containers or retort pouches. Generally intended to be stored indefinitely at ambient temperature. Includes baby food in jars. | * Baked beans * Canned soups * Egg custard in glass jars * Pasta in jars * Baby food in jars * Pickled onions (sterilised) | **P2**  Register | The heat step severity is dependent on the pH of the food but must control *Clostridium botulinum*. |
| **Cereals**  M7 | Business makes non-perishable (dry) cereals including flour, grain and starch products (including arrowroot, rice, corn barley, malt, pulses, legumes, etc), dry pasta or baking mixes.  Does **not** include perishable products such as fresh pasta (see M22, M23 or M24). | * Unpopped or plain popcorn * Breakfast cereal * Pasta, dried * Dry noodle * Cake or pastry mix * Baking powder * Custard powder * Glucose, gluten | **P3-N**  Notify | Processing and low water activity mean pathogens are unlikely to be present or to grow. |
| **Chocolate**  M8a | Business makes chocolate and/or similar confectionery. | * Chocolate * Choc-coated lollies * Fudge | **P3**  Register | Chocolate is a medium risk food. |
| **Chocolate – industrial scale**  M8b | *Discuss with PHS before classifying a business under this risk category.*  As above but industrial-scale production. | As above | **P2**  Register | Large-scale distribution and evidence of outbreaks from contaminated ingredients (*Salmonella)*. |
| **Confectionery**  M9 | Business makes sweets and/or sugar confectionery and/or high sugar snack foods.  Does **not** include icing and decorations (for cakes) that contain raw egg (see M2). | * Chewing gum * Crystallised or glace fruit * Liquorice * Marshmallow * Candied nuts and popcorn * Honey * ‘Protein’ balls * Carob products * Icing and decorations without raw egg (eg fondant for cakes) | **P3-N**  Notify | Low water activity and manufacturing prevent microbial contamination or growth. |
| **Cook-chill food – extended shelf life**  M10a | Business makes cook-chill food that has an extended shelf life (>10 days). Cooking step is equivalent to 90°C for 10 minutes. Refrigerated storage at ≤5°C for a shelf life of more than 10 days.  **Or** business of any size makes cook-chill food intended for vulnerable population groups (such as the elderly, people with compromised immune systems, pregnant women, babies and infants). | * Pre-prepared meals * Pre-prepared pasta * Pre-prepared rice * Pre-prepared soups and sauces * Baby food * Pre-prepared meals for aged care facilities, etc | **P1**  Register | Evidence of pathogens in cook-chill food with extended shelf life in Australia has increased due to inadequate manufacturing controls used by inexperienced operators. Generally non-aseptic practices used. |
| **Cook-chill food – extended shelf life – industrial scale**  M10b | *Discuss with PHS before classifying a business under this risk category.*  As above but industrial-scale production.  Does **not** include cook-chill food intended for vulnerable population groups (see M10a). | * Pre-prepared meals * Pre-prepared pasta * Pre-prepared rice * Pre-prepared soups and sauces | **P2**  Register | Cooking delivers a 6-log reduction of non-proteolytic *Clostridium botulinum.* No evidence of botulism from cook-chill products in Australia where manufacturing steps and risks are well managed and understood. Usually aseptically packaged. |
| **Cook-chill food – short shelf life**  M11 | Business makes cook-chill food that has a short shelf life (≤10 days). Mild heat or pasteurisation step is generally equivalent to 70°C for 2 minutes. Refrigerated storage at ≤5°C for a shelf life of no more than 10 days including the days of production and consumption. | * Pre-prepared meals * Pre-prepared pasta * Pre-prepared rice * Pre-prepared soups and sauces | **P1**  Register | The process delivers a 6-log reduction in *Listeria monocytogenes.* Cold chain is unreliable with significant potential for microbial growth or recontamination. |
| **Cook-frozen food**  M12 | Business makes cook-frozen food meaning food which has undergone a mild heat or pasteurisation step and is intended to be frozen and reheated prior to eating. | * Pre-prepared meals * Pre-prepared pasta * Pre-prepared rice * Pre-prepared soups and sauces | **P2**  Register | Substantial documented evidence that cook-freeze reliably controls pathogens. |
| **Freeze dried food**  M30 | Business freeze-dries food without cooking or similarly processing the food beforehand. Business may cut, slice or mix ingredients.  Does **not** include cook-frozen food (see M12) or blanched and frozen fruit and vegetables (see M13) | * Freeze-dried fruits * Freeze-dried cheese | **P3**  Register | Freeze drying removes moisture to prevent microbial growth and extend shelf-life. Packaging prevents reabsorption of moisture. The process does not eliminate all pathogens, so the safety of ingredients is critical. |
