

CLUTHA DISTRICT COUNCIL

ADVICE FOR FOOD PREMISES

HOMESTAY ACCOMMODATION

Homestay accommodation can provide an attractive and useful addition to the many other forms of accommodation available for visitors to our area. They are capable of providing visitors with a lasting, favourable impression of Kiwi hospitality and the warm and friendly reception for which we have earned a justifiably unique reputation.

Homestays are potentially subject to a number of requirements depending upon the number of people to be accommodated. This advice pamphlet is intended to give advice regarding your responsibilities and to suggest additional ways in which you can improve the comfort and safety of your guests.

Resource Management Act Consent

Provided that the accommodation caters for no more than five people (who are not members of your family), consent is not normally required for use as a Homestay. This is on the assumption that you are not building additional facilities for the activity. If additional development is required, resource consent may also be required. It is therefore best to check with the Council to make sure that your proposal is a permitted activity that will not require an application to be submitted.

Building Act Consent

Once again, provided that you are not catering for more than five persons, building consent will not apply. As soon as you exceed this number the Building Act will require that you comply with various aspects of the Building Code. These will include such issues as amenities [WC's, showers, basins, etc] and most importantly with fire precautions.

The precise impact of the Building Code can only be assessed after close inspection of the property for which you may need to seek professional help. Plans would need to be prepared and submitted together with a specification of works. Evidence may also be required concerning existing methods of construction within your property.

Clutha District Council Bylaw

The Council introduced a bylaw in 2001 which governs various aspects of hostel accommodation. Separate advice is available regarding the requirements of the bylaw upon request.

The bylaw applies to premises which provide accommodation for more than five persons. Although homestays are specifically excluded there is no formal definition of what constitutes a homestay situation and depending upon circumstances it is possible that the bylaw may apply. This is an area where there are fine points of distinction and it is conceivable that a property could be considered to be a guest house or boarding house.

It is for the above reasons that the majority of homestay accommodation commonly found within New Zealand is on a low scale, within the five persons limit.

Food Hygiene Regulations 1974

Any premise in which food is only supplied or sold together with accommodation is not required to register with the Council. The Food Hygiene Regulations will still apply, however, if food is being prepared for guests. The Regulations will not apply where guests are self catering but this scenario would not be viewed as a homestay where guests have their own facilities.

The majority of homestay accommodation will provide a substantial breakfast and will also offer guests the option of having an evening meal with their hosts. Under either circumstance the Regulations will govern the food preparation facilities. The following is therefore intended as a general summary of the main requirements of the Regulations. A full breakdown of the Regulations can be found on the Council's web site at www.cluthadc.gov.nz. See Services>Food Hygiene>Starting a Food Business>First Schedule – Summary of Requirements.

- The basic structure of the food preparation facilities must comply with the First Schedule. This requires, in effect, that the room shall be clean, readily cleansable and in good condition. There are also a number of specific requirements.
- Washing facilities in the form of sink and a dish washer are also required. Hot water must be available at specified temperatures. The choice of domestic or commercial dishwasher will be governed by cost and volume of crockery and cutlery requiring washing. For small operations a domestic unit will usually suffice.
- Personal washing facilities in the form of a wash basin are required. A mixer tap is advisable to control the water temperature. Clean towels [e.g. paper towels], a nailbrush and soap are also required. Anti-bacterial soap from a dispenser is recommended.
- A first aid kit must be provided including waterproof plasters.
- Clean overclothing must be worn at all times while food is being prepared.
- Refrigeration equipment will be required. Refrigerators must be capable of operating at either 2⁰C or 4⁰C depending upon the nature of the food being stored. Fresh meat, for example, has to be stored at a lower temperature than cooked foods. Freezers need to be capable of holding food at -18⁰C.
- Suitable storage facilities for dry goods are necessary. Washable containers with close fitting lids will suffice.
- Work tops need to be impervious and in good condition. Together with cutting boards and other food equipment they will also need to be properly sanitised using appropriate chemicals. Both commercial as well as domestic sanitisers are available.
- The choice of cooking equipment will depend upon cost and the type of fuel availability. Electricity is the most common choice. Gas cookers using LPG are also becoming increasingly popular.
- Having the appropriate facilities and keeping them clean and safe is only part of the job in providing food safely. Just as important is the question of safe handling. The following are just a few examples of the sort of knowledge that is vital to ensuring safe practice:-
 1. Avoiding cross contamination
 2. Maintaining good temperature control
 3. Stock rotation
 4. Correct storage

