

How to be Confident that Your Business Sells Safe Food

Good Hygienic Practice Tips

Blenheim has a large number of lunch bars and cafes that serve the workers and visitors of Blenheim. It is estimated that Blenheim has more cafes per head of population than New York.

The number of meals produced every day in Blenheim would be in the tens of thousands. This represents a considerable risk if food is not prepared, cooked, and stored in a safe manner. This pamphlet is to assist café, restaurant, and lunch-bar operators in providing safe food.

Preparation of food

Thawing

Do not thaw food at room temperature. There are three acceptable methods for thawing frozen food:

- In the chiller either the day before or overnight which will limit any bacterial growth.
- Under cold running water.
- In a microwave oven.

Food should be thawed in containers that are large enough to collect all liquid.

Preparation & Hand Washing

This step is critical to prevent contamination, particularly if the product will not be heated before eating, such as a salad.

Prior to beginning any work in food premises, workers must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and hot water aided by the use of a nailbrush. They must wash their hands after using the toilet, before recommencing work, and between tasks. Either disposable paper towels or a towel dispenser should be used, providing a clean towel to each person.

Disposable gloves can be worn but hands must still be washed before use and the gloves changed between preparing raw and cooked food. Never use gloves for handling money.

Raw and cooked food should be prepared separately and preferably in different areas of the kitchen. It is recommended that a separate cutting board be provided for raw red meats, raw chicken, cooked meats and food, and vegetables. Separate knives and slicers for raw and cooked product are advisable. If this is not possible, boards, knives, and slicers are to be thoroughly cleaned with detergent and

hot water and then wiped over with an appropriate sanitiser (e.g. bleach) between uses. This should be repeated at the end of the day.

All food preparation areas and surfaces are to be cleaned and sanitised before use and between tasks. Ensure that all surfaces and equipment are rinsed before use to remove any traces of detergent or sanitiser.

Any food that is not to be eaten straight away, or is not on display, is to be kept refrigerated at 4°C or hot at not less than 60°C, preferably higher.

Cooking

This is the critical point at which any bacteria that may be present in the food can be destroyed. It is important to remember though that no amount of heating will destroy any heat stable toxins. That is why it is important to protect the food through all phases of preparation and not to rely on cooking to kill the bugs that can cause food poisoning. Careful handling and storage of the raw product is therefore essential.

Food should be cooked so that the internal temperature reaches at least 85°C. A guide that meat has reached the right temperature for the appropriate period of time is that the juices run clear.

Any microwaved food should be given at least two to three minutes sitting time to allow complete heating throughout.



Display of food

Readily perishable food – this is any food that consists partly or wholly of milk, milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, or any ingredients capable of supporting the growth of organisms that can cause food borne illnesses.

All readily perishable food on display is to be maintained at a temperature not exceeding 4°C, or alternatively at a temperature of not less than 60°C, except during periods of preparation, service, and where it is not exposed or exhibited for sale for any period or periods totalling 2 hours. This means that food is to be either kept hot in an appropriate warmer unit or chilled in a refrigerated display case. If an unrefrigerated display unit is used or the refrigerated display case cannot maintain food at the correct temperature, than a suitable method of proving that the food is not displayed for more than 2 hours is to be developed.

There are several methods that may be acceptable to keep food safe:

- food should be prepared as required and not displayed for more than 2 hours
- unrefrigerated display cases or inadequately refrigerated display units can be supplied from a refrigerator and food replaced as sold – once in the display case it needs to be treated as unrefrigerated
- food can be wrapped and a time marked on the wrapper indicating when it was put on display. After two hours it should be discarded
- coloured discs or stickers on dishes can indicate the time that food was put on display

In all circumstances a method of verifying how long the food has been displayed is required.

It is often stated that bread (sandwiches and rolls) kept in a chiller unit takes on a “stale” texture. This can be alleviated by displaying the product in a solid plastic package. In some circumstances this type of display package may even enhance it’s shelf life.

Non-readily perishable food – although not requiring refrigeration, the food still requires protection from contamination from dust, insects and customers. Food is therefore to be protected with suitable covers or wrapping and any food on the counter or servery is to be protected.

Protection of food – all food is to be protected against all sources of potential contamination. Display cabinets are to have proper covers or windows that are kept closed when not in immediate use. Smorgasbord display units are to have appropriate sneeze guards to protect against contamination from customers.

All self-service units are to be supplied with a suitable number and type of tongs and serving implements.

