

## Food traceability

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Traceability is the ability to track any food through all stages of production, processing and distribution (including importation and at retail). Traceability should mean that movements can be traced one step backwards and one step forward at any point in the supply chain.

For food processing businesses, traceability should extend to being able to identify the source of all food inputs such as:

- raw materials
- additives
- other ingredients
- packaging.

### Why is traceability important?

Traceability enables corrective actions (such as a product [recall](#)) to be implemented quickly and effectively when something goes wrong. When a potential food safety problem is identified, whether by a food business or a government agency, an effective traceability system can help isolate and prevent contaminated products from reaching consumers.

Traceability allows food businesses to target the product(s) affected by a food safety problem, minimising disruption to trade and any potential public health risks. It is important for all food businesses (including retailers and importers) to be able to trace products.

### What are the characteristics of a traceability system?

An effective traceability system relies on being able to track product one step forward and one step back at any point in the supply chain. The system a food business has in place includes any procedures for identifying producers, suppliers, customers and products and the records kept including:

- name and address (and other contact details) of suppliers and a description of products or inputs supplied
- name and addresses (and other contact details) of customers and a description of the product supplied to them
- date of transaction or delivery
- batch or lot identification (or other markings)
- volume or quantity of product supplied or received
- any other relevant production records.

### What are the Food Standards Code requirements?

[Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements](#) in chapter 3 of the Code covers the "one step back and one step forward" elements of traceability under Clause 5 (2) Food receipt and Clause 12 Food recall.

#### *Food receipt*

In relation to food receipt, a food business must be able to provide information about what food, it has on the premises and where it came from:

A food business must provide, to the reasonable satisfaction of an authorised officer upon request, the following information relating to food on the food premises:

1. the name and business address in Australia of the vendor, manufacturer or packer or, in the case of food imported into Australia, the name and business address in Australia of the importer; and
2. the prescribed name or, if there is no prescribed name, an appropriate designation of the food.

This means that a food business must not receive a food unless it is able to identify the name of the food and the name of the supplier.

#### *Food recall*

A food business engaged in the wholesale supply, manufacture or importation of food must have a system, set out in a written document, to ensure it can recall unsafe food. The system should include records covering:

- production records
- what products are manufactured or supplied
- volume or quantity of products manufactured or supplied
- batch or lot identification (or other markings)
- where products are distributed
- any other relevant production records.

This information should be readily accessible in order to know what, how much and from where product needs to be recalled.

### Are there other traceability requirements under the Food Standard Code?

Primary production and processing standards in Chapter 4 of the [Food Standards Code](#) also include traceability measures. There are specific traceability requirements for:

- seafood businesses (Standard 4.2.1)
- dairy primary production, transport and processing businesses (Standard 4.2.4)
- poultry processors (Standard 4.2.2)
- egg producers and egg processors (Standard 4.2.5)
- seed sprout processors (Standard 4.2.6).

There are also information requirements for food (for retail and non-retail sale) specified in the labelling standards. In particular, [Standard 1.2.2 - Information requirements - food identification](#):

- name of food
- lot identification
- name and address of supplier.