

COMMUNICATION

Food & Controlled Drugs Branch

To: Vulnerable Population Food Businesses / Food Handlers

Title: Cleaning and Sanitising of Mechanical Equipment

Purpose

This bulletin is to remind food businesses of the critical importance of effective cleaning and sanitising of mechanical equipment such as stab mixers, food processors, blenders, vitamisers, slicers and similar devices.

Background

There is a lack of knowledge by some food businesses of how to effectively clean and sanitise mechanical equipment.

A recent outbreak has highlighted an emerging issue that some mechanical equipment may not be designed or serviced appropriately to enable effective cleaning and sanitising.

This type of equipment can look clean externally, however internal areas may be contaminated.

Therefore it is important to ensure that all equipment used for food preparation can be dismantled sufficiently to allow for thorough cleaning and sanitising.

Why it is important to thoroughly clean and sanitise

The mechanical action of some equipment will allow food and bacteria to be drawn into the internal areas, where the bacteria can grow and multiply. The bacteria may subsequently contaminate other food prepared with that equipment.

When harmful bacteria are present, they may cause foodborne illness. This has a greater risk of occurring where equipment is used for processing both raw foods (e.g. eggs and meat), and also cooked (e.g. soup)/ready to eat (e.g. cream) foods.

It is safest to use separate mixing, blending and vitamising equipment for raw products and for foods that are cooked/ready to eat.

Who is responsible?

Food business proprietors are responsible for ensuring that equipment used in the preparation of food for sale does not become a source of contamination. It is recommended that food businesses review all equipment to assess the risk to food safety.

It is important that you consult the manufacturer's instructions to ensure that equipment is cleaned, sanitised and maintained as required. In the absence of manufacturer's instructions, consult a service technician to determine the correct cleaning, sanitising and servicing procedure for the equipment. If equipment cannot be dismantled for effective cleaning and sanitising, it may be contaminating the food that is being prepared with it.



It is the responsibility of every food business to know their equipment and to be able to demonstrate to food safety auditors that it can be effectively cleaned and sanitised.

Cleaning and sanitising of equipment

All mixers, food processors, blenders, vitamisers, slicers and similar devices should be cleaned and sanitised as soon as possible after use so that food does not dry onto surfaces, making it more difficult to remove. Consult manufacturer's instructions regarding recommended cleaning and sanitising practices; however at minimum the following should be applied.

- **Using Dishwashers for Cleaning and Sanitising**

Where possible, use a commercial dishwasher to clean and sanitise equipment.

- **Manual Cleaning and Sanitising**

For manual cleaning, all parts of the equipment should be washed in warm water and detergent using a small scrubbing brush to clean every surface.

Sanitising should be done by immersion in food grade chemical sanitisers or alternative heat treatment e.g. very hot water >80°C or steam.

When using sanitising chemicals, refer to the manufacturer's instructions for recommended dosages, contact time and temperatures.

For areas that cannot be immersed in very hot water or chemical solution, ensure that they are cleaned and sanitised as per the manufacturer's recommendations.

Maintenance of equipment

Regular maintenance of equipment is essential. This should include checking the effectiveness of seals and replacing them where they have evidence of deterioration. This is important to ensure that non-food contact areas are not becoming a source of contamination.

Where can I get more information?

- Contact the Environmental Health Officer at your local council or alternatively SA Health.
- Refer following webpage on SA Health website
<http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/protecting+public+health/food+standards/skills+and+knowledge+for+food+handlers/cleaning+and+sanitising+in+food+businesses>

For more information

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