Verification – it is vital that you are sure that your display equipment is operating at the right temperature. Regular (at least daily is recommended) temperature measurements are to be taken of all display equipment and the temperature recorded. Record also where the temperature is taken so repeat checks can confirm that the machines are running consistently. If temperatures fluctuate beyond the recommended range then adjustments or repairs may be necessary.



Storage

Storage of ingredients and any processed food (not on display) is to be in appropriate containers at the right temperature. The danger zone for bacterial growth is between 4°C and 60°C.

Refrigerators – Food is to be stored in covered containers (Solid lids or cling wrap. Damp tea-towels, bread bags or similar are not suitable).

Any cooked food should be placed in the refrigerator as soon as possible. It should be cooled at room temperature for no longer than 30 minutes. Shallow dishes of sufficient size that allows the food to be spread out will aid quicker chilling.

Raw product is to be kept at the bottom of the refrigerator / chiller in containers that will capture any leakage. Don't forget to regularly clean and sanitise the fridge or chiller.

Keep cooked food completely separate from raw



product including vegetables. There should be sufficient space around containers to allow effective circulation of cold air.

Freezers – The same requirements apply.

Only clean unused wrapping or bags are to be used for the storage of product. These should be labelled with the product name and date so as to provide for good stock rotation (using old stock first).

All food should be in containers or wrapped so as to prevent freezer burning and deterioration of the product. Frozen food is not to be re-frozen.

Regular temperature checks are to be taken of freezers and refrigerators to ensure that they are operating at the required temperature (-18°C and 4°C respectively). Record temperature measurements.

Vegetables – These should be stored either in a suitable refrigerator or chiller (separate from cooked food) or in a dry, well ventilated compartment. Vegetables should be removed from any soiled bulk container.

Dry Goods – All opened dry goods are to be kept in clean and dry containers constructed of smooth and waterproof materials and equipped with a close fitting lid.

The containers and lids are to be thoroughly cleaned each time before refilling.

The pantry area is to be cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis (include as part of your cleaning schedule).

Delivery/Reception

Food safety begins right from delivery of the product to your premises. You become responsible for the quality of the food once delivered to your premises. If it's unsafe and you accept it – it has become your problem.

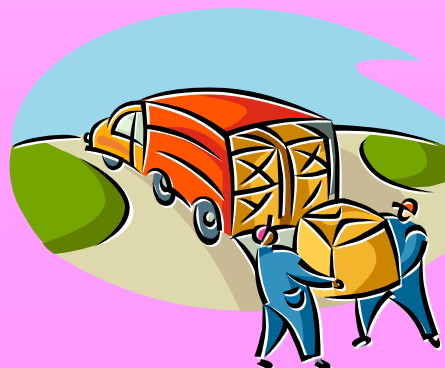
Frozen, chilled and readily perishable food is to be delivered when you are open unless arrangements can be made for the food to be put straight into suitable refrigeration or freezer space.

Temperatures of the food should be measured upon delivery to ensure it is within the required range.

Frozen food – at or less than -18°C.

Chilled and readily perishable food - at less than 4°C.

In addition, it is recommended that these temperature measurements be recorded for future reference should problems occur.



Cleaning and Maintenance:

All of the above food safety procedures are worthless if suitable cleaning, sanitising and maintenance of food preparation surfaces, equipment, and storage and display units are not carried out in a satisfactory manner. Every food premises is to have a suitable cleaning schedule detailing the areas and equipment to be cleaned on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. It should also include the method, cleaning materials and sanitisers to be used and the person or persons responsible.

Ensure that suitable cleansers and sanitisers are used appropriately.



Cleaning Schedules:

Introduction:

Food premises need continual cleaning and sanitising to eliminate food poisoning bacteria before they can multiply and spread.

Some areas, equipment and surfaces, particularly food preparation and storage areas will need more frequent cleaning and sanitation and in some cases specialised procedures may be required.

All premises need a cleaning plan to ensure that they are thoroughly cleaned and sanitised.

General Housekeeping:



Good housekeeping involves maintaining a clean, tidy workplace and using safe working practices so that safe, clean, wholesome food can be produced.

Unless the equipment and surfaces that come in contact with food is adequately cleaned and sanitised, it may be a prime source of food contamination from bacteria.

Effective Cleaning:

Foodworkers must “clean as they go”. Good cleaning equipment is needed and may include vacuum cleaners, mops, buckets, brooms, and specialised items such as sanitisers, steam cleaners, etc.

Protective clothing and gloves must be worn where necessary and the chemical manufacturer’s instructions on use and preparation should be followed.

