



BASIC RULES OF HYGIENE, SANITATION AND SAFETY IN FOOD PROCESSING

Facilities required in the processing room

- A changing room where clothing and shoes that are not worn for work can be stored.
- Separate hand-washing facilities for staff, with soap, clean water, nail brushes and clean towels or hot-air hand dryers. Hand-washing facilities should not be used for washing equipment.
- Toilets, which should be separated from the processing room by two doors or located in a nearby building.
- First aid materials.
- Protective aprons or coats washed regularly, hats/hairnets, and if necessary, gloves and shoes/boots.
- Cleaning chemicals, stored away from the processing room.

Hygiene and sanitation

Personal hygiene

- Wear a hat/hairnet that completely covers the hair. Do not comb your hair in a processing room or storeroom.
- Cover all cuts, burns, sores and abrasions with a clean, waterproof dressing.
- Do not smoke or eat in any room where there is open food because bacteria can be transferred from the mouth to the food.
- Do not spit in a processing room or storeroom.
- Wash hands and wrists thoroughly with soap after using the toilet, eating, smoking, coughing, blowing your nose, combing your hair, handling waste food, rubbish or cleaning chemicals. Dry them on a clean towel before handling food again.
- Keep finger nails cut short.
- Do not wear perfume or nail varnish as these can contaminate products.
- Do not handle any food if you have sores, boils, septic spots, a bad cold, chest infection, sore throat or a stomach upset. Report any of these to the manager and do alternative work.
- Do not cough or sneeze over food.

Cleaning

- Clean the processing room, toilets and washing facilities, and storerooms every day.
- Use the correct chemicals to clean equipment, make sure there are no food residues and rinse the equipment with clean water of drinking quality.
- Make sure all cleaning cloths are washed and boiled each day. Do not hang them on equipment, products or window ledges to dry.
- Clean as you go -do not leave dirty equipment until the end of the day before cleaning it.
- Keep the outside area around the processing room clean and tidy, keep grass cut short.

Sanitation

- Put all wastes into bins that are not used for anything else. Empty the bins periodically during the day away from the processing site.
- Prevent all animals from entering the processing area or storerooms.
- Visitors should only enter the processing room wearing protective clothing and under supervision.
- Keep food covered wherever possible.
- Keep all food, tools and equipment off the floor.
- Store ingredients in sealed containers.
- Do not use broken or dirty equipment.
- Report any signs of insects, rodents or birds to the manager.

Safe working

Safe clothing and work practices

- Wear shoes that protect your feet from falling objects.
- Do not wear any loose clothing or jewellery that could get caught in running machines. Wear overalls.
- Prevent staff from running inside a building.
- Do not allow customers, children or animals into the processing room.
- Immediately clean up any water, oil or grease on the floor using sawdust, sand, husks etc.
- Cover burning electrical equipment with a damp cloth or sand. Never use water to put out flames.
- Shield gas burners from direct sunlight because the flames can become invisible.
- Do not put cleaning chemicals into old food containers.
- Have a first aid box containing sterilised dressings, cotton wool, adhesive plasters and bandages.

Operating machinery

- Ensure that only trained staff enter the premises or operate machines.
- Do not allow staff to start a machine unless they know how to stop it. Only one person should operate a machine at any one time.
- Make the layout of machinery logical, and leave sufficient space around it so that there are few chances for operators to get in each other's way.
- Do not try to attract operators' attention by touching or calling them from behind if they are using a machine. Always speak to them from the front, or wait until they have finished what they are doing.
- Train staff to be familiar with potential hazards (e.g. potentially dangerous machines), and what they should do in case of an accident. Use charts hung on the wall near to each machine to show safety precautions.
- Ensure that guards are fitted and in place over any moving parts of a machine and alert staff to machines that appear to be standing still when running at high speed.
- Never allow staff to clean, adjust or lean over moving machinery and do not allow them to leave a running machine un-attended.
- Encourage operators to report any loose parts on a machine.
- Do not allow staff to work with equipment that is defective. Put a note on any machine that is under repair saying 'DO NOT TOUCH'.
- Do not allow anyone to touch inside electric equipment while it is connected.
- Regularly check the cords of electrical appliances to ensure that outside covers are not broken and wires are not exposed.

References and further reading

Food Poisoning and its prevention

(Barrie Axtell for Practical Action, 2003)

Making Safe Food

(P.Fellows, V.Hidellage & E.Judge for Practical Action / CTA, 1998)

Food-Processing Equipment Design

In this technical brief, some simple principles are described which can be used to check the design of locally-made or imported equipment.

This document was produced by Barrie Axtell (2003) and updated by Peter Fellows (2008) for Practical Action. (Adapted from: The Food Hygiene Handbook, Sprenger R.A.,Highfield Publications, Doncaster DN5 7LY, UK, 2002)

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technical brief