

PROCESS DESCRIPTION

Eating and drinking places, otherwise known as catering or hospitality establishments include:

- Bars/cafes;
- Restaurants and bistros;
- Hotels;
- Fast food/takeaways;
- Canteens and other in-house and contracted catering services.

There is considerable variation in the size of catering outlets from sole traders running out of single premises through to large corporate structures operating a chain of outlets across one or more countries.

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK/LIABILITY ISSUES

Product Contamination

Food and drink can become contaminated through:

- Contaminated ingredients received from the supplier, e.g. drug and chemical residues, dioxins, radiation, pesticides, diseases;
- Water used in the preparation of food and cleaning may be contaminated (with heavy metals, pesticides or microbiological contaminants). The sources and quality of the water supply should be checked regularly;
- Poor food hygiene standards within the preparation and serving operations may result in diseases being transferred through infected food, utensils, or staff to customers or the general population, e.g. unclean equipment and surfaces, poor food cleaning, unhygienic handling;

- Failure in the cooking and food storage, e.g. under cooking, failure to maintain chilled conditions, inappropriate storage leading to cross contamination between cooked and uncooked goods

The Company's operations should be designed to internationally recognized food safety standards consistent with the principles and practice of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP)¹ and Codex Alimentarius².

Water Supply and Wastewater

Large quantities of water can be used by catering establishments in the following operations:

- Food cleaning and preparation;
- Thawing frozen ingredients;
- Cleaning cooking and serving utensils;
- Cleaning crockery, cutlery, glasses etc in which the food and drink is provided to the consumer;
- Cleaning and disinfecting floors and work surfaces;
- Use of sanitary facilities.

The wastewater generated by these premises may cause pollution problems due to the high content of fat, oil, grease, other food waste, and cleaning detergents. It is normally discharged to municipal sewage systems. Discharge of the wastewater directly to water bodies is not acceptable as it can pollute causing damage to the environment. The wastewater may also contain pathogenic and non-pathogenic viruses, bacteria, and parasite eggs.

A permit with specific discharge parameters from the regulatory authorities will normally be required.

¹ ISO 2005

² FAO and WHO (1962–2009).

Fats, Oils and Grease

Liquid fats, oils and greases should not be discharged with wastewater into drains as they congeal and harden blocking the sewer system. Plates, pans and utensils should be scraped clean before washing and the waste placed in a waste container.

A grease trap should be fitted to the premises drainage system and regularly maintained to remove fats, oils and greases from wastewater prior to discharge into the municipal wastewater collection system.

Waste oil should be temporarily stored in a suitable secure container and collected by an authorised waste contractor for recycling.

Grease from frying is vaporised and can build up on surfaces within the kitchen if not cleaned regularly. The grease will help food debris and dirt stick to surfaces encouraging the growth of bacteria and attracting pests.

In addition, the presence of fats, oils and greases can make floor surfaces slippery increasing the risk of slips and trips.

The use of fats and oils can be reduced by altering cooking methods and revising menus. The life of cooking oils can be extended by regulating the temperature and filtering/sieving to remove particles of burnt food.

Food Waste

Food waste is generated from food preparation, and when food is left uneaten or when spoilt through inadequate storage or handling.

Food waste should not be fed directly to farm animals, as there is a high risk of passing on

disease. It can be composted but the method depends on the nature and amount of the waste and the level of regulation that applies. Small amounts of raw vegetable scraps can be composted on-site if there is sufficient outdoor space. Large amounts and waste containing animal by-products should be composted in dedicated, enclosed, vermin secure facilities.

Food waste awaiting collection should be stored separately to other waste in secure vermin proof containers to prevent the spread of disease and causing offensive odours. This waste should be collected and finally disposed according to legal requirements.

Other Solid Waste

Packaging and similar waste will be generated from the containers and wrappings in which the food is delivered to the establishment, but may also arise from the product served to the customer, e.g. sachets of sauce, butter portions, fast food containers, plastic cutlery and cups, paper plates etc. Consideration should be given to the use of reusable containers.