Food must not be exposed to the risk of contamination during cleaning or from chemical storage. After use, the cleaning equipment itself must be cleaned and chemicals stored in a separate area away from food and food preparation areas.

What is to be cleaned:

Walk through your premises and list everything that requires cleaning on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Start with the structure (floors and walls etc), then detail each area, preparation surfaces, fixtures, and equipment.

A regular check should be made of the premises and the effectiveness of the cleaning schedule. Update and alter as necessary.

For a cleaning plan to be effective it also needs to be “signed off” and a record kept so that it can be audited. Keep all completed schedules in a binder or folder for at least a year.

All areas to be cleaned should be listed in the cleaning plan (refer to attached examples)

Reasons for Cleaning:

- To remove material where bacteria can grow, thus reducing the risk of food poisoning and spoilage.
- To allow disinfection of specific equipment and surfaces.
- To remove materials and items that could encourage pest infestation.
- To reduce the risk of foreign matter contamination.
- To provide a safe working environment.

Management:

A clean premises requires commitment to hygiene from all staff.

It is essential that all staff are aware of how the cleaning programme works and what their duties are.

A cleaning programme is recognised as an essential food safety tool in providing a control point in limiting potential risks of contamination to food.

The Environmental Health Team recognises this fact through the “Risk Assessment” made of your premises.

An effective cleaning programme is one that is being seen to be used on a daily basis, involves all staff, and is being signed off and the record kept.

Any cleaning schedule should be able to be audited and therefore an effective method of recording the completion of the cleaning duties should be maintained.

For further information on cleaning programmes ask your Environmental Health Officer.

Dishwashers – for dishwashers to sanitise crockery, cutlery, and other equipment properly it is essential that they are operating at the correct temperatures (60°C – wash and 77°C – rinse). Your machine should be maintained on a regular basis by a reputable white-ware technician with verification of the operating temperatures. In addition the dishwasher is to be cleaned internally on a regular basis to maintain its effectiveness.

Method:

To be effective a Cleaning Schedule must be drawn up for all parts of the premises. The plan should list:

- Items, areas, and equipment to be cleaned.
- Cleaning product. Type and amount of chemical to use.
- Cleaning method. How to do it?
- Frequency and persons responsible.
- Date completed.
- Sign off (on a daily or at least weekly basis).

Common Issues

Below are some other common issues with lunch bars, restaurants, and cafes:-

- Don't use plastic bags that have been used before for storage of food, particularly in freezers;
- Soiled tea-towels are to be stored in a covered impervious container or suitable linen bag. Keep clean tea-towels separate in a suitable cupboard;
- Suitable protective clothing and head coverings are to be worn by workers. Aprons worn without other suitable clothing and untied or uncovered hair are not acceptable.

Handy Hints:

Use combined cleanser/sanitisers as opposed to separate detergents and sanitisers. This will save time and expense.

Keep the number of chemicals to a minimum to avoid confusion.

- Never mix separate sanitisers and cleansers. At least they may be rendered ineffective, at worst they could become toxic, corrosive, or flammable.
- Ensure that the sanitiser is suitable for the product. Surfaces and equipment that come into direct contact with food should be rinsed off with hot water before use.
- No matter how good the cleaning product, effort and energy from workers is still required to achieve good results.
- For special equipment such as slicers, mixers etc. provide instructions on how the machinery is to be stripped down for effective cleaning.

Cleaning cloths are to be regularly sanitised by boiling for at least 10 minutes, soaking in a sanitiser (bleach), or washing and microwaving for several minutes.



Hints on refrigeration

- Refrigerate food as soon as possible after cooking or preparation.
- Place prepared food in shallow dishes, preferably no deeper than 75mm. This allows quick cooling.
- Store perishable food in covered containers with raw product at the bottom of the fridge.
- Allow space around food and containers to allow circulation of cool air. Do not store above load lines in open display units.



Food safety

It is important to monitor food displays, particularly self-service buffet systems. At busy times of the year food safety systems can be under pressure with consequent outbreaks of food poisoning amongst your customers and a damaged reputation for your business.

Here are some tips to reduce risks and keep your customers safe.

- Food should not be prepared earlier in the day than is necessary. It must be refrigerated from the time of preparation until the setting up of the smorgasbord or buffet.
- Food in bain maries or hot cabinets must be held at 65°C. Regular stirring will ensure that the food remains hot throughout the container. Measurements should be



taken and recorded to show that the food is held at the right temperature.