Advice on the adequacy of your facilities and on good food handling can be obtained from the Council's Environmental Health Officer. Short Courses are also available through the Otago Polytechnic. The Council can supply details of these upon request.

Sale of Liquor Act 1989

Many Homestays like to be able to offer their guests some form of alcohol to accompany their meals, such as wine or beer. The Sale of Liquor Amendment Act 1999 allows for the supply of alcohol within Homestays providing that:-

- The host occupies premises that are used exclusively or principally as his or her home or residence with his or her family; and who for reward, permits guests to stay, from time to time, on the premises or other premises nearby;
- There are no more than 10 guests present

Whilst a license is not required under the above circumstances, the principals embodied within the Sale of Liquor Act are just as relevant. As a responsible host you do not want to see your guests becoming intoxicated and unmanageable within your premises.

Additional Recommendations

There are a number of additional considerations that Homestay owners are advised to consider. These are not necessarily legal requirements or matters for which the Council is the regulatory authority. They are, however, matters which it would be prudent to bear in mind in order to ensure the safety and comfort of your guests and to protect your own interests.

i) Fire Precautions

Where there are more than five guests you will have to ensure that the fire precautions are adequate to meet the Building Code. For less than five guests these requirements will not apply. The question therefore arises as to what precautions would it be prudent and advisable to take even though they are not required by the Building Code?

In the simplest analysis smoke alarms offer a very cheap and effective early warning system. These can be fitted to ceilings [as close as possible to the centre of the room or corridor is best] within escape corridors and within guest rooms themselves. Coupled with a 'No Smoking' policy this will significantly reduce the chances of a fire.

For guest rooms at ground floor an externally opening door will frequently offer guests a chance to make a quick escape in the event of an emergency as well as a useful facility to sit outside in the summer months. Where guest rooms open onto car parking areas they also enable guests to more easily transfer their luggage.

Doors to guest rooms need to be substantial in order to provide the necessary security and privacy that guests will expect. This means that any doors with glass panels, for example, will need to be replaced. If new doors have to be fitted for whatever reason, consider the use of properly constructed fire doors. As well as satisfying the basic needs, such doors will also help prevent the spread of fire. There is a very strong economic argument in restricting a fire to a single room!

ii) Electrical safety

Electrical safety is an obvious important issue. Unless the installation is new or has recently been examined, it is a worthwhile precaution to arrange for an inspection and report from a qualified electrical contractor who is authorised to issue inspection reports. Any defects identified within the report should be attended to before accommodation is offered to guests.

iii) Security

Your guests will want to feel safe and secure for themselves, their belongings and their vehicles. The security of guest rooms, the building itself and car parking areas will need to be considered. The range of alternatives is very wide and specialist advice may need to be sought.

There are also very simple measures that the owner can take. A sensible choice of good quality locks, good exterior lighting and keeping gardens under control to reduce cover for intruders, etc. are all obvious measures that entail little cost.

iv) Insurance

It is wise to check with your insurers before taking in guests to ensure that you have the appropriate level of cover against foreseeable eventualities. Public liability insurance is particularly important.

Should you require any further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Council's Environmental Health Officers at:-

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Regulatory Services
1 Rosebank Terrace
P O Box 25
BALCLUTHA 9240
Tel: 03 419 0200
Fax: 03 418 3185
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