| **Fruit and vegetables – frozen (blanched)**  M13a | Business blanches and freezes fruit and vegetable products. Food is continuously maintained at -18°C or below. Includes food that is peeled or sliced. | * Fruit, blanched and frozen * Vegetable, blanched and frozen | **P3**  Register | Time/temperature control to limit microbial growth during processing and the blanching step are strong controls against microbial hazards. Frozen storage at less than -18ºC is widely recommended. |
| **Fruit and vegetables – frozen – industrial scale**  M13b | *Discuss with PHS before classifying a business under this risk category.*  As above but industrial-scale production and/or makes unblanched food (eg berries). Large volumes produced or smaller volumes of unblanched food. | * Fruit, frozen * Vegetable, frozen | **P2**  Register | Large-scale distribution and unblanched food increases risk. |
| **Fruit and vegetables – non‑RTE**  M14 | Business peels, cuts or combines ingredients to make non-RTE products (ie food that requires further cooking or similar processing before consumption). | * Stir-fry vegetable mixes * Bagged leafy greens labelled ‘to be washed’ | **P3**  Register | Food is non-RTE and will be further cooked or prepared (eg washed) by the consumer. |
| **Fruit and vegetables – RTE – fermented or in oil, brine, water or vinegar**  M29a | Business preserves fruit, vegetables, nuts, spices, herbs, fungi, legumes or seeds by:   * submerging in oil, brine, water or vinegar, or * fermentation.   Product has low pH. Ambient or refrigerated storage.  Does **not** include sterilised food (see M6). | * Preserved garlic, chilli or ginger * Sun-dried tomatoes * Olives in oil or brine * Pickled onions (not sterilised) * Kimchi * Sauerkraut | **P1**  Register | Fruit and vegetables in brine oil, vinegar or water that are not commercially canned are required to have a pH ≤4.6 under Standard 2.3.1 of the Food Standards Code. Possible acidifying agents include vinegar, acetic acid, citric acid, and lemon juice. Risk of spore former/toxin production, ie *Clostridium botulinum.* |
| **Fruit and vegetables – RTE –in vinegar – industrial scale**  M29b | *Discuss with PHS before classifying a business under this risk category.*  As above but industrial-scale production of fruit, vegetables, nuts, spices, herbs, fungi, legumes or seeds in vinegar only. | * Pickled onions (not sterilised) | **P2**  Register | No evidence of botulism from large-scale manufacture of fruit and vegetables in vinegar in Australia where manufacturing steps and risks are well managed and understood. |
| **Fruit and vegetables – RTE – high risk food**  M15 | Business peels, cuts or combines ingredients to make RTE fruit and vegetable salad or similar products.  Does **not** include blanched and frozen fruit and vegetables (see M13). | * Fruit salad * Salad * Tabouli * Bagged leafy greens labelled ‘RTE’ | **P1**  Register | *Listeria* and *Salmonella* uncontrolled or control steps are potentially unreliable. |
| **Fruit and vegetables – RTE – low risk or medium risk food**  M16 | Business processes (eg cooks, dries) fruit and vegetables to make RTE products. Includes dehydrated fruit and vegetables, low pH/low water activity condiments and fruit spreads with added sugar.  Does **not** include canned, blanched and frozen or freeze dried fruit and vegetables (see M6, M13 or M30) or fruit and vegetables fermented or in oil, brine, water or vinegar (see M29). | * Dried apricots * Fruit leathers * Seaweed * Apple cider vinegar * Jam or fruit conserves * Fruit and vegetable-based chutneys, sauces, relishes | **P3-N**  Notify | Risk associated with dehydrated products is reduced by pre-preparation steps (eg blanching, peeling or washing). Manufacture of condiments usually involves cooking and hot-filling or product has low pH/low water activity. Jams have high sugar content. |
| **Fruit and vegetable juice – pasteurised or shelf stable**  M17a | Business makes pasteurised or shelf stable fruit or vegetable juice, purees or nectars. Pasteurised juice has undergone a mild heat treatment that will not eliminate all spores, so it requires refrigerated storage.  Shelf stable juice has had an ultra-heat treatment and does not need refrigeration. | * Pasteurised and shelf stable fruit juice, purees and nectars | **P3**  Register | Pasteurised juice may support the growth of pathogens and toxin formation, but processing and low temperature storage manages the risk. Shelf stable juice is a low risk food since the ultra-heat treatment inactivates vegetative cells and spores. |
| **Fruit and vegetable juice – pasteurised or shelf stable – industrial scale**  M17b | *Discuss with PHS before classifying a business under this risk category.*  As above but industrial-scale production. | As above | **P2**  Register | Large-scale distribution increases risk. |
| **Fruit and vegetable juice – unpasteurised**  M18 | Business makes unpasteurised fruit or vegetable juice. Juice has not been heat-treated to commercial sterility. Product is intended to be kept under refrigerated storage. | * Unpasteurised juice | **P1**  Register | Unpasteurised juice is classified as a high risk food as it may contain pathogens and support their growth. |