Where recycling facilities exist, waste should be stored in separate marked containers for each type of waste, e.g. tins, cardboard, plastic, glass etc.

All waste should be temporarily stored in secure containers, collected and finally disposed according to legal requirements.

Energy

Catering establishments consume energy in the following ways:

- Thermal energy in the form of heat for cooking and heating hot water used for cleaning;
- Electricity for machinery operation, refrigeration and lighting and production of compressed air.

Energy use has a direct correlation to the operating costs of the company and energy generation and consumption may be regulated or taxes/levies applied to reduce energy use and associated emissions of gases such as carbon dioxide.

Refrigerants

Catering establishments rely heavily on freezing and chilling facilities to preserve the products. The refrigerants used may be ozone depleting chemicals, such as Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), the production of which are being phased out under the Montreal Protocol. Use of these types of refrigerant gases should be avoided. Ammonia is becoming a more commonly used alternative refrigerant, which has no such restriction but does have health and safety issues.

Manual Handling and Repetitive Work

Lifting, repetitive work and posture injuries occur as a result of lifting and carrying heavy or awkward shaped items such as pots, height of work surfaces, prolonged standing. Repetitive tasks, such as stirring, mixing, slicing and cleaning, can lead to musculoskeletal injuries.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Slippery floors and surfaces caused by oil and fat deposits present a high risk of slips, trips and falls where spills have not been cleaned up or

effective cleaning has not taken place. However, floors still wet from cleaning also present a hazard. The majority of tripping injuries are caused by obstructions on the floor and uneven work surfaces.

Sharp Edges and Machinery

Cuts from sharp objects such as knives, glass and tins can occur during food preparation, service and setting tables. Staff should be made aware of the risks and instructed in safe handling procedures. Cuts may also occur from sharp bones and equipment edges. All automated equipment should have safety guarding and workers should be issued with appropriate personal protective equipment to protect against unavoidable sharp items and edges.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK/LIABILITY ISSUES

Asbestos

Asbestos has been used on a large scale for many years as a fire proofing and insulation material and may be encountered in a wide range of forms including asbestos cement boards, as fire retardant gaskets in pipework and as fire retardant insulation around boilers and furnaces.

Particular attention should be given to buildings constructed before the 1980s since asbestos could have been used.

Temperature

- High temperatures associated with hot surfaces, equipment and food can lead to collapse through heat exhaustion and contact burns and scalds;

- Refrigeration systems will result in very cold temperatures, which can result in frostbite and contact burns;
- Ill health can also result from prolonged working at low temperatures.

Dermatitis

Contact with foods (e.g. juices from fruit and vegetables, proteins in fish, shellfish, meat and flour), water (through washing up and food washing), soaps and cleaning products can cause work-related contact dermatitis. This can result in symptoms of redness, itching, swelling, blistering, flaking and cracking of the skin. A general guide is that more than 2 hours contact per day or 20 hand washes a day can constitute a risk³.

Hazardous Substances

- Cleaning and disinfecting process areas uses materials that if inappropriately used and stored could result in chemical contact burns to employees, inhalation of harmful/toxic fumes or ingestion of harmful substances;
- Exposure to ammonia from leakage from refrigeration equipment; Ammonia, which is commonly used as a replacement for Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in refrigeration systems, is toxic if inhaled at high concentrations and can cause frostbite when released to the atmosphere. Facilities using ammonia refrigeration should be aware of the potential hazards of ammonia releases and of the steps that can be taken to prevent such releases. They should be prepared to respond appropriately if releases do occur.

Work-Related Violence

Workers or other people in the establishment may be subject to physical and/or verbal abuse as a result of disagreements between customers, customers being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Some groups of staff may be more at risk e.g. young workers, trainees, temporary workers, night workers and lone workers.

KEY SOCIAL, LABOUR AND COMMUNITY RISK/LIABILITY ISSUES

Hygiene

Contamination of food and drink products could result in ill health in the general public. Hygiene standards must be maintained to a high level to prevent product contamination and should be consistent with the principles and practice of HACCP and Codex Alimentarius.

