

Mission:

The Department of Health through the Directorate: Food Control ensures an optimal non-personal preventative primary health care service, in respect of the safety of food for the South African community based on basic needs and the right to make informed choices without being misled by means of scientifically founded legislation, auditing and information actions.

What is Food Control?

Food Control is a mandatory regulatory activity of enforcement by national or local authorities to provide consumer protection and to 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 labeled as prescribed by law.

What is Food Safety?

It is the assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and eaten according to its intended use.

The Directorate: Food Control is the component within the Department of Health with the mandate to develop and administer of legislation relating to food safety, labeling and related matters. This legislation is enforced by local authorities (for locally manufactured foodstuffs) and by National Port Health Services (for imported foodstuffs).



Food Control – Roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of Government

National level (Directorate: Food Control):

- Administer, compile and publish legislation in terms of the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics & Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act No. 54 of 1972), which include, amongst others:
 - Food hygiene matters/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) ;
 - Additives in foodstuffs;
 - Chemical contaminants in foodstuffs, including pesticides and veterinary drugs residues;
 - Microbiological standards for foodstuffs;
 - Importation and exportation of foodstuff
 - Nutrition, labeling and advertising of foodstuffs.
- Initiate and coordinate food monitoring programmes/plans as well as data analysis and reporting;
- Audit, support and guide port health, provinces and municipalities on food control matters such as law enforcement, as well as the implementation of norms and standards;
- Inform, educate and communicate food control/safety issues to stakeholders such as the food industry, food service industry, consumers and other departments dealing with food safety and related matters;
- Participate in inter-sectoral co-operation with role players such as Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), Department of Trade and Industry (dti), National Regulatory for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS), and others;
- Serve as the national contact point for international bodies such as the United Nation's Joint Food and Agricultural Organisation/World Health Organization (FAO/WHO) Codex Alimentarius Commission; FAO/WHO - International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) Emergency and the European Union Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (EU-RASFF);

- Evaluate risk assessments of agricultural remedies / chemicals and foods produced by means of modern biotechnology (GMOs);
- Facilitate and ensure that any Food Safety Emergency is correctly identified and a response is rapidly coordinated; and

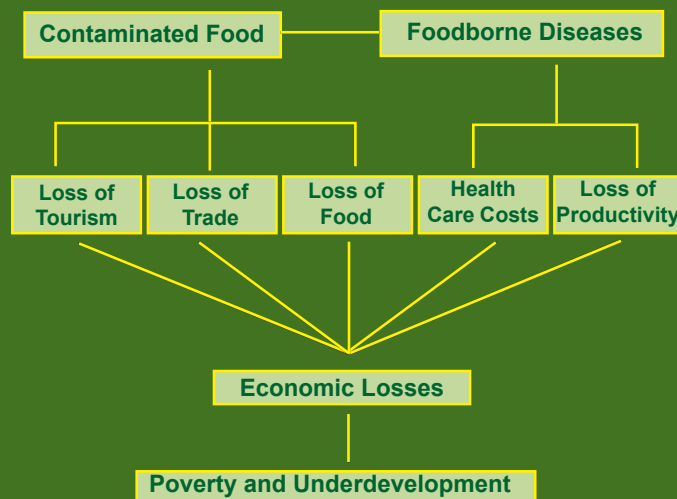
Provincial level (Environmental Health Services):

- Audit, support and co-ordinate delivery of Municipal Health Service within the District Health system.

Municipal level- Municipal Health Services

- Promote inter-sectoral co-operation
- Law enforcement of food legislation;
- Inspection and sampling;
- Investigate complaints and food borne outbreak incidences;
- Health promotion and education on, for example, WHO five keys to safer food messages;
- Ensure inter-sectoral co-operation;
- Health certification of food premises and food exports;,,
- Implement community development projects, for example, on street foods, and
- Attending to food safety alerts / detentions by inspecting / detaining / seizing / condemning / disposing of unsafe foodstuffs, where applicable.

Health and economic consequences of food contamination



Components of a food control system in South Africa

Legislation and Policies:

- Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, (No 54 of 1972) and Regulations;
- Departmental and other Guidelines, and
- Codex Alimentarius Standards, Guidelines and Codes of Practices.

Inspection and Monitoring

- Routine food and food premises inspection done by Municipalities;
- Routine inspection of imported foodstuffs done by Port Health officials; and
- Routine/special/ad hoc food sampling programmes.

Food Safety/ Epidemiological Data:

- Notification / surveillance of cases of:
 - Food poisoning
 - Typhoid
 - Brucellosis
 - Cholera
 - Other foodborne diseases, etc
- National Food Consumption Surveys and other data generation;
- Non-communicable disease prevalence;
- Risk assessment/ Evaluations of pesticides, veterinary drugs and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs); and
- Results of analytical data from laboratories.

Information / Education / Communication (IEC):

- Directorate Webpage
- Posters, brochures and pamphlets on food safety, legislation and labeling
- Street foods CD-rom & flipcharts;
- Directorate's training seminars/workshops/programmes on food control issues.

Analytical Services:

- Forensic Chemical laboratories (Pretoria and Cape Town); and
- Microbiological laboratories (branches of NHLS, municipalities etc.); and
- Private laboratories when necessary

Food safety and health – Interaction with other programmes



SAFE, GOOD FOOD FOR ALL

Directorate: Food Control



Department of Health

Directorate: Food Control

Layout and Design: national Department of Health Communication



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA