



**Government Health Department  
Queensland Australia  
Food Industry Fact Sheet No. 10 - Guide to Safe Handling of Ice  
Published August 2007**

In August 2007 the Government Health Department of the State of Queensland in Australia published and circulated Food Industry Fact Sheet number 10, titled “Guide to Safe Handling of Ice”. The following is a summary of the contents of that fact sheet.

**Summary:**

Ice may be used as a food for human consumption and, like any other food, has the potential to cause food poisoning if it is not manufactured and handled under hygienic conditions.

Everyone serving, handling or manufacturing ice that will be consumed or will come into contact with food, has a responsibility to ensure that the ice is safe, fit for consumption and free of harmful bacteria.

In June/July 2001, Qld Health Population Health Units carried out a quality survey of ice used in drinks at hotels, restaurants and bars.

Eight premises failed to comply with the National Health and Medical Research Council Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. The survey also identified inadequate handling practices likely to contaminate the ice.

There have been a number of outbreaks associated with ice contaminated by food related pathogens, particularly a virus called Norovirus. An outbreak in 2002 in the U.S.A. occurred as a result of a sick employee who had not washed his hands, contaminating the ice in ice coolers. Approximately 80 people got sick and a healthy 15 year old boy died when he choked on his own vomit from the illness.

The fact sheet provides further advice regarding personal hygiene, sick workers, product handling, serving containers, utensils, ice machines, bagged ice storage, pest control, sanitizing and quality assurance.

The original document can be viewed at:

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/Documents/ehu/12629.pdf>