OTHER SOCIAL, LABOUR AND COMMUNITY RISK/LIABILITY ISSUES

Waste

Waste from fast food or takeaway outlets is frequently temporarily stored near the outlet on the grounds of neighbouring properties and can become a major annoyance to these occupiers.

The accumulation of waste awaiting collection outside an establishment can cause offensive smells and attract vermin. This can be a source of complaints from neighbours and could lead to prosecution.

³ UK HSE 2008

Noise

Noise caused by customers within or on leaving an establishment may exceed statutory nuisance levels.

Odour

Odour can be a serious problem for catering establishments if wastes, air emissions and wastewater are not managed correctly, particularly when located near a residential area and/or in a hot climate.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Adverse health impacts on customers, staff or the general population which is proved or suspected to originate from an establishment can have a significant impact, e.g. compensation claims, loss of reputation, loss of custom, fines and closure by health authorities. The reputation of unaffected branches of the same enterprise may also suffer;
- Capital investment may be required to achieve compliance with environmental, health, safety and hygiene standards;
- Replacement of refrigerant gas or equipment may be required to meet international standards;
- Where large quantities of energy are used then this can result in high operating costs to the business;
- Injuries may lead to increased payroll costs to replace skilled workers;

- Fines, penalties and third party claims may be incurred for non-compliance with environment, health & safety regulations.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Good housekeeping should be maintained at all times. The adoption of good cleaning and working practices as a routine will reduce odour emissions, improve hygiene standards and reduce the risk of slips and trips;
- All surfaces and equipment should be cleaned regularly to prevent build-up of oil and fat and to reduce risk of health hazards;
- Install strainers and fat interceptors on all sinks and drains and ensure these are inspected and cleaned regularly;
- Implement procedures to ensure solid waste is removed from pots, utensils, plates, equipment and surface areas before rinsing and washing, e.g. using scrapers, brooms and vacuum cleaners.
- Consider composting for disposal of organic waste;
- Segregate other reusable/recyclable wastes and arrange for collection for recycling; It may be easier to find a waste contractor that will take single waste types rather than mixed recyclables;
- Encourage suppliers to use reusable containers rather than disposable packaging;
- Replace individual packaged portions and sachets with tamper-proof dispensers to reduce packaging waste;

- Consider changes to non-CFC coolants and/or sealing of leakages in the refrigeration system;
- Train staff to switch off taps when not in use and to fill sinks rather than use a running tap to clean vegetables;
- Only use dishwashers when fully loaded;
- Allow food to defrost in refrigerators overnight rather than using running water;
- If a waste disposal unit (device installed under a sink to shred food waste into pieces small enough to pass through plumbing) is used for food waste ensure that this is only operated when required e.g. foot or sensor operated;
- Ensure extraction fans are regularly cleaned so that they operate efficiently;
- Keep cool room doors closed where possible;
- Turn off gas hobs between uses and only turn on hotplates and ovens when required. Make staff aware of the time taken to bring equipment to temperature;
- Any new kitchen equipment purchased should be water and energy efficient.
- Train workers in safe procedures and correct use of machinery and safety devices;
- Redesign manual processes to avoid heavy lifting/repetitive activities;
- Install mechanical lifting aids where possible and rotate work tasks to reduce repetitive activities;
- Walking and working surfaces should be kept clean and dry and workers provided with anti-slip footwear. Consider installation of anti-slip surfaces. Restrict access to areas being cleaned or where spillages have occurred;
- Restrict times for people being in very cold or very hot areas; Educate workers on the symptoms of heat stress; Provide cool drinks and provide a cool area for breaks;
- Consider use of air conditioning or fans to increase airflows;
- Highlight any uneven surfaces or changes in level;
- Consider use of dishwashing machines to reduce manual washing and handling and repetitive injury risks;
- Install water jet sprayers to remove baked on food;

Health and Safety Improvements

- Provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) that is fit for the task, such as, heat resistant gloves, aprons and non slip footwear, to prevent injury and maintain hygiene standards. Staff should be trained in the correct selection, use and maintenance of PPE;
- Consider the height and siting of shelving and racks to avoid awkward lifting of heavy items;
- Consider appropriate actions to minimise risk of violence towards staff, e.g. improved external lighting, security staff, CCTV,

banning offenders, staff training, redesign work place layout.

