

Notifiable contaminants Information for laboratories

The [South Australian Public Health \(Notifiable Contaminants\) Regulations 2020](#) (the Regulation) will come into force on 19 July 2020, and requires specified microorganisms to be reported to SA Health when they are found in food and water by the analysing laboratory service.

The collection of this data will support the [Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy](#), in addition to enabling a national/international profile of the microorganisms of public health significance and their possible sources.

Food and water samples

Notification of the prescribed contaminants is required from food samples as defined by Section 5 of the South Australia Food Act 2001. This will include raw, partly processed and ready-to-eat foods. It may also include live plants and animals and also captures bottled water and ice.

Notifiable contaminants

The presence of the following contaminants must be notified to SA Health:

- > *Campylobacter* (any species)
- > *Clostridium botulinum*
- > *Cryptosporidium* (any species)
- > *Cyclospora* (any species)
- > *Giardia*
- > Hepatitis A
- > Hepatitis E
- > *Listeria* (any species)
- > *Salmonella* (any species)
- > Shiga toxin or vero toxin producing *Escherichia coli*
- > *Shigella* (any species)
- > *Yersinia* (any species)

Or: Any microorganism detected / isolated in a defined food sample for which an 'unacceptable microbiological level' is prescribed and if that level is exceeded in the [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, Schedule 27 \(and Standard 1.6.1\)](#).

Or: Where the following micro-organisms are reported at levels classified as 'unsatisfactory' or 'potentially hazardous' in ready to eat (RTE) foods as per Table 1: Interpreting results for testing of pathogenic microorganisms in RTE food in the [Food Standards Australia New Zealand \(FSANZ\) Compendium of Microbiological Criteria for Food](#):

- > *Bacillus cereus*
- > *Clostridium perfringens*
- > Coagulase positive *Staphylococci*
- > *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*

NOTE: any changes to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, Schedule 27 or the Compendium of Microbiological Criteria for Food may result in changes to the notifiable contaminants either with regard to the defined contaminants or the limits of detection that require notification.



Notifying SA Health

It is a requirement that the person responsible for the day to day running of a South Australian laboratory service (defined as “a service which performs tests or analyses for the purpose of isolating or detecting contaminants in various substances”) or a person that is informed of positive results detected by an interstate laboratory service [or where they know that the laboratory service has not notified], must notify the Chief Public Health Officer.

How to notify

Notification, by fax or email of the laboratory report will be required as soon as possible, but must be within 24 hours of receiving positive confirmation.

Notifications will be made to SA Health’s Food and Controlled Drugs Branch (Food Standards Surveillance) via

Email: healthfood@sa.gov.au

Fax: 822 67102

It is requested that the laboratory call prior to faxing results.

Phone: 822 67100, request to speak to a Food Standards Surveillance team member.

Information to be provided

1. When making an initial phone call, the minimum details to be provided are:
 - > Laboratory service name
 - > Micro-organism
 - > Food description
 - > Who submitted the sample and contact details
2. The written notification must contain the following information:
 - > Micro-organism detected
 - > Date of isolation
 - > Enumeration of pathogen (if known)
 - > Food/Water source
 - > Batch/lot identification (if known)
 - > Name of laboratory & contact details
 - > Date of sample submission and contact details of the company/person submitted sample

A laboratory report containing this information will be acceptable.

Exclusions

The *Public Health Act 2011* excludes notification of contaminants where the test was only carried out for

- (i) educational purposes; or
- (ii) the purposes of academic research,

unless the test and the circumstances of the particular case indicate the existence of a material risk to public health.

This provision would apply to laboratories, universities or research facilities conducting research on food and water samples.

The exclusion does not apply to food businesses conducting Research and Development (product development) within a food facility. SA Health will be responsible for confirming with the business that food has not been available for sale.

Confidentiality

As prescribed in the *Public Health Act 2011* (Part 9, Section 68, 9, 10 and 11); notification of a sample will not result in any civil liability or be regarded as a breach of any law or a breach of any principle of professional ethics. The notification is also not admissible in evidence for an offence for the imposition of a penalty.

More information

Contact SA Health's [Food and Controlled Drugs Branch](#) via healthfood@sa.gov.au or 8226 7100

For more information

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www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/foodsafety



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**Government
of South Australia**

SA Health