

THE CENTRAL KITCHEN

A publication of Central Michigan District Health Department



IMPORTANCE OF CLEANING YOUR FOOD FACILITY

Cleaning your restaurant is important for food safety and it shows your customers and staff you care about their safety, their jobs, and your business. Restaurants must constantly battle unseen bacteria that can establish colonies on food contact and nonfood contact surfaces. You probably see recalls of fruits and vegetables because of bacterial contamination on a weekly basis. Many of the recalls are traced back to improperly cleaned surfaces in processing areas. Restaurants are not immune to bacteria clinging to surfaces that otherwise look clean. *Listeria* is one example of an organism that can cling to stainless steel and resist vigorous cleaning.

Cleaning in a food facility is broken up into two categories. The first category being nonfood contact surfaces. Nonfood contact surfaces are surface like walls, floors, bathrooms, racks, shelves, and ventilation grates. Nonfood contact surfaces should be cleaned at a frequency to prevent the buildup of debris. After cleaning, these surfaces must be sanitized or disinfected using an approved chemical for the task. Proper cleaning not only maintains compliance with the health code but can prevent other related problems. If not cleaned frequently, soiled surfaces become a food source and attract pests such as mice, rats, or insects into the restaurant. Greasy floors can be a slipping hazard to both employees and customers or grease may be a fire hazard if the ventilation system is not cleaned

frequently. It is important to clean all nonfood contact surfaces at a frequency to prevent the accumulation of food debris, grease, or grime.

The second category of cleaning is food contact surfaces. A food contact surface is a surface that comes in direct contact with foods. Examples of food contact surfaces are utensils, cutting boards, prep counters, food sinks, pots, and pans. In use utensils and cutting boards should be cleaned at a minimum every 4 hours to help stop bacteria growth. Food contact surfaces must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized in order to effectively remove soil and kill bacteria. Sanitizers must be labeled for use on food contact surfaces, used according to label directions, and verified it is mixed correctly using an appropriate test kit.

Frequent and proper cleaning of food contact and nonfood contact surfaces provides multiple returns on investment. Surfaces are less likely to be contaminated with bacteria that can cause foodborne illness. A cleaned facility reduces physical safety hazards to customers and employees. Frequent cleaning prevents attracting pests into the facility. Finally, a clean facility is an expectation of your guests and is noticed when it doesn't meet their expectations.



TWO STAGE COOLING

When food is cooked and is not served immediately, the food must get out of the temperature danger zone to prevent bacteria from growing. This means cooling food quickly from 135 F to 41 F, the danger zone.

Hot foods must be cooled completely within 6 hours to avoid the growth of bacteria and toxin formation. In the first 2 hours food must be cooled from 135 F to 70 F. In the next 4 hours food must be cooled from 70 F to 41 F. If food has not been cooled to 70 F within the first 2 hours, it must be reheated and then cooled more rapidly using one or more of the techniques below. Following the appropriate steps of two-stage cooling will prevent bacteria growth or toxin formation in the food. Food can become unsafe in a matter of hours if these steps aren't followed.



There are several factors that can affect how quickly food cools:

Size of the food – Large food items cool more slowly than smaller items. To help food cool faster, cut larger items into smaller pieces or divide larger batches of product into smaller containers.

Storage containers - Stainless steel pans cool quicker than storing food in plastic containers. Shallow pans are better for cooling product than deep pans.

Several methods can be used for cooling food quickly. Ice water baths can be used after dividing food into smaller containers and then placing the container in a larger container filled with ice. Food should be stirred frequently to cool it faster.

Ice paddles can help to cool food quickly. Ice paddles can be filled with water and then frozen. Food can then be stirred with the ice paddle to help aid the cooling process.

When cooling soups or stews, make soup with less water and then add cold water or ice after cooking to help cool the food properly.

Restaurant managers must monitor the two-stage cooling process in their facility to make sure that the correct procedure is being followed. Keeping accurate time and temperature logs when cooling products can help employees to get this process right and provides process verification. Cooling food quickly through the danger zone keeps it safe and can retain quality for a better product.

FOOD SAFETY REMINDERS

- Wash hands often!
- Don't handle ready to eat foods with bare hands.
- Cook foods to proper temperatures.
- Use a food thermometer!
- Keep hot foods HOT – 135 F or above.
- Keep cold foods COLD – 41 F or below.
- Keep foods out of the Danger Zone (between 41 F and 135 F)
- Wash, rinse and sanitize food contact surfaces regularly.



PLAN REVIEW

REMINDER: If you plan on remodeling a food facility, a plan review must be completed by the local health department. A plan review application and worksheet must be submitted at least thirty days prior to the planned beginning of construction.

After the plans have been reviewed and approved, you will receive a letter authorizing construction. During construction, a sanitarian may visit to check progress. A completed Food Service License Application must also be submitted, along with License Fees at this time.

Contact your local health department office several days in advance to arrange for a pre-opening inspection. The inspector will verify all work was completed according to plans; all equipment is operational; and all required inspections including plumbing, electrical, mechanical, and building have been completed and approved.

Once the facility has been found to be in substantial compliance with the food code requirements and building occupancy has been granted, approval to operate will be authorized.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH & PERSONAL HYGIENE PRACTICES

What are personal hygiene practices?

Personal hygiene practices are the overall behaviors, activities, and actions that can help food employees prevent spreading viruses and bacteria to food. They can be summed up into four categories.

1. Hand practices: employees shall follow proper handwashing procedures; avoid wearing fingernail polish or false fingernails; use single-use gloves properly; and avoid bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.
2. Personal cleanliness: food employees shall maintain an overall state of cleanliness, including showering or bathing before work.
3. Work Attire: employees shall wear effective hair restraints, clean clothing, and clean aprons, and remove rings, bracelets, and watches before preparing food, washing dishware, etc.
4. Employee illness policies: food employees are required to inform their manager or person-in-charge if they are experiencing vomiting and/ or diarrheal symptoms and are to be excluded from the operation until symptom free for 24 hours or receive written release from a doctor.



**Wash
YOUR
Hands**

When should employees wash their hands?

Employees shall wash their hands immediately after engaging in activities that contaminate the hands and...

1. When entering a food preparation area or leaving and returning to a food prep area.
2. Before putting on clean, single-use gloves for working with food and between glove changes if a change in task has occurred.
3. Before handling clean equipment and serving utensils, or after handling soiled dishes, equipment, or utensils.
4. When switching between handling raw and ready-to-eat foods.
5. After touching the face, hair, or body, soiled clothing, or aprons, or after coughing or sneezing.
6. After using the restroom, eating, drinking, smoking, using your cell phone, handling money, taking out the garbage, sweeping/ mopping floors, using chemicals, after cleaning/ sanitizing, or any other activity that might contaminate the hands.

Good hygienic practices can make the difference between serving food safe for consumption and food that can make someone ill. Most food-borne illness can be traced back to poor personal hygiene, whether as a result of an employee illness or handling foods with bare hands. Accordingly, proper hand washing is a critical step in the food preparation process to help prevent the spread of food-borne illnesses.



The Central Kitchen is a publication of
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Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

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