

# CLEANING AND SANITISING



It is important that people working in the food industry understand that food premises must be continually cleaned to ensure all surfaces and equipment that come in contact with food do not contain food poisoning bacteria.

Cleaning and sanitising is essential for the safe operation of any food business. It is particularly important in regard to eating and drinking utensils such as cutlery, crockery and drinking glasses as well as food contact surfaces including counters, preparation benches, meat slicer/s, cutting boards and other equipment and appliances.

It is important therefore that the different terms **cleaning** and **sanitising** are fully understood.

- **Cleaning** refers to the removal of visible items such as food particles, dirt, dust and grease and is usually carried out using warm water and detergent.
- **Sanitising** refers to the process which reduces the number of micro-organisms to a safe level and this is usually undertaken using hot water and / or chemicals.

Neither method removes or kills all bacteria.

## How can I clean?

The standard procedures for routine cleaning involve the following:

- Pre-clean, this involves scrape, wipe or sweep away food scraps and rinse with water.
- Wash using hot water and detergent to remove grease and dirt. The use of water at a hot temperature will require protective gloves.
- Rinse off any loose dirt or detergent residue.

## How can I sanitise?

The next step is to sanitise to reduce the number of food poisoning bacteria and viruses. Sanitising can be carried out using either:

- Hot water: this can be achieved by immersing the article or equipment in hot water at a minimum temperature of 77°C for at least 30 seconds. At this temperature, serious scalding is possible and so hot water sanitising is only recommended for use with specialised equipment such as a commercial dishwashing machine (which use high water temperatures for a relatively short time) or a domestic dishwasher which use a lower temperature but their long cycle times can allow for effective sanitisation. 'Low' or 'economy' settings should not be used on domestic dishwashers, as the minimum temperature is unlikely to be achieved.

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- **Chemicals:** The most commonly used sanitisers in food businesses use either chlorine or QATs (quaternary ammonium compounds) as active ingredients. Most suppliers of sanitisers tend to recommend QATs because they have a longer shelf life than most chlorine sanitisers, less odour and unlike chlorine, are not corrosive on most metal surfaces.

Suppliers can provide advice on:

- Suitability of a sanitiser for use in a food business;
- The correct concentration to use;
- Contact time (important—don't overlook this); and
- Whether it needs to be rinsed off. Use of a no-rinse sanitiser can save time and water if the sanitiser is used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

## How to sanitise using a chemical sanitiser and a double bowl sink

Best practice involves using one of two methods in a double bowl sink. Method 1 requires use of a container for the sanitiser; method 2 involves emptying and refilling one of the sinks.

### Method 1

1. Set up a clean plastic tub or bucket containing sanitiser at the correct concentration on a bench or draining board;
2. Wash utensils and equipment in the first sink using warm water and detergent;
3. Rinse in clean water in the second sink;
4. Place into the tub of sanitising solution for the required time;
5. Rinse again (unless a 'no rinse' sanitiser is used) in the second sink; and
6. Air dry or dry with a clean tea towel.

### Method 2

1. Wash utensils and equipment in warm water and detergent in the first sink;
2. Rinse in clean water in the second sink;
3. Empty the first sink, clean, then refill with sanitiser at the correct concentration;
4. Place into the sink of sanitising solution for the required time;
5. Rinse again (depending on the sanitiser) in the second sink; and
6. Air dry or dry with a clean tea towel.

## Sanitising with a spray bottle

A spray bottle of sanitiser can be used for bench tops or equipment not suitable for washing in a sink or dishwasher. A spray bottle can also be used for single tasks such as sanitising a cutting board.

Before using the spray, ensure the surface to be sanitised is properly cleaned and thoroughly rinsed. Apply the spray and allow sufficient time for the sanitiser to work (see manufacturer's instructions) and wipe off with a clean sponge or cloth. The cloth used to wipe off the sanitiser must be clean to ensure it does not re-contaminate the surface.

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## Developing a regular cleaning and sanitising program

For health and safety reasons it is important that a food business maintain all fixtures, fittings, equipment and appliances in a clean and sanitised condition in order to minimise the potential contamination of food.

This requirement can be achieved by the business developing and implementing a regular cleaning and sanitising schedule specific for the premises. The schedule should be displayed in a conspicuous location so that all staff know their individual responsibilities.

The primary aim of a cleaning schedule is to prevent accumulations of grease, food wastes, dirt, dust, garbage and other miscellaneous items on floors, walls, ceilings, fixtures, fittings and equipment.

There are many ways of developing a cleaning schedule or program but a good idea is to list the various pieces of equipment within the business, whether it is in the kitchen, storeroom/s, dining area, bar, rear yard, toilets, garbage/recycling areas, staff clothing, cleaning cupboard etc.

Start with a walk through your premises and make a list of all the items that need cleaning. Begin with items like the structure (floor, walls and ceilings) then move on to equipment, fittings and fixtures. Using a chart similar to the example below, list these items down the first column. Consider items not cleaned frequently, as well as daily items.

Fittings/equip	Cleaning product	Cleaning method	How often	Staff member responsible	Completed yes/no	Date

Then, in regard to the kitchen, make a practical assessment as to how regularly the particular items need cleaning and sanitising. For example, a food contact surface such as a preparation bench may need cleaning and sanitising a number of times per day whereas shelves in a dry goods storeroom or the grease filters in a range hood will need less regular cleaning.

A meat slicer used frequently should be cleaned after every use and sanitised at least every 2 hours.

Remember to include hard to reach places, such as beneath and behind equipment. Also fridge seals, light switches, power leads and handles on doors and equipment.



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A person's name and realistic time periods should be allocated to the specified items or places and for each specific appliance or utensil or equipment. Whether all the cleaning and sanitising is carried out by one person or is allocated to a number of people will depend on each business but all items should be included on the written cleaning schedule.

Care should be taken to use protective clothing/gloves, if required, and to know the correct procedure if an accident occurs. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the various chemicals used should be maintained in a known location. All cleaning chemicals and equipment should be stored in a designated location generally not in the kitchen. Remember that any cleaning schedule is only as good as the follow up supervision so each business operator should undertake regular checking of the cleaning program.

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### General cleaning rules

- Clean up all spills straight away.
- Clean and sanitise all cutting boards and preparation benches after each use. This is particularly important when changing from preparing raw to cooked foods.
- Each day, clean and sanitise areas and appliances directly involved with food preparation.
- Schedule areas, such as shelving and exhaust canopies, for cleaning and sanitising on a weekly basis. Exhaust canopy filters can be cleaned by external contractors.
- Store cleaning products away from food.
- Use different cloths for cleaning different types of food areas and equipment i.e. One cloth may be used for the waste area and another for the hand washing basin.
- Soak cleaning cloths in sanitiser on a daily basis.

### The Law

National food safety standards have been developed to reduce foodborne illness and help food businesses produce food that is safe to eat. Copies of the Food Safety Standards can be obtained by contacting the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) on (02) 6271 2222 or from the FSANZ website on [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au).

Council is legally required to enforce these laws.