



Cleaning and Sanitising

What is Cleaning?

Cleaning in the food industry is a process that removes visible contamination such as food waste, dirt and grease from a surface. This process is usually achieved by the use of water and detergent. Some micro-organisms (bacteria etc) will be removed, but the cleaning process is not designed to destroy micro-organisms.

What is Sanitising?

Sanitising is a process that destroys micro-organisms, thereby reducing the numbers of micro-organisms present on a surface. This is usually achieved by the use of heat and chemicals or chemicals alone.

Cleaning and sanitising should usually be done as separate processes. A surface needs to be thoroughly cleaned before it is sanitised, as sanitisers are unlikely to be effective in the presence of food residues, grease and detergents.

What Needs to be Cleaned and Sanitised?

Anything that comes into contact with food, is likely to come into contact with food, or a customer's mouth must be cleaned and sanitised. Items which do not come into contact with food need only be cleaned. The table below gives some examples.

Items to be cleaned and sanitised	Items to be cleaned
Plates and bowls	Floors
Cutlery	Walls
Glasses, cups and mugs	Ceilings
Utensils for preparing and serving food	Rubbish bins
Cutting boards	Windows
Preparation benches	Refrigerators
Storage containers and trays	Cool rooms and freezer rooms
Food display units	Light fittings
Food preparation sinks	Cupboards and shelves
Hand wash basins	Cleaning equipment (buckets, mops etc)

Processing fresh food using dirty equipment will transfer contamination and possibly harmful bacteria. Food utensils and equipment must be cleaned and sanitised before each use and between being used for raw food and ready-to-eat food. Equipment and utensils may also need to be cleaned and sanitised if they have been used for long periods to prepare or process potentially hazardous foods, eg. meat slicers. The surfaces that food may come in contact with must also be cleaned and sanitised.

Six Steps to Effective Cleaning

1. Pre-clean: scrape, wipe or sweep away food scraps and rinse with water;
2. Wash: use hot water and detergent to take off any grease and dirt. Soak if needed;
3. Rinse: rinse off any loose dirt or detergent foam;
4. Sanitise: use a sanitiser to kill any remaining germs;
5. Final rinse: wash off sanitiser (read sanitiser's instructions to see if you need to do this); &
6. Dry: allow to drip-dry, if not possible dry with a clean tea-towel

How to Sanitise

Most food poisoning bacteria are killed if they are exposed to chemical sanitisers, heat, or a combination of both.

To sanitise:

- soak items in water at 77°C for 30 seconds (commercial dishwasher);
- use a commercial (food contact surface) sanitiser following the manufacturer's instructions; or
- soak items in water which contains (non-scented) bleach for a minimum of 60 seconds. The table following shows the amount of bleach required using cold tap water to make sanitising solutions – these must be made fresh daily.

Bleach as a Sanitiser (non-scented)			
	4% total available chlorine (42g/l sodium hypochlorite)	6 % total available chlorine (63g/l sodium hypochlorite)	8 % total available chlorine (84g/l sodium hypochlorite)
1 Litre water	2.5 mls	2 mls	1.25 mls
5 Litres water	12.5 mls	10 mls	6.25 mls
10 Litres water	25 mls	20 mls	12.5 mls
20 Litres water	50 mls	40 mls	25 mls

Note: Be sure measurements are accurate to ensure correct concentrations.

Planning for Cleaning

When planning your cleaning and sanitising program, remember the following points:

- start at the back and work towards the front;
- start high and work your way down;
- single-use paper towels are better than cloths. If you use cloths, they must be washed in hot water and allowed to dry after every single use;
- use the right size brush or cleaning tool for each task;
- use food-grade detergents and sanitisers, always following the manufacturer's instructions;
- clean as you go;
- keep cleaning chemicals away from food storage areas;
- disassemble equipment such as the meat slicer before starting to clean it;
- a dishwasher will sanitise most small equipment;
- educate staff on correct cleaning and sanitising procedures;
- provide regular checks on cleaning carried out and instruct staff where required; and
- ensure that all equipment used for cleaning (eg. mops, buckets, cloths, brooms etc) are also kept clean.

Cleaning Schedules and Records

A cleaning schedule is a set of written instructions that describe everything that needs to be done to keep your business clean. It sets out the tasks of cleaning and sanitising, how often each job needs to be done, how it should be done, and who should do it. A cleaning record is a way of documenting that the cleaning tasks have been done by the responsible personnel. A **Cleaning Schedule Template** is available on Council's website if you wish to develop one for your food business.

If you have any further questions please contact Council's Environmental Health Officer during normal business hours, 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday on telephone (02) 9777 1000.