

# Guidance for Developing Good Operating Practice Procedures: Cleaning and Sanitising

August 2011  
Amendment 1

## Background

**Cleaning** is the process of removing dirt, debris and other visible matter that may contain microorganisms which can be harmful to health if they contaminate food that is later ingested. Sometimes cleaning is enough to achieve a sufficient level of safety. At other times a sanitation step is also necessary.

**Sanitising** is the application of a chemical or physical agent for the purpose of killing microorganisms or reducing them to a safe level. Sanitising is only effective if the surface being sanitised has already been thoroughly cleaned.

## 1 Purpose and Scope

Write up your purpose and scope for Cleaning and Sanitising.

*Example:* To ensure the buildings, facilities, equipment and surrounding environment are:

- (a) effectively cleaned to remove food residues, debris and other matter which may be a source of contamination;
- (b) kept clean to deter pests; and
- (c) sanitised whenever it is necessary to ensure the microbiological safety of food.

*See also:*

- Chemical Control
- Waste Management
- Pest Control
- Personal Hygiene and Behaviour

These topics have been covered individually in other guidance documents.

## 2 Authorities and Responsibilities

Write up who has specific authorities and responsibilities for Cleaning and Sanitising. Think about managers, supervisors and other people as may be necessary, including contractors.

Examples: The business operator has the overall responsibility for ensuring the buildings, facilities and equipment are kept appropriately clean and sanitised.

All staff are expected to clean proactively (clean-as-you-go), with specific responsibilities assigned as follows: [provide/include specific cleaning/sanitising details against a job title or role].

## 3 Control Measures

Write up how you ensure the building, facilities and equipment are kept clean (and sanitised).

Consider at least the following points:

- how you ensure the building, facilities, equipment and the surrounding environment are kept clean, e.g.:
  - ensuring there is a cleaning schedule prominently displayed showing:
    - what tasks are to be carried out (both routine and periodic cleaning activities);
    - when/how often tasks need to be carried out;
    - who is responsible for doing them; and
    - what equipment/chemicals are needed for each task.
- how you ensure cleaning is effective, e.g.:
  - providing information/instruction to staff about:
    - using cleaning equipment;
    - the cleaning chemicals and dilutions; and
    - the way to effectively clean surfaces and equipment (and where necessary dry and sanitise surfaces).
  - making sure staff understand what they need to do to meet cleaning requirements;

- providing on-the-job support until confident that staff are competent to carry out cleaning duties according to requirements; and
- sourcing appropriate materials for the job (i.e. chemicals are consistent with the supplier or manufacturers' specifications for use).
- how you make sure that cleaning activities don't cause contamination, e.g.:
  - ensuring the cleaning method that is specified for a task is suitable for the purpose of removing visible debris and contamination, rather than spreading contamination around (e.g. redistribution of contaminants through use of high pressure hoses or air guns);
  - using clean and well maintained equipment for cleaning;
  - where necessary, cleaning and sanitising equipment before use; or
  - using single-use materials that are thrown away after cleaning is finished;
  - using dedicated cleaning equipment for specified areas (e.g. colour-coding cleaning materials used in high risk areas); and
  - organising/carrying out cleaning activities to ensure that once cleaned, areas don't become re-contaminated, e.g.:
    - ordering your cleaning activities so the cleanest areas are cleaned first (then moving on the dirtier areas);
    - using different staff or ensuring that boots/overclothing are changed for cleaning in specified areas.

Consider:

- cleaning inside areas before outside areas;
- cleaning raw product areas after process areas / ready-to-eat food areas; and
- cleaning product contact areas before non-product contact areas.
- how you determine when sanitising is necessary and what method is most appropriate, e.g.:
  - Consider:
    - can equipment be put through a dishwasher (or similar) or is a chemical sanitiser necessary?
    - does the sanitiser need to be rinsed-off surfaces before they are used for food?

- when is the most effective time to apply a sanitiser?

## 4 Monitoring

Write up how you check that your cleaning and sanitising is under control.

Consider the following checks:

- visual inspection of cleanliness e.g. pre-start-up, checks periodically through operation, closing checks;
- observing that cleaning and sanitising practices meet requirements.
- testing cleaned surfaces if necessary for meeting food safety requirements e.g. microbiological swab testing

## 5 Corrective Action

Write up how you correct any problems that monitoring identifies, or that you otherwise become aware of.

Include how you cover the following:

1. Identifying the extent of the problem (i.e. what has happened, why and when it happened, how it happened and whether any product has been affected);
2. Restoring control (i.e. the action needed immediately to stop any more product becoming affected and to fix problem);
3. Dealing with affected product and equipment (e.g. preventing any unsafe product from being released - see the separate guidance for Complaints, Non-conforming Product, Corrective Action and Recall); and
4. Preventing a reoccurrence (e.g. using information gained from problem to identify better ways to do things, develop better procedures, improve checking systems, provide better staff training etc.).

## 6 Documentation and Record Keeping

Determine what records you need to keep for this procedure. These will help you to introduce and maintain consistent good practices, and to demonstrate to your verifier

(auditor) that you are sufficiently controlling those factors that can impact on the safety and suitability of the food.

Assess any records you already have, and introduce any additional records you need for the monitoring and corrective action activities you specify in your procedure. When monitoring, you may have an option to either:

- record every check; or
- indicate that checks have regularly been carried out (e.g. throughout a week) and only record the results of a specific check where something went wrong. In these instances, always make a record of what you did to put things right (the corrective action).

Keep blank record forms handy for staff to use and let people know where they are. Keep completed record forms together where they can be found easily for your regular internal verification checks.

For your [general programme requirements](#) refer to the guidance document on the appropriate risk-based programme or plan which can be found on the Food Safety website.