

Cleaning and Pest Control in Food Preparation Areas

Effective cleaning and pest control are critical to maintaining a safe and hygienic premises. Regular cleaning prevents the build-up of dirt and bacteria, while robust pest control measures protect against contamination and disease. Together, they safeguard food safety, ensure compliance with food hygiene legislation, and protect the reputation of the University.

CLEANING

It is a legal requirement to ensure high standards of cleanliness are maintained in a food premises. Legislation also requires that all equipment, fittings, articles, and surfaces be cleaned and disinfected.

Maintaining cleanliness in food preparation areas is essential as it:

- ensures good hygiene,
- prevents the growth of harmful bacteria, and
- minimizes the risk of attracting pests such as flies, ants, cockroaches, and rats.

Food handlers and kitchen users should follow a 'clean as you go' approach, ensuring that any spills or splashes of food and drink are cleaned up immediately.

Cleaning chemicals must be:

- Be 'food-grade,' meaning suitable for use in kitchens and food areas.
- Be stored in properly labelled containers with the manufacturer's instructions clearly visible.
- Along with cleaning equipment, be kept separate from food and food equipment.
- Used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Used away from food.

Disinfectants and sanitisers must:

- Be of the appropriate BS EN standard - either BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697.
- Be sprayed onto the item/surface and left for the appropriate 'contact time' before it is wiped off. It is recommended that a disinfectant/sanitiser with a short contact time (30 seconds) is used.
- Be diluted (if purchased concentrated) to the correct ratio according to the manufacturer's instructions.

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

Waste bins must be emptied regularly and not be allowed to overflow. Where containers are lidded, these should be foot operated. Bins must be left empty at the end of the day and cleaned at least weekly.

A cleaning schedule is a systematic approach to cleaning and an effective way of ensuring that cleaning is undertaken at the correct frequency using the appropriate chemicals and equipment. The schedule should include details of any necessary safety measures to be followed.

Areas and frequencies:

- Food contact areas such as chopping boards, utensils, containers should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Work surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected first thing in the morning and at the end of the day and after each use.
- Hand contact surfaces such as door handles, fridge handles, light switches should be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Internal surfaces of fridges at least weekly.
- Sinks, taps and drainers should be cleaned and disinfected each day.
- Cooker hobs, griddles, toasters, and microwaves should be cleaned and disinfected at the end of the day and ovens cleaned thoroughly at least weekly.
- Floors must be swept and cleaned at the end of the day.

It is suggested that completed cleaning records are kept for six months.

Food establishments should preferably be equipped with a dishwasher to wash, disinfect, and dry crockery, utensils, and cutlery. If a sink is used instead, items must first be cleaned with detergent and hot water, then disinfected using either boiling hot water or an appropriate sanitiser. Finally, they should be rinsed and allowed to air dry.

Dishcloths and sponges must 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 daily. They must be washed on a 90°C cycle.

Clean crockery, cutlery, mugs, and similar items should be stored in closed cupboards/containers or cling wrapped when not in use to prevent them from becoming contaminated.

Thorough cleaning of walls, ceilings, extractor fans and hoods, and the floors behind fridges and cookers must be undertaken in all food preparation and storage areas at least every six months, or more frequently if required.

PEST CONTROL

Pests such as flies, cockroaches, rats, mice, and birds can pose serious risk of contamination.

Food premises must, by law, be kept free from pests, and effective pest control measures must be in place. Infestation by pests is likely to result in the closure of a food premises by a local authority Environmental Health Officer.

Food handlers must be trained to identify signs of pest activity and report any sightings to management without delay.

All external doors and windows in food preparation areas must remain closed or fitted with screens or chains to prevent pest entry.

Electronic fly killers should be installed in food preparation areas, ensuring the units are not located above food preparation or storage areas which could result in contamination of food. Units should be properly maintained, with debris trays emptied on a regular basis.

External bins used for kitchen and food waste must be fitted with secure, tight-closing lids to prevent pest entry. The bin store must always remain clean and tidy.

Any signs of infestation must be reported to the appropriate person, such as the facilities manager, who must contact a pest control contractor (this may be via Estate Management). Pest control contractors should be members of the British Pest Control Association and have knowledge of pests that frequent food businesses.

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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