| **Infant formula**  M19 | Business makes infant formula or similar products. Food is made for babies or infants (vulnerable population group). | * Pre-term, baby or infant formula * Follow-on formula | **P1**  Register | Critical control is unreliable as evidenced by repeated problems, eg *Salmonella* and *Cronobacter sakazakii.* |
| **Nut butter and nut processors**  M20a | Business makes nut butter or paste or other nut products such as roasted, salted or hulled nuts. | * Peanut butter * Walnut butter * Roasted or salted nuts | **P3**  Register | *Salmonella* can be eliminated from nuts by roasting but prolonged survival occurs if recontaminated. Nut butter has a low water activity and does not require refrigeration. |
| **Nut butter – industrial scale**  M20b | *Discuss with PHS before classifying a business under this risk category.*  As above but industrial-scale production of nut butters only. | * Peanut butter * Walnut butter | **P2**  Register | Large-scale distribution increases risk. |
| **Oils and fats**  M21 | Business makes crude vegetable or marine animal oil, fat, meal, margarine, compound cooking oil or fat, blended table or salad oil, or refined or hydrogenated oil or fat. | * Vegetable oil * Animal, fish or other marine animal oil or meal * Lard or tallow * Margarine * Olive oil * Oil-based marinade/ dressing | **P3-N**  Notify | Low water activity of most products precludes microbial growth. Safety of marinades and dressings with other ingredients depends on pH <4.6, water activity, cooking or cooling steps. |
| **Prepared non‑RTE food**  M22 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business makes non-RTE food (ie food requires further cooking or similar processing by the consumer). Food may have undergone partial heat treatment by the business. Food requires frozen or refrigerated storage. | * Frozen meals (eg pizzas, pies, TV dinners) * Marinated, stuffed and/or breaded fish or meat * Fresh pasta * Wet noodles * Butchers making sausages and hamburgers | **P2**  Register | Food can contain pathogens that could cause foodborne illness. Refrigerated storage is important. The foods are not intended to be consumed without cooking or similar processing. |
| **Prepared RTE high risk food**  M23 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business makes RTE food (ie food that is normally consumed in the same state as that in which it is sold, without further cooking or similar processing) that is high risk food. Includes refrigerated foods. | * Sandwiches and salads * Tofu * Pesto * Dips * Shredded BBQ chicken (cold) * Unpasteurised nut-based milks (eg almond milk) | **P1**  Register | Different control steps are used (and are needed) to make the food safe for consumption. |
| **Prepared RTE medium risk food**  M24 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business makes RTE medium risk food. Includes refrigerated and non-refrigerated foods. | * Ice cream (hard frozen) or yoghurt sold direct to consumer only * Brandy sauce * Cooked rock lobster | **P2**  Register | Different control steps are needed to make the food safe for consumption. Ice cream or yoghurt sold to other businesses is regulated by the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority. |
| **Salt and other low risk ingredients or additives**  M25 | Business makes salt or similar low risk ingredients or additives. | * Salt * Colours, preservatives and artificial sweeteners | **P3-N**  Notify | The inherit nature of these products does not support the growth of pathogens. Risk of physical contamination needs to be considered. |
| **Snack crisps**  M26 | Business makes potato, corn and other crisps. | * Corn chip * Potato crisp * Taco, tortilla or tostada shell | **P3-N**  Notify | Frying and low water activity mitigate against microbial hazards being present or growing. |
| **Spices and dried herbs**  M27a | Business makes dehydrated culinary herbs and spices, seeds, teas or coffee roast. | * Dried herbs and spices * Tea and coffee * Seeds * Coffee bean roasting | **P3-N**  Notify | Low water activity but may contain heavy microbial load. Risk of physical contamination needs to be considered. |
| **Spices and dried herbs – industrial scale**  M27b | *Discuss with PHS before classifying a business under this risk category.*  As above but industrial-scale production. | As above | **P2**  Register | Large-scale distribution increases risk. |
| **Starter cultures**  M31 | Business makes and sells starter cultures.  Does **not** include starter cultures made for in-house use only (see the relevant fermented food category). | * SCOBY * Yeast mixes for bread manufacture | **P3**  Register | A starter culture is a preparation of living microorganisms that aids food fermentation. |
| **Sushi**  M28 | Business makes sushi, whichis rice, acidified with vinegar, and usually combined with other ingredients such as raw fish. | * Nigiri * Gunkan * Norimaki * Temaki * Temakizushi * Oshizushi * Inari | **P1**  Register | Controls include limitation on storage time, storage and display temperature, appropriate cooling and storage of rice to minimise *Bacillus cereus* and acidification to prevent other pathogen growth. |