- Use shallow trays to ensure thorough heating and do not pile food too high.
- Any readily perishable food not

held hot must be chilled and held at a temperature not exceeding 4°C. Any food not displayed either hot (65°C) or cold (4°C) must be thrown away after two hours at room temperature.

- Food must be set out in such a way that customers are prevented from reaching over food.
- Food on display must be protected from dust, flies and customers' coughing and sneezing. Suitable sneeze guards must be used.
- Do not hold over prepared food for further sittings – leftover food must be discarded. You should exchange fresh containers of food when the containers are empty and do not top up fresh containers with leftovers. Prepare enough food for the immediate meal only.
- Provide customers with sufficient tongs, spoons and spatulas for serving from each dish. These utensils must be removed and cleaned regularly throughout the sitting. They should not be kept in water.
- A worker must be on duty at all times to ensure utensils are used appropriately by customers and are regularly cleaned.
- Spillages must be cleaned up immediately. Disposable towels should be used and then discarded.

The food worker – personal hygiene

Anyone working with food must not only maintain the food premises to a high standard but also themselves. Micro-organisms (bacteria and viruses) present on the body can get into food and cause food poisoning. Your customers will return if you and your premises look clean and tidy.

Nose and mouth

The nose and mouth contain lots of food poisoning organisms that can easily be passed on to food.

You should:

- stay at home if you have a cold
- use disposable tissues and flush them down the toilet after use
- wash your hands after blowing your nose
- never cough or sneeze over food
- never taste food you prepare with your finger – use a clean spoon
- avoid licking your fingers or blowing on glassware before

Hair

Hair is an ideal environment for micro-organisms to grow in. Keeping your hair clean, healthy and contained, limits growth of bacteria and minimises the risk of hair getting into food. Ensure that you wash your hands if you touch your hair, tie long hair back and cover hair to prevent it falling into food. Use a clean light coloured hat, hair-net or scarf. A baseball style cap is a suitable alternative.

Clothing

Clothing worn in a food premises must be adequate for the purpose. Wearing only street clothing is not considered suitable.

Protective clothing worn by food handling staff is to protect the food and must:

- be changed when dirty, especially aprons
- be washed daily in hot soapy water separate to other clothes that may contaminate them (e.g. nappies)
- be light in colour so that dirt and stains are easily seen
- only be worn at work

Protective clothing is not to be worn to and from work or out during the day on other errands.

Hands

Dirty hands, nails and jewellery are the likely cause of food poisoning micro-organisms getting into food. Hands are always touching food and food preparation surfaces.

You must wash your hands thoroughly in hot soapy water using a nailbrush to scrub the skin and beneath fingernails.

Thorough drying of hands on a clean surface is as important as washing. Disposable paper towels are best. You should wash your hands often throughout the day but particularly:

- before starting work
- after going to the toilet, blowing your nose or scratching your head
- after having a break or a cigarette
- after handling raw food, rubbish, money or chemicals
- whenever your hands become soiled or dirty

You should also keep fingernails short, remove jewellery and remove nail polish or any false nails before commencing work. Even when washed, hands may still be covered in micro-organisms so the use of tongs or serving spoons is essential. Disposable gloves may be useful but are not a substitute for good handwashing. Gloves can be easily contaminated and must be changed regularly.

The hand basin must be kept clear at all times and used exclusively and frequently for hand washing purposes. It must be supplied with soap, hot and cold (or warm) running

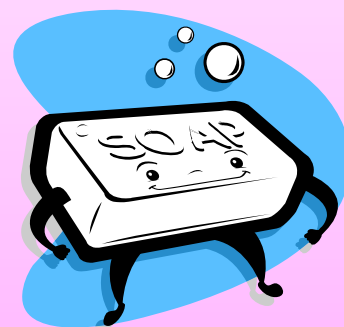
water, a nailbrush and disposable towels. The nailbrush is to be cleaned regularly.

Cuts and scratches

Cuts, scratches and skin conditions such as warts may have food poisoning organisms present and must be covered. Blood of course can also carry viruses such as Hepatitis and AIDS. All cuts and scratches need to be covered with coloured waterproof dressings so that

they can be detected in food if they are dislodged. For additional protection, use a disposable rubber glove. Ensure that any blood on equipment is cleaned off and wiped over with a chlorine based sanitiser (e.g. bleach). Any contaminated food is to be thrown away.

All food premises should have a suitable first aid cabinet with appropriate waterproof dressings. Any needles or pins should be discouraged as they may get into food. A log of all accidents and the action taken should be kept.



For further information or assistance contact your Environmental Health Officer, Marlborough District Council, PO Box 443, Blenheim 7240