

Staff Kitchens and Tearooms – General Hygiene Requirements

The guidance in this leaflet applies to facilities used by individuals to store and prepare food for their own personal consumption. If departments wish to use these facilities to provide refreshments beyond tea, coffee, and biscuits for departmental hospitality, additional precautions will be required.

All kitchens and tearooms must be maintained in a clean and hygienic manner. Maintaining general cleanliness and tidiness is critical to ensure good hygiene standards, reduce the risk of slips and trips, and minimise the risk of a pest infestation such as rats, cockroaches, ants, and mice.

Every person who uses the facilities has a responsibility to ensure they play their part in maintaining high standards.

This guide aims to assist departments in maintaining best practice standards.

General

All food and drink must be prepared, stored, and consumed in suitable and appropriate areas that are free from contamination (never in laboratories, workshops etc).

Any splashes or spills of liquid and foodstuffs must be cleaned up immediately.

Storage of food and drink

High-risk foods such as fresh milk, dairy products, eggs, meat, sandwiches, salads, cream cakes etc. must be kept refrigerated and used within their use-by dates.

Refrigerators should operate at a maximum of 8°C, ideally 5°C. It is advisable to keep a fridge thermometer in the refrigerator so that the temperature can be checked daily.

Long life milk can be stored at room temperature but once opened it must be treated as fresh and labelled on date of opening and stored following the manufacturer's instructions.

Stored food must be checked regularly for signs of spoilage or damage. Any items past their use-by date must be discarded without delay.

Low-risk foods such as biscuits, bread, cakes (not cream), tea/coffee, sugar, crisps, and confectionary should be stored in sealed containers in an appropriate place, where they cannot become contaminated. Packaging must be retained for allergen information.

Cleaning

In addition to the practice of 'cleaning as you go,' a rota or system for daily and weekly cleaning should be in place, with tasks signed off upon completion. In some departments, cleaners may be employed.

Only cleaning products that are suitable for use in kitchens/food areas should be used.

All cleaning chemicals must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worn when required.

Where a substance is considered hazardous to health, a COSHH Risk Assessment must be undertaken.

All cleaning chemicals must be kept in their original containers and stored separately from food and food equipment. During use, it is essential to prevent any risk of food contamination.

Work surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day using an approved disinfectant or sanitiser.

Dishcloths and sponges are to be discarded at the end of each day and replaced with new ones each morning.

Disposable paper towels are the preferred option. Where cotton tea towels are used, they must be changed when wet and also daily. They must be washed on a 90°C cycle. Tea towels are not to be used for hand drying under any circumstances.

Fridges must be cleaned at least weekly. At the same time, food items should be checked and any past their use-by date discarded.

High-touch areas such as door handles, light switches, taps, and fridge handles must be disinfected regularly.

Sinks, taps, and drainers must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected each day using an approved disinfectant or sanitiser.

Cooker hobs, microwaves, kettles, toasters and other equipment should be wiped at the end of the day using an appropriate cleaning agent and a clean, preferably disposable, cloth.

Bins should not be allowed to overflow. They should be emptied at the end of each day.

Floors should be swept daily. Where there is evidence of staining or dirt then it must be cleaned using hot water and a detergent.

All used **plates, cups, cutlery**, etc. should be washed and disinfected using detergent and hot water followed by a hot water rinse and left to air dry. The use of a dishwasher is always advisable.

Food Safety Information. Number 3

Clean crockery, cutlery, mugs, and similar items should be stored away when not in use to avoid contamination. Items kept in storage for extended periods should be cling-wrapped or rewashed before use.

Further Information

On the Food Standards Agency website www.food.gov.uk

In other leaflets in the food safety information series

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