## Wholesale sector

Sells food primarily to businesses in the retail and service sectors or is otherwise involved in pre-retail distribution activities such as importing and wholesale storage. May or may not involve food packing.

| **Food Type**  Ref | **Description** | **Example**  **foods / business** | **Risk category** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Frozen food**  W1 | Business handles non-dairy packaged foods preserved by freezing. | * Frozen fruit or veg * Frozen fish/seafood * Frozen ready meals | **P3**  Register | Cook-freeze reliably controls pathogens in food. |
| **High risk food**  W2 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business handles high risk food. Generally RTE and packaged. Refrigerated storage. | * Fresh cut RTE fruits and vegetables, packaged (eg bagged lettuce) * Soft cheeses | **P2**  Register | Distributor must maintain refrigerated storage to keep the product safe. |
| **Low risk food** **– packaged**  W3 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business handles only low risk packaged food. Does not repack. | * Alcoholic beverages * Cooking oil or fat * Confectionery * Condiments * Snack chips | **P4**  Notify | Product unlikely to be contaminated and does not support growth. Packaging provides protection against recontamination. Distribution does not affect risk. |
| **Low risk or medium risk food – unpackaged**  W4 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business handles only low risk or medium risk food. Includes unpackaged food and repacking food. Ambient or refrigerated storage. | * Unpackaged hard cheese wheels * Unpackaged fermented meats * Repacker of confectionery * Repacker of dry goods (eg spices, tea, grains) | **P3-N**  Notify | Risk of contamination for unpackaged food or when repacking. |
| **Medium risk food – packaged**  W5 | *Generic category. If the food type is listed elsewhere in this table, that food type and risk category must be used.*  Business handles only medium risk packaged food. Does not repack. Ambient or refrigerated storage. | * Bottled water * Canned food * Chocolate * Fermented meats * Hard frozen ice cream * Pasteurised milk * Yoghurt | **P3-N**  Notify | Risk of contamination for unpackaged food or when repacking. |
| **Raw and processed meat and poultry**  W6 | Business mainly engaged in wholesaling fresh or frozen meat, bacon, ham, poultry or game meat.  Does **not** include fermented meats (see W5). | * Bacon * Frozen meat * Ham * Meat * Poultry * Sausage | **P2**  Register | Distributor must maintain refrigerated storage to keep the product safe. |
| **Seafood**  W7 | Business mainly engaged in wholesaling fresh or frozen seafood.  Does **not** include canned seafood (see W5). | * Crustacean (including processed) * Fish * Mollusc (including processed) * Seafood, fresh/frozen | **P2**  Register | Distributor must maintain refrigerated storage to keep the product safe. |
| **Whole fruit and vegetables or cut non-RTE vegetables**  W8 | Business handles only whole (uncut) fresh fruit or vegetables or cut vegetables that are typically cooked before eating. Refrigerated or ambient storage. Packaged or unpackaged. | * Whole fruit * Potatoes * Cut pumpkin | **P3-N**  Notify | Surface of food may be contaminated but will not support pathogen growth due to food surface characteristics. |