Community Environment, Health and Safety Improvements

- Ensure workers are adequately trained in food hygiene standards including food storage, preparation, disposal and cleaning requirements;
- Monitor any occurrences of food contamination and ascertain whether any particular food type, supplier, storage conditions or staff member is responsible;
- Potentially screen new employees for communicable diseases, e.g. hepatitis.
- Food allergies can cause a life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis. Symptoms can include swelling of the throat and mouth, difficulty in breathing, collapse and unconsciousness. Peanuts and tree nuts, shellfish and sesame seeds are among the most common foods to cause such reactions. Minute amounts of these foods can cause allergic reactions. Establishments should be aware of the principal food allergens and be able to state which menu items may contain them.

GUIDE TO INITIAL DUE DILIGENCE SITE VISITS

During the initial site visit, the issues will vary according to the type of facility and its size and depending on the level of environment, health and safety management already introduced. While visiting the site it is important to discuss and review the following:

Environment, Health and Safety

- Confirm organisational responsibilities and systems for environment, health and safety;
- What is the standard of “housekeeping” on site? Do areas look clean and tidy? Look for build up of fat and oil on floors and surfaces, evidence of any recent spills or releases of raw ingredients, food, or other products. Look for evidence that the walking and working surfaces are kept clean and dry;
- Observe food hygiene standards at the facility and the results of previous food hygiene inspections, e.g. separate welfare areas for workers; Are staff wearing PPE?
- Check signage around the establishment:
 - Does it convey the health and safety risks?
 - Are fire exits clearly marked?
- Is fire fighting and first aid equipment available?
- Check the age and condition of equipment, look for signs of wear and tear, degradation, leaks and breaks;
- Check that waste collection takes place on a regular basis;
- Check that waste temporary storage areas are clear of debris and that waste containers are covered to prevent waste escaping, e.g. check that waste containers have lids or are stored in an area with a roof and are in good condition;

- Have there been any recent (within the last three years) incidents on site such as hygiene, injury, fire, spills? Is there insurance in place to cover such incidents?
- Have the premises been inspected recently (within the past 2 years) by the regulatory authorities for health, hygiene and environment? What were their findings?
- Does the business plan have line items for environment, health, safety and hygiene improvements?
- Check the conditions and duration of validity for all permits.

Social, Labour and Community

- Check that labour standards, contracting and remuneration are in line with national law and are consistent with the average for the sector;
- Check that hours worked, including overtime, are recorded and staff should receive written details of hours worked and payment received;
- Check that wages and working hours are consistent with the average for the sector and national standards;
- Has the Company received inspections from the local labour inspectorate in the previous three years? Have these resulted in any penalties, fines, major recommendations or corrective action plans?
- Does the organisation have a grievance mechanism which allows employees to raise workplace concerns?

- Are employees free to form, or join, a worker's organisation of their choosing?
- Does the organisation have insurance in place to cover the sale of contaminated food and drink? Have there been any recent incidents? What other insurances does the company have in place?

Take note/ask questions relating to any activities that address the improvements listed in the Improvements section of this document.

ACTION PLANS

Dependent on the individual business, select from the list above actions to include in the action plan. As a minimum, any business should be required to have the following in place:

- Operational procedures to manage environmental, health & safety risks;
- Monitoring programmes;
- Improvement objectives, targets and project plans;
- Training for personnel;
- Regular inspections, checks and audits with records to demonstrate achievement of the required level of performance against legal requirements and improvement action;
- Emergency plans for environment, health & safety accidents;
- Management review/demonstrated involvement in environment, health & safety management.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL SOURCES

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