

## ***Sub-sectoral Environmental Guidelines EATING AND DRINKING PLACES***

### ***PROCESS DESCRIPTION***

This note covers restaurants, bars, cafes and bistros where food or drink is served to customers for consumption on the premises.

It applies only to those enterprises where the serving of such food and drink is the main business of the enterprise. It does not apply to enterprises where primary food or drink manufacture is also carried out on the premises, for example brewing or slaughter of animals. Other guidance notes cover these activities.

### ***SUMMARY OF KEY ENVIRONMENTAL RISK/LIABILITY FACTORS***

#### ***Hygiene and Food Quality***

Food may be contaminated prior to purchase, for example due to disease, inappropriate storage, or with chemicals such as pesticides or by radioactive material (for example, food grown in areas contaminated by the Chernobyl accident).

Water used in the washing of salad etc. may be contaminated (with heavy metals, pesticides or microbiological contaminants). The sources and quality of the water supply should, therefore, be checked regularly.

Inadequate hygiene standards may result in diseases being transferred through infected food, utensils or staff to customers or the general population. Proprietors will also need to verify that new staff are not carriers of infectious diseases such as hepatitis.

#### ***Waste disposal***

Wholesale food outlets generate organic waste when food is left unsold or spoiled through spillage or inadequate storage or handling. Inadequate waste handling may spread disease and cause offensive odours.

#### ***Wastewater discharges***

Most waste from cleaning and sanitary facilities will normally be discharged to sewer. If this waste is not sent to sewer but is allowed to enter surface water drains or watercourses, it may cause water contamination leading to environmental damage or a public health hazard.

## ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

Any adverse health impact on customers, staff or the general population which is proved or suspected to result from an establishment may result in loss of reputation, with a significant impact on custom, or prosecution, fines or closure by health authorities. Reputation may well be affected at any other branches of the same enterprise, regardless of whether they have suffered the same problem.

Compliance with environmental standards and health and safety regulations may require capital investment, for example in refrigeration or waste disposal facilities. Compliance with food hygiene regulations may also require significant investment.

## ***OTHER POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES***

### ***Odour and noise***

Odour caused by waste food or cooking and noise caused by patrons may exceed statutory nuisance levels or generate local complaints.

### ***General***

Certain generic environmental issues may apply to any site. The two main ones are asbestos and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), which may both be harmful to human health. Both require specialist disposal if removed, which has cost implications for any alterations to or redevelopment of the site.

## ***ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS***

Ensure that staff are adequately trained in food hygiene standards including food storage, preparation, disposal and cleaning requirements.

Monitor any occurrences of food contamination and where these occur ascertain whether any particular food type, supplier, storage conditions or staff member is responsible.

## ***ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN***

- Ensure all staff are trained in food hygiene, handling and storage.
- Ensure that the establishment is regularly inspected by health officers, and that any recommendations are acted upon.
- Routinely inspect crevices and holes for signs of rodents or cockroaches.
- Change disinfectants used to wipe down work surfaces on a frequent basis.

## ***GUIDE TO INITIAL DUE DILIGENCE SITE VISITS***

- Determine the main sources of produce to be used by the establishment.
- Look for any evidence of poor hygiene, for example offensive odours, dirt, build-up of fat and grease on ventilation grills, pests such as cockroaches or mouse droppings in crannies and corners.
- Check on disposal routes and policy for uneaten food, to ensure that waste food is stored away from food for consumption and disposed of properly.
- Establish the history of the site and consider whether any contamination is likely to have arisen from previous activities.
- Determine from local authorities if the premises have ever been subject to complaints or investigations relating to food poisoning.

# ***Sub-sectoral Environmental Guidelines***

## ***RETAIL FOOD OUTLETS***

### ***PROCESS DESCRIPTION***

This note covers retail food selling, providing food to retailers in bulk, and storing it. It does not include growing, processing or transporting food.

### ***SUMMARY OF KEY ENVIRONMENTAL RISK/LIABILITY FACTORS***

#### ***Hygiene***

Inadequate hygiene arrangements for storage and handling of food produce may result in adverse health effects on staff and customers.

#### ***Waste disposal***

Retail food outlets generate organic waste when food is left unsold, which can be a breeding ground for disease and cause offensive odours. Inappropriate or tardy disposal may result in disease propagation.

Product packaging may, depending on local regulations, be required to be recycled or recyclable.

#### ***Air emissions***

Refrigeration equipment used for food storage may contain refrigerants which cause damage the ozone layer such as CFCs (Freon) and HCFC's. These chemicals are controlled under International Law and their manufacture has been phased out.

#### ***Wastewater discharges***

Cleaning of food storage and retail areas will generate liquid waste containing organic food material. If this is allowed to enter surface water drains or watercourses in sufficient quantity it may contaminate them.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

Compliance with environmental standards and health and safety regulations may require capital investment, for example in refrigeration (to replace ozone depleting refrigerants) or waste disposal facilities.

Any adverse health impact on customers may result in loss of reputation, with a significant impact on custom, or prosecution, fines or closure by health authorities.

Reusing packaging internally or passing or selling packaging to private or municipal recycling operations may present an opportunity for the enterprise to reduce costs by reducing the cost of buying packaging and of waste disposal.

#### ***OTHER POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES***

##### ***Odour and noise***

Odour or noise may exceed statutory nuisance levels or generate local complaints.

##### ***General***

Certain generic environmental issues may apply to any developed site. The two main ones are asbestos and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), which may both be harmful to human health. Both require specialist disposal if removed, which has cost implications for any alterations to or redevelopment of the site.

#### ***ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS***

- Replace CFCs in refrigeration systems.
- Upgrade storage areas for raw materials and waste.
- Consider how ingredients and fresh produce are produced. Do the suppliers use pesticides? Are source areas known to be contaminated with radiation etc.?
- Encourage organic farming methods.

#### ***ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANS***

In addition to the above:

- Change routinely disinfectants used to avoid resistance build up.
- Ensure that staff are adequately trained in food hygiene standards including food storage, disposal and cleaning requirements.
- Monitor any occurrences of food contamination and attempt to identify any particular food types, suppliers or storage conditions responsible.
- Ensure that environmental and health requirements are defined and communicated to staff, vendors and customers

#### ***GUIDE TO INITIAL DUE DILIGENCE SITE VISITS***

- Make an inspection of all parts of the site, preferably accompanied by someone familiar with all the activities that take place.

- Look for any evidence of poor hygiene, for example offensive odours, dirt or pests such as cockroaches.
- Check on disposal routes for food past its shelf-life, to ensure that waste food is stored away from food for consumption and disposed of properly.
- Establish the history of the site and consider whether any contamination is likely to have arisen from previous activities.
- Establish with local regulatory authorities the precise nature of local standards and determine whether the business has a history of non-compliance.
- Determine whether complaints have been received from the local population or customers regarding activities at the site.
- Look for signs of asbestos and inquire about transformers and other electrical equipment which may contain PCBs.