

## **Guide to Kitchen Regulations for Food Hygiene and Health and Safety**

Any catering organisation, whatever its size, has to pay attention to food hygiene in order to protect its customers' health and therefore its business, but there is considerable confusion between the rules of food hygiene and the rules of health and safety.

The UK Food Standards Agency regulates food hygiene and enforces it, while the Health and Safety Executive enforces safe working practices.

Since 2006, when new EU rules came into force, food safety regulations have been tightened up and catering establishments must now have a written food safety management system showing how the kitchen ensures that food is produced safely, hygienically, without the risk of cross contamination.

FSA guidelines state that foods must be hygienically handled. Staff must be appropriately supervised, and be instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters so that they can carry out their work hygienically.

Hazards to safe and hygienic food handling must be identified along with procedures for ensuring they cannot happen as well as evidence that regular checks are carried out.

There is a very useful set of guidelines in a downloadable PDF about safe and effective cleaning and how to set up a proper management regime at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/hyaleg/hygleginfo/foodhygknow/>

Health and Safety procedures, on the other hand, are primarily designed to protect those working in a kitchen from accident and injury. Catering is one of the higher risk working environments for the risk of injury because of the use of machinery, of cooking ingredients at high temperatures, using sharp implements and all of these very often in a highly rushed environment. Kitchen floors can become slippery and dangerous and have to be frequently washed, but then dried to ensure they are safe to walk on when people are rushing about.

Management leadership is crucial to getting both these elements of working in a kitchen right and this means both training for everyone involved and then making sure they are all applying it. Warning and advisory notices should be prominently displayed explaining the rules and as a reminder.

Where food hygiene practices and health and safety come together, however, is in the maintenance of a clean environment. It is much easier to ensure food hygiene if there is a proper regime of cleaning surfaces and equipment in place, using the appropriate chemical cleaners. Waste disposal also needs to be carried out efficiently and safely.

Most importantly a regular kitchen deep clean from ceiling to floor will prevent build-up of problems by tackling hard to reach and hidden areas where grease and grime could collect.

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