

Food Safety Requirements at Catering Establishments

Food safety is a very important health issue for the public. Across the world, governments are constantly trying to improve food safety. This is because unsafe food is responsible for many diseases, ranging from diarrhoea to cancer. Estimates from WHO show that diarrhoeal diseases, both foodborne and waterborne, kill 2.2 million people each year, 1.9 million of them being children. In developed countries, up to 30% of the population have been reported to suffer from foodborne diseases each year. [1] (<http://www.who.int/foodsafety/en/>)

An important approach towards food safety is **HACCP** (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) It is a systematic preventative approach which **identifies various hazards** including physical, chemical and biological, and acts to eliminate the risk of them manifesting. This system is used at all stages of food production and it is important that the food service provider works hard to identify things that pose the greatest risk to food safety.

Requirements for restaurant layout and facilities

- Catering establishments are usually divided into 3 parts, storage area, kitchen and a dining room for diners.
- **The storage area** should be of a sufficient capacity to store unpackaged and packaged ingredients and to house fridges for the separate storage of raw and treated foods.
- **The kitchen (preparation area)** is where meals are made, both hot and cold, and where the dishes are washed, but these two areas should be separated.
- **The Dining room** Where the food is consumed, should be clearly separated from the other areas.
- There should be **good ventilation or air conditioning**
- The establishment should have separate entrances for diners and employees. These should not be near the refuse disposal or the delivery entrance.
- Basic requirements for the establishment include a sufficient number of toilets and sinks, adequate ventilation, good sewage disposal and refuse disposal.

Requirements for catering equipment operation and using raw materials

- Raw materials used in the preparation of food must be fresh. Storage must be provided separately in designated areas to prevent contamination.
- Foods where pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation may occur must be stored at low temperatures.
- Meals should be served to diners as soon as possible after cooking.
- Throughout all stages of production, processing and distribution of food; **contamination should try to be prevented**. There must be rigorous cleaning after preparing raw foods, dishes and surfaces must be washed and the rubbish should be removed. Tools and areas of workspace should not be contaminated so should be dedicated to individual tasks.
- An essential part of the catering establishment is **sanitation**. It is important to clean, **prevent infestations of insects and rodents** and disinfect the kitchen space. Cleaning of all areas, machinery and equipment must be carried out daily



Requirements for personal hygiene and training of staff

These are to ensure that no worker who comes directly or indirectly into contact with food is a source of contamination. To ensure this, every employee must maintain an appropriate degree of personal hygiene.

Workers who come into contact with food should:

- Complete a medical examination before employment,
- immediately report to the manager of any infectious diseases or illnesses they or their family has or suspects they may have
- **Keep a high level of personal hygiene**
- wash hands in warm water using soap or disinfectant after using the toilet or handling waste.
- wear clean clothing, footwear and headgear (if have long hair must be covered)
- not leave the premises during working hours in work clothes and work shoes
- travel to work in different clothes to their uniform, which are stored separately from the kitchen.
- Have clean hands with short, non-painted fingernails and no jewellery.

Food in health facilities

Therapeutic nutrition is a very important part of the healing process. **Half of patients in European hospitals are undernourished from hospital food.** [2] (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1296107/pdf/jrsocmed00044-0014.pdf>) This can lead to patients staying in hospital for longer, may lessen their quality of life and is

also more expensive for the hospital

Hospital catering facilities have the same requirements as other catering establishments. Meals are prepared and transported to the wards to be served immediately. Throughout transportation and serving of food, its temperature must not fall below 65 ° C.

In the Czech Republic, a new method of distributing food called the **tablet system** has been introduced. The meal is placed on a tray and a lid covers it (the tablet) they are then distributed quickly to the patients. This tablet can ensure the food stays hot for 45 minutes after serving. This eliminates the handling of food so removed the possibility of human contamination of the food. [3] (<http://www.abner.eu/en/tray-systems.aspx>)

Food is served to able bodied patients in the canteen; immobile patients have their meals delivered to their bed. All workers who handle the food are subject to the requirements for health, personal hygiene and training listed above. The hospital usually also provides food for the catering staff. Their food is prepared separately and served in the staff canteen.

References

- BENCKO, Vladimír, et al. Hygiene and epidemiology : selected chapters. 2. edition. Prague. 2008. ISBN 80-246-0793-X