

Cleaning

What the law says

Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, states that a food premise and all articles, fittings and equipment which food comes into contact with, must be kept clean. They must also be maintained in good repair and condition so they can be kept thoroughly clean and minimise any risk of contamination of the food.

What you need to do

Organisation

Cleaning is most effective when it has been properly organised. So you need to introduce an effective **cleaning schedule**.

This should show clearly:

- The area to be kept clean.
- The person responsible.
- The cleaning chemical to be used.
- The equipment to be used.
- Any health and safety precautions to be taken.
- When the cleaning is to be carried out.

You must carefully assess all the cleaning tasks before you draw up a suitable schedule. A supervisor should carry out daily and weekly checks to make sure all areas are being cleaned as shown in the schedule, and that the cleaning is to a satisfactory standard.

Training

Cleaning is a basic requirement of good food hygiene. If cleaning standards are poor, the hygiene of the whole premises will suffer. For this reason, staff carrying out cleaning must be properly supervised, instructed and trained.

You must make enough time for members of staff to carry out cleaning effectively. Remember that frequent cleaning to remove one day's dirt is easier than allowing grease and grime to build up that are then difficult to remove.

'**Clean as you go**' should be the training motto for staff to stick to.

Training must include explaining the hazards that certain chemicals may pose. (Please see below.)

Chemicals

It is essential that you provide chemicals that are suitable for the cleaning tasks they are intended to be used for. You must make up cleaning chemicals freshly each time you need them. Throwaway old chemicals.

In general, cleaning involves the use of the following types of chemicals:-

Detergents

Use these for washing up utensils and for cleaning down work surfaces. They break up grease and grime, allowing it to be dissolved by hot water. Remember, the better the quality of the detergent you use and the hotter the water, the less physical (elbow) power you need to use.

Heavy duty de-greaser

These are used to cut through grease and grime. These are particularly useful on the floors and some cooking equipment, such as cooker tops, deep fat fryers and griddles.

Cleaning the floor with a suitable de-greaser is essential to avoid slippery conditions. Take particular care to clean right into the corners, and around and beneath fittings and equipment such as refrigerators and freezers. Heavy cooking equipment should be on flexible couplings to the gas or electricity supply, and preferable on wheels, so you can move them to clean thoroughly.

A suitable de-greaser commonly available at cash and carry is 'Deepio'.

Caustic or acidic de-carbonisers

You can use these around cooker tops and griddles to remove encrusted deposits of carbonised grease. You must take great care when using these products as they can cause serious skin and eye damage.

Disinfectants

Use disinfectant after cleaning to kill any bacteria that remain on the surface. Using a disinfectant before thorough cleaning has been carried out is a waste of money.

You must use disinfectants in the kitchen on surfaces where food will come in contact, or that will be in contact with the hands of food handlers. For example, food preparation work surfaces, boards, knives and the handles to refrigerators and other equipment should be regularly disinfected.

There are many disinfectants available. Each one will have its own 'contact time', this is the time it will take to reduce bacterial numbers down to safe levels. Disinfectants for the domestic market tend to have long contact times, up to 10 minutes. Commercial disinfectants can have contact times as short as 30 seconds. When purchasing disinfectants always check for the contact time and ensure that you and your staff adhere to the instructions for use.

Sanitisers

These are a combination of a detergent and disinfectant.

As with disinfectants, sanitisers will have different contact times. You must check the instructions for use to ensure effective cleaning and disinfection with these products.

GENERAL

Cleaning Equipment

Remember that cleaning equipment, such as cloths, scourers and mop heads, also need to be kept clean. These should be hot washed in detergent and if re-useable, disinfected with a 1:10 solution of bleach or another suitable disinfectant.

Storage

You should not store cleaning chemicals in food rooms, unless they are kept in cupboards. Cleaning chemicals must never be poured into other containers. They must always carry any warning signs and safety information.

Safety

Some chemicals are subject to the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations**. These carry an orange square with a black warning symbol, usually a cross. This identifies the level of hazard that the chemical may pose to the user. Recommendations for safety equipment, such as rubber gloves, overalls and goggles, are usually stated on the container.

You can get further details from the chemical manufacturer or supplier on a 'hazard data sheet'. You should keep these on record as information for staff.

Assess all chemicals properly to make sure their use does not put the health of employees at risk. Keep protective equipment readily available and in good condition, and provide training where necessary.

Cleaning is hard work and needs to be made as easy as possible for people. Old stock, equipment and general clutter should be removed from food rooms. Clear away cleaning equipment, such as buckets and mops, into a separate storage area or cupboard to avoid people tripping over them.

Deep Cleaning

Deep cleaning should be carried out once or twice a year by a specialist contractor. This will allow all areas of your kitchen to be thoroughly cleaned to a level that can then be maintained by your staff using ordinary cleaning methods. Deep cleaning by professional contractors may be necessary where grease and grime has built up. Your visiting Environmental Health Officer will advise you when this is necessary.

The cleaning of high level areas such as the upper walls, ceiling and extractor or ventilation canopies may need special safety considerations to ensure safe access. It may be necessary for high level cleaning to be carried out by a specialist contractor.

Grease accumulation at a high level is mainly due to inadequate ventilation. Grease fumes from cooking equipment, especially griddles and deep-fat fryers, creates a large volume of condensation and grease that sticks to cold surfaces. You should have adequate extract ventilation with removable grease filters. We recommend that you take expert advice from a ventilation engineer.

REMEMBER, CLEAN AS YOU GO!