



Public health planning and environmental health

Access to safe food and water

Local governments play a key role in ensuring safe food and water through regulation, monitoring, and education. Safe food and water are free from harmful bacteria, parasites, viruses, toxins, chemicals, and radionuclides.

Under the *Food Act 2008* and *Food Regulations 2009* local governments are the enforcement authority overseeing food safety for retailers (cafes, restaurants), manufacturers, vulnerable facilities (hospitals, aged care, childcare), and primary production (domestic abattoirs, egg and seed sprout processing, select horticulture). They also educate the community to minimise food poisoning at home.

Local governments manage water safety and wastewater through regulation, surveillance, and education. This includes monitoring chemical, microbiological, and physical hazards in drinking water, aquatic facilities, recreational waters, wastewater, and recycled water.

Example strategies that could be implemented are included in the table below:

Examples
Food
Disseminate copies of food safety posters and stickers to local food businesses during routine assessments and ensure resources are readily accessible to businesses (e.g. links from website, copies available at the council building).
Promote a positive food safety culture and provide food safety education and/or training for local food businesses to access.
Promote awareness of food allergen risks and support local food businesses with food allergen information and resources.
Conduct a review of council owned facilities and services that would benefit from safe food handling messaging for consumers and/or food businesses.
Understand roles and responsibilities for food recalls and support local food businesses in developing their own food recall plan.
Align operational surveillance and on farm primary production activities with the Western Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2023 – 2026 .
Participate in regular food sampling programmes coordinated through the Department of Health or Local Health Authorities Analytical Committee.
Develop and embed regular environmental health communications within local communication strategies that raise awareness of the safe handling of food in the home, incorporating messages from the Play it Food Safe campaign .

Examples

Display Play it Food Safe campaign posters and factsheets in local government facilities frequented by the public including community halls, libraries, and recreational centres.

Provide, or partner with suitable organisations to offer, [safe food handling courses](#) for higher risk groups (e.g., mothers groups, elderly).

Monitor and critically review the Regulatory Food Safety Audit (RFSA) reports of vulnerable populations (private hospitals, childcare and aged care) in the local district.

Raise awareness about the benefits of local food production related to community development, and provide appropriate training on local food production.

Water

Conduct health promotion activities throughout the year (including Water Safety Week) to increase awareness on water related diseases and water management.

Provide residents guidance on rainwater, bore water and other natural water used for household purposes on protecting tanks from contamination, testing to ensure water is suitable for intended use/s.

Provide guidance to the owners of onsite water treatment systems to make sure the systems are operated correctly.

Partner with Water Corporation to treat and reuse wastewater for non-potable uses, such as irrigation and industrial processes.

Implement stormwater harvesting and water-sensitive urban design to reduce wastewater runoff and improve water quality.

Ensure council owned non-drinking water systems operate in a such a way that the water they supply cannot be mistaken for drinking water.

Participate in the WA environmental [recreational waters microbiological monitoring program](#) to monitor bacterial water quality at popular swimming beaches and natural water bodies and communicate results to the community.

Undertake annual [sanitary surveys](#) of popular swimming locations to identify sources of bacterial pollution that may impact on water quality and initiate strategies to reduce sources.

Embed seasonal local communications to raise awareness about [safe recreational water use](#), including messaging on harmful algal blooms.

Provide public health response to elevated bacterial monitoring results, amoeba, fish kills, chemical spills, and other hazards in environmental waters.

Ensure an adequate supply of health warning signs advising the public of health risks associated with swimming in natural water ways, including the risk of wild shellfish consumption are displayed effectively.

The Department of Health WA has factsheets and further information on its website on [food](#) and [water](#) safety.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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