# High, medium & low risk foods

The following table contains examples of high risk, medium risk, and low risk foods:

| Food Type | Definition | Example foods |
| --- | --- | --- |
| High risk food | As defined in Part C, a high risk food may contain pathogenic microorganisms and will support formation of toxins or support growth of pathogenic microorganisms | Any potentially hazardous food.  Including:   * Raw and cooked meat and poultry * Seafood (excluding live) * Soft cheese * Sprouted seeds * Cut fruits * Cooked vegetables * Cooked rice and pasta * Foods containing any of the above |
| Medium risk food | As defined in Part C, medium risk food:   1. may contain harmful natural toxins or chemicals introduced at steps earlier in the food supply chain; or 2. may contain pathogenic microorganisms but will not normally support the formation of toxins or growth of pathogenic microorganisms due to food characteristics; or 3. is unlikely to contain pathogenic microorganisms due to food type or processing but may support the formation of toxins or growth of pathogenic microorganisms | * Fresh, whole fruit and vegetables * Pasteurised milk * Pasteurised fruit juice * Canned foods * Salami * Ice cream (hard frozen) * Milk-based confectionery (eg chocolate) * Vegetables in oil * Peanut butter * Yoghurt * Mock cream or packaged fresh cream |
| Low risk food | As defined in Part C, a low risk food:   1. is unlikely to contain pathogenic microorganisms and will not support their growth; and 2. is unlikely to contain harmful natural toxins, chemicals or foreign matter | Generally, any food that is not high risk or medium risk food.  Including:   * Biscuits and crackers * Dry goods (eg flour) * Plain bread and rolls |

# Quick reference guide

*The tables shown are a navigation tool only. They summarise and cross reference the types of food and food handling activities contained in the risk-classification tables at Part E. They must not be relied upon to classify a food business*

| **Retail sector** | Ref | Page |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bakery products – high risk fillings | R2 | 10 |
| Continental type delicatessen food | R4 | 10 |
| High risk food | R5 | 10 |
| Raw meat and poultry | R9 | 11 |
| Seafood | R10 | 11 |
| Bakery products – low risk or medium risk fillings or no filling – unpackaged | R3 | 10 |
|
| Frozen food | R12 | 10 |
| Low risk or medium risk food – unpackaged | R7 | 11 |
| Medium risk food – packaged | R8 | 11 |
| Whole fruit and vegetables or cut non-RTE vegetables | R11 | 11 |
|
| Alcoholic beverages | R1 | 10 |
| Low risk food – packaged | R6 | 11 |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| High risk food – prepared in advance (>4 h) | S1 | 12 |
| High risk food – express order (<4 h) | S2 | 12 |
| High risk food – no processing | S3 | 12 |
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| Low risk food – packaged | S4 | 12 |

| **Wholesale sector** | Ref | Page |
| --- | --- | --- |
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| Raw and processed meat and poultry | W6 | 20 |
| Seafood | W7 | 21 |
| Frozen food | W1 | 20 |
| Low risk or medium risk food – unpackaged | W4 | 20 |
| Medium risk food – packaged | W5 | 20 |
| Whole fruit and vegetables or cut non-RTE vegetables | W8 | 21 |
|
| Low risk food – packaged | W3 | 20 |

| **Manufacture sector** | Ref | Page |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bakery products – high risk fillings | M1 | 13 |
| Cook-chill food – extended shelf life | M10a | 15 |
| Cook-chill food – short shelf life | M11 | 15 |
| Fruit and vegetables – RTE – fermented or in oil, brine, water, or vinegar | M29a | 16 |
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| Fruit and vegetables – RTE – high risk food | M15 | 16 |
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| Chocolate – industrial scale | M8b | 14 |
| Cook-chill food – extended shelf life – industrial scale | M10b | 15 |
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| Fruit and vegetables – frozen – industrial scale | M13b | 16 |
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| Spices and dried herbs – industrial scale | M27b | 18 |
| Bakery products – low risk or medium risk fillings or no fillings | M2 | 13 |
|
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| Freeze dried food | M30 | 15 |
| Fruit and vegetables – frozen (blanched) | M13a | 16 |
| Fruit and vegetables – non-RTE | M14 | 16 |
| Fruit and vegetable juice – pasteurised or shelf stable | M17a | 17 |
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| Starter cultures | M31 | 19 |
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| Beverages – alcoholic | M4 | 13 |
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| Confectionery | M9 | 14 |
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|
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| Salt and other low risk ingredients or additives | M25 | 18 |
| Snack crisps | M26 | 18 |
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Key

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **P1** | **P2** | **P3** | **P3-N** | **P4** |



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1. The *Gazette* notice from 3 July 2019 is available on the Tasmanian Government Gazette website at [www.gazette.tas.gov.au](http://www.gazette.tas.gov.au) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Department of Health and Ageing (Commonwealth). 2007. The Business Sector Food Safety Risk Priority Classification Framework, Canberra, Australia. [webarchive.nla.gov.au/gov/20161017092024/http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/risk-profiling-framework](http://webarchive.nla.gov.au/gov/20161017092024/http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/risk-profiling-framework) (accessed March 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)