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Cleaning and sanitation done right

Cleaning and sanitation are crucial in a food premises and are considered two separate processes. Cleaning physically removes food matter, dirt and grease from food surfaces and is immediately followed by the sanitation process which kills microorganisms. Cleaning detergents contain chemicals such as surfactants that are designed to dissolve grease and loosen food and dirt from surfaces. Sanitisers used after cleaning contain chemicals such as disinfectants that are designed to kill microorganisms that can cause foodborne illness.

For the cleaning and sanitation processes to be effective, equipment and areas within a food premises must be designed and constructed to prevent contamination, and maintenance must be carried out regularly.

Meat and seafood premises must be cleaned and sanitised:

- Before operations commence each day;
- At the end of operations each day;
- After every shift; and
- Whenever it is necessary to prevent contamination of meat and seafood products.

Hazardous chemicals used for cleaning and sanitation should:

- Be fit for the purpose for which they are to be used;
- Not used if they could contaminate food;
- Not become contaminated during storage and handling;
- Be labelled so that their identity can be confirmed to prevent misuse; and
- Be used according to manufacturer's instructions.

Businesses should have a cleaning and sanitation schedule and cleaning and sanitation procedures to reduce the risk of potential contamination or bacterial growth. When developing the schedule and procedures consider the following factors:

For cleaning

- All surfaces should be cleaned before being sanitised;
- All equipment and areas for food receipt, processing and storage must be listed on the cleaning schedule;
- All cleaning implements should be listed on the schedule or in the procedure;
- All cleaning instructions must be documented and specify the exposure time and the quantity of any detergents used;
- Disassemble equipment when possible;
- Clean-as-you-go policy; and
- Training of staff.

For sanitation

- Only sanitise when a surface has been verified as being clean of food matter, dirt, grease etc.;
- All surfaces that contact food must be sanitised;
- All sanitising equipment should be listed on the schedule or in the procedure;
- Sanitation instructions must be documented and specify the exposure time and the quantity of each sanitiser used;
- Disposable paper towels should be used when possible. If cloths are used, they must be washed in hot water and sanitised before use; and
- Pre-operational checks must be conducted prior to commencing operations and/or at the end of each processing shift.

For more information, [click here](#) for the Cleaning and Sanitation Fact Sheet.

Cleaning and Sanitation Forum

A forum on the subject of cleaning and sanitation will be held on 19th November 2019. If you are interested in attending please email info@primesafe.vic.gov.au.

Using preservatives correctly

Some businesses choose to add chemical preservatives to processed meat or seafood products to inhibit growth of harmful microorganisms, extend shelf life, and enhance colour or “blooming”.

Some preservatives are considered allergens that may cause allergic reactions or other adverse health effects in some individuals. Preservatives used directly, or in a premix, must only be used in accordance with the quantities prescribed in [Schedule 15](#) of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code). Premixes containing preservatives are designed by manufacturers to meet the requirements of the Code. Any use of quantities different to the recommendations by the manufacturer must be validated by testing the final product.

Sulphur Dioxide

Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is a chemical additive used to prevent microbial spoilage and preserve the colour of meat and seafood products. SO₂ in foods has been reported to cause adverse reactions such as asthma attacks, allergic reactions or gastric irritation in some individuals. Due to the potential serious health effects of SO₂, the Code has limited its use to sausages, sausage meat, further processed comminuted meat and edible casings.



SO₂ is not permitted in fresh whole cuts or mince of meat, poultry or game. Processed or unprocessed seafood is not permitted to contain SO₂ except for uncooked crustacea, canned fish and canned abalone.

The Code requires that if the sulphite concentration is 10mg/kg or greater, then it must be declared on the label of the packaged food. If the food is unpackaged, then the presence of SO₂ must be declared on a ticket displayed with the food, or information regarding SO₂ must be presented to the customer on request.

Nitrites and Nitrates

Nitrites (NO_2) and nitrates (NO_3) are widely used additives in the meat industry as preservatives for curing meat and when manufacturing bacon or ham. They are also responsible for the characteristic colour and flavour of cured meat products. NO_2 plays a key role in preventing the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*, a bacteria that causes a life threatening disease called botulism.

NO_2 can be added to cured meat, dried meat, slow dried cured meat, further processed comminuted meat, poultry and game products, fermented uncooked processed comminuted meat products, sausages and sausage meat.

NO_3 on the other hand is only permitted in slow dried cured meat as it is chemically degraded by bacteria NO_2 during the curing process.

Nitrates and nitrites must be used in accordance with [Schedule 15](#) of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. The use of any alternatives to NO_3 or NO_2 requires approval by PrimeSafe including procedures that validate food safety.

A free food safety program for licensees

A free food safety program for Retail Meat, Retail Seafood or Smallgoods Retail Licensees is now available from PrimeSafe.



The PrimeSafe food safety program is a simplified user-friendly documentation system that allows licensees to manage and meet regulatory requirements of the Australian and Victorian Standards. The program can be tailored to include more complex processes however licensees may be required to pay a fee for this service where site-specific amendments are required.

[Click here](#) to read how one PrimeSafe licensee has used the free Retail Meat food safety program in their business.

To obtain a free food safety program, please send an email to info@primesafe.vic.gov.au or for more information contact PrimeSafe on (03) 9685 7333.

Learning about listeria management

More than 50 people from businesses that manufacture and package ready-to-eat products attended PrimeSafe's Listeria Management Forum held in July.

The Forum shared the latest information on Listeria and Listeriosis and the compliance requirements for their management across all businesses of all sizes.

PrimeSafe holds forums periodically to inform licensees about the food safety requirements for meat, seafood, poultry and pet meat.

Feedback from licensees who attended the Listeria Forum highlighted that the information received was valuable and they would attend future forums to gain a better understanding of compliance requirements about other topics.

The forums also provide an opportunity for licensees to interact with each other, PrimeSafe staff members and third party auditors.

For more information on Listeria Management, [click here](#) for the Listeria Management for Ready-to-Eat Meat Products PrimeNote.



Keep your details up-to-date

Remember to keep your contact details up-to-date with PrimeSafe. This includes the most relevant email address in your business. Send through any changes to info@primesafe.vic.gov.au.

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