

Fact Sheet for Retail Food Businesses

Cleaning and sanitising

October 2010

What is the Food Regulation Partnership?

The Food Regulation Partnership (FRP) became effective 1 July 2008 when The NSW Food Authority (the Authority) appointed local councils as enforcement agencies under the *NSW Food Act 2003*.

This means that councils now have a mandated role and are responsible for regulating the food retail and food service sector in their local government area. This includes inspections and complaint investigation of retail food businesses in their area.

Cleaning and Sanitising

It is important that food business owners and food handlers understand the importance of cleaning and sanitising within their food business. It is a legal requirement for premises and fixtures, fittings and equipment and food contact surfaces to be maintained in a clean condition.

Additionally, any food contact surface or eating or drinking utensil needs to be sanitised.

Cleaning and sanitising are important steps you must take as they help prevent the growth and spread of organisms that cause food borne illness and help reduce the activity of pests within the food premises.

What are my legal requirements?

A food business must maintain food premises and fixtures, fittings and equipment to a standard of cleanliness where there is no accumulation of;

- Food waste
- Dirt
- Grease, or
- Other visible matter

Additionally, garbage and recycled matter needs to be stored in appropriate containers.

Clean means that surfaces are clean to touch and free of visible matter and without objectionable odour.

How do I clean?

Cleaning generally involves use of hot water and detergent. Cleaning generally involves the following steps

- Scraping, wiping or sweeping away food scraps and rinsing with water
- Washing using hot water and detergent to remove grease and dirt (protective gloves may be required).
- Rinsing off any loose dirt or detergent residue.

What is Sanitising?

Sanitising is the process of applying to a clean surface heat and/or chemicals (or other approved process) to reduce the number of bacteria and other organisms to a safe level.

Sanitising can be performed using hot water (eg dishwasher) or through use of chemicals.

Important: Sanitising must be performed on all food contact surfaces and eating and drinking utensils.

How do I sanitise?

Ensure that the item to be sanitised is in a clean condition. Sanitising is not effective on unclean surfaces.

Dishwasher

To sanitise effectively with a dishwasher a rinse cycle temperature of at least 77 degrees and a rinse cycle of greater than 30 seconds is required. Domestic dishwashers may not achieve these temperatures, check with the manufacturer if in doubt.

Chemicals

Chemical sanitisers are generally chlorine or ammonium based compounds. Products appropriate for use in food businesses are available from commercial chemical suppliers and retailers.

It is important when using chemical sanitisers that the product is designed for use in food premises and that manufacturers instructions are followed. Some chemical sanitisers require residues to be rinsed off the food contact surface after use.

Dilution rates, contact times and safety instructions vary from product to product. Before using any chemical (including bleach) the manufacturers instructions for safe use and storage should be followed.

The diagram below shows how a double bowl sink can be used to clean and sanitise utensils, plates, containers etc.



Items that can fit within the sink can be washed and cleaned in the left hand bowl. They can then be immersed in a chemical sanitiser solution in the bowl on the right hand side.

For items that are too large to fit in the sink bowl, these can have sanitiser solution applied using a spray bottle (after having been cleaned first).

Vinegar and methylated spirits as sanitisers?

Vinegar and methylated spirits should not be used as sanitisers. Vinegar is a weak acid and is not considered to be an effective sanitiser.

Methylated spirits should not be used as a sanitiser as it can leave chemical residues on surfaces.

Using bleach as a sanitiser

Unscented bleach is a chlorine based chemical that can be used to sanitise food contact surfaces when diluted correctly. As a guide the following table provides an indication of how to dilute bleach.

How much water?	How much bleach?			
	Using household bleach (4%) chlorine		Using commercial bleach (10%) chlorine	
Concentration required (ppm)	50ppm	100ppm	50ppm	100ppm
1 litre	1.25ml	2.5ml	0.5ml	1ml
10 litres	12.5ml	25ml	5ml	10ml
50 litres	62.5ml	125ml	25ml	50ml

What happens after an inspection?

If an authorised officer identifies a cleaning issue that needs to be rectified a variety of compliance actions can be initiated.

For further information on the circumstances in which compliance action may be initiated the *NSW Food Authority Compliance and Enforcement Guidelines* are available at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

Need further information

Your local council environmental health officer can assist you with any questions you have about inspection findings or compliance action. Talking with them can assist in clarifying what work needs to be undertaken and the required time frame for completion of the work.