

BYO Containers – Consumer Fact Sheet

This information has been written for customers of Victorian based butchers, fishmongers, poulterers and delicatessens.

The Act, Code and Regulations

Currently there is **no provision** under the **Victorian Food Act 1984**, the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (**FSANZ**) **Code** or the **Primesafe** or **Dairy Food Safety Victoria** Regulations **which expressly prohibits stores** from accepting reusable customer containers*. Councils are responsible for enforcing the Code but whether a business accepts customer containers is ultimately a management decision and this can be done so safely, provided you follow basic hygiene measures.

*Market stalls are an exception, as these may be required to package produce (such as meat) before transport to market.

Hygiene

The simplest methods to clean and sanitise containers at home per the **FSANZ Standards Appendix 6** are:

- Domestic dishwashers (preferred): Standard wash cycles and detergents are adequate, however longer/hotter cycles produce the best results. Rinse heavily soiled containers first to ensure food residue does not protect bacteria.
- Hand washing: Thoroughly wash in 54-60°C water with detergent, rinse, then sanitise by immersing in 77-80°C hot water for at least 30 seconds and air dry.

We recommend containers are stored sealed to remain sanitised. Take special care for ready to eat food which are not intended to be further cooked/sterilised at home.

Containers

Customers are responsible to provide clean and sanitised, non-porous containers free of visible debris, grease, odours and stains, which are fit for purpose and undamaged. We recommend containers made from durable materials which seal well and are easy to clean*. It is good practice to ask yourself, does it look like my container presents a contamination risk? Remember, businesses have the right to refuse unsuitable containers.

*The Code prohibits reuse of single use containers such as takeaway tubs, as this type of plastic is not easily cleaned and sanitised.

Tips for approaching a new business

Smile and be friendly as you explain you are trying to avoid single use plastic. Present your container and ask if they can accept it, have tongs/scoop and can tare/zero the scales. Shop at quieter times. Remember this may be their first BYO Container request. If accommodated, thank them and ask if they would be happy to take the BYOC Pledge.

When a business declines: Ask why and if there is a suitable time you could chat with a manager? Be polite and understanding, as their **food safety program** and **risk assessments** may first require an amendment with their regulator before they can accept BYOC. Leave them with the Business Fact Sheet and Handout or refer them to our website. Stores that don't say yes today may change their mind if enough customers approach them in a polite and considerate manner.

Contact info@byocontainers.org or refer to byocontainers.org for more information.



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