

Guidance for Developing Good Operating Practice Procedures: Personal Hygiene and Behaviour

August 2011
Amendment 1

Background

Food can become contaminated by people who are unwell with certain infections, or are carrying the organisms in or on their body. Harmful microbes can be transmitted onto food by infected food handlers (and others, e.g. contractors, visitors etc.) either handling the food directly or by touching things that the food comes into contact with (e.g. benches and other food-contact surfaces, food packaging etc).

Hazards of concern:

- Biological -- Virus -- [Hepatitis A](#)
- Biological -- Virus -- [Norovirus](#)
- Biological -- Bacteria -- [Staphylococcus aureus](#)
- Biological -- Enterobacteriaceae -- [Salmonella](#)
- Biological -- Proteobacteria -- [Campylobacter](#)
- Biological -- Parasite -- [Giardia intestinalis](#)

Source: Human faecal/oral route

Control Measures: Good operating (hygienic) practice to:

- a) prevent anyone who is carrying a communicable disease from contaminating food; and
- b) prevent food and food contact surfaces from becoming contaminated by unclean hands through effective hand washing and drying.

1 Purpose / Scope

Write up your purpose and scope for Personal Hygiene and Behaviour.

Example: To ensure staff, contractors and visitors follow good hygienic practices so they do not contaminate the products, inputs, premises, equipment and the surrounding environment.

See also:

- Training, Education and Competency

This topic has been covered in separate guidance.

2 Authorities and Responsibilities

Write up who has specific authorities and responsibilities for managing Personal Hygiene and Behaviour. Think about managers, supervisors and other people as may be necessary.

Example: The business operator has overall responsibility for the Personal Hygiene and Behaviour of staff, contractors and visitors.

Other responsibilities are assigned as follows: [include specific details against a job title or role] e.g.[specify who] is responsible for determining whether a sick food handler is to be sent home or given safe alternative work not involving direct contact with food or work in areas where open food is prepared or processed.

3 Control Measures

Write up how you ensure the personal hygiene and behaviour of staff, contractors and visitors is controlled.

Consider at least the following points:

- how you ensure food handlers follow good personal hygiene practices to minimise the risk of product contamination, e.g.:
 - ensuring food handlers know the correct hand washing method to ensure their hands are appropriately clean;
 - ensuring food handlers wash their hands following any activity that poses a contamination threat to food (e.g. immediately after using the toilet; after eating, drinking or smoking; after handling raw ingredients or contaminated materials including facilities, equipment and utensils; upon entering a food handling or processing area);
 - ensuring at all times there is an adequate supply of clean running water, soap, disposable towels and other materials necessary to keep hands clean;
 - ensuring there are separate facilities for washing and preparing food and these are not used for hand washing;

-
- ensuring materials used for drying hands are disposed of appropriately and without risk of contaminating food;
 - how you ensure food handlers practice good personal cleanliness in order to protect the food from physical, chemical and microbiological hazards;
 - ensuring food handlers wear clean, protective clothing that has been stored hygienically and is laundered regularly;
 - ensuring there is suitable storage for personal belongings so that personal effects such as bags and mobile phones are kept out of areas where the food is exposed;
 - ensuring any jewellery worn does not pose a risk of contamination to food (e.g. the standard for jewellery and other adornments is appropriate for the business);
 - ensuring food handlers cover any wounds with an appropriate dressing and then cover with a disposable glove (where applicable).
 - how you ensure food handlers who are suffering from, or suspected of suffering from, certain illnesses or conditions do not contaminate food, e.g.:
 - ensuring staff are aware they must not handle food if there is any chance they may be suffering from or carrying an illness that is likely to be transmitted through food;
 - ensuring illness is reported, including when a family member is sick;
 - excluding any person who exhibits the following symptoms from food handling duties:
 - cold like symptoms
 - fever
 - vomiting
 - diarrhoea
 - weeping sores
 - discharge from the ears, nose or eyes.
 - ensuring that normal duties are not resumed until after the illness has cleared or the employee has a medical clearance to return to work.

NOTE: There are specific exclusion controls for employees suffering from unspecified vomiting or diarrhoea. Refer to separate guidance for 'Exclusion of Infected Persons' in the [Food Service and Catering Food Control Plan](#) for specific advice.

- how you ensure the behaviour and personal habits of staff do not pose a contamination risk to food, e.g.:
 - ensuring staff do not eat over unprotected food or surfaces that are likely to come into contact with food;
 - ensuring staff use hygienic practices to sample and taste food;
 - ensuring staff refrain from licking their fingers, spitting and smoking in areas where food is handled; and
 - ensuring staff refrain from sneezing or coughing over unprotected food, food packaging, materials and equipment that are likely to come into contact with food or used for cleaning.
- how you ensure visitors, contractors and other people meet the same standard of personal hygiene, behaviour and cleanliness as permanent staff, e.g.:
 - ensuring you are aware of all the visitors that come to the site (e.g. keeping a visitor register);
 - ensuring visitors agree to the conditions of entry (e.g. sign-in and induction procedures) and are issued with the correct protective clothing (as appropriate);
 - ensuring visitors are adequately supervised (e.g. making visitors responsible to a particular person while on site);

4 Monitoring

Write up how you check that personal hygiene and behaviour of staff, contractors and visitors is under control.

Consider the following checks:

- check sickness records and documented actions; and
- routine inspection (e.g. personal protective clothing, personal hygiene, facilities, hand washing and personal conduct, etc).

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. Defining the extent of the problem (i.e. what has happened, why and when it happened, and how much and which (if any) product has been affected);
2. Restoring control (i.e. the action needed immediately to stop more product becoming affected and to fix problem);
3. Handling of affected things including ingredients, packaging, products, contaminated equipment, etc. (e.g. preventing any unsafe product from being used - see the separate guidance for Complaints, Non-conforming Product, Corrective Action and Recall); and
4. Preventing re-occurrence (e.g. using information gained from the problem to identify better ways to do things; developing better procedures; improve the 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.