

An information series for Ontario food processors from the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors and The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

# *Sanitation Programs*

• To learn more about food safety contact the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs at 1-888-466-2372 ext 64752, follow the food safety links at [www.omaf.gov.on.ca](http://www.omaf.gov.on.ca) or email at [haccp.advantage@omaf.gov.on.ca](mailto:haccp.advantage@omaf.gov.on.ca)

## **Sanitation Programs**

Sanitation programs are important to ensure the effective cleaning and sanitizing of rooms, utensils and equipment associated with the processing of a food product. Sanitation programs must remove food residues and gross soil; remove unacceptable chemical residues such as detergents, allergen residues; and, reduce the numbers and types of microorganisms to an acceptable level. Sanitizing can only occur after all items have been cleaned. Cleaning procedures are covered in the following section. It is important that all equipment and structures are designed and located for easy cleaning and sanitizing.

### **What Is Included in a Sanitation Program?**

Key components of a Sanitation Program include:

- Purpose – what the procedure is for, what equipment or utensil
- Responsibility – who does it?
- Frequency – how often is it done?
- Cleaning procedures for equipment, rooms and utensils should include:
  - Identifying the personnel responsible for particular tasks
  - Detailing the chemicals required
  - Proper handling and application of sanitation chemicals (e.g. proper temperatures, concentrations, duration of application)
  - Equipment disassembly and assembly instructions
  - Inspection activities
  - Documentation requirements
  - Methods to prevent or minimize cross-contamination
- Sanitation schedule for all equipment, rooms and utensils
- Housekeeping and sanitation procedures required during operation (e.g. changeover of product lines)
- Effectiveness monitoring (e.g. swab tests)

### **The sequence of activities for cleaning and sanitizing are:**

- Preparation – what you need to do, or take apart, before you can start to clean and how to do it, what you need to cover or remove from the room
- Pre-clean – scraping, shoveling, vacuuming, removal of gross soils
- Pre-rinse – water rinse to soften and remove soils, how to rinse (top to bottom), water temperature, high pressure or low pressure water
- Apply cleaning solution – how to apply, what strength, what cleaning chemicals used, temperatures
- Post rinse – how to rinse, water temperature, high pressure or low pressure water
- Inspect – how to inspect, what to look for, trouble spots
- Sanitize – what sanitizer to use, what strength, temperatures, how to apply it

### **The Final Step: Pre-operational Inspection**

Once the equipment is cleaned, a pre-operational assessment or 'pre-op' is done before restarting manufacturing. A pre-op is a final check to ensure the facility and equipment are free of residues that could cross-contaminate food. A checklist detailing the rooms and equipment is used so that no areas are missed. If any area is not cleaned to the established standard, production must not start until the problem is corrected.

### **Creating a Pre-Op Inspection Procedure**

Decide how many pre-op forms you will need. You can have one for the whole facility, or one for each production line and each piece of equipment and utensil.

Place the equipment/utensil name on the form(s).

List what to check for – this should include any areas that are in contact with food, areas that are hard to clean, things needed for line start-up and inspection items.

Make a place for the person doing the pre-op to initial and date as well as a place for comments on unacceptable conditions and corrective actions.

Consider including non-sanitation related items like pest control, temperatures, or lighting on your form too.

As part of the overall Sanitation Program, your facility will need a sanitation procedure for each type of equipment and utensil used in your manufacturing process. You also need a sanitation procedure for the cleaning of the entire premise such as walls, floors, ceilings, overheads, and racking. The procedures should be detailed enough so that they could be used as a training tool for new sanitation workers but simple enough to understand without training, if needed. The clearer and easier to read the better: use simple direct language with pictures or diagrams or videos if available.

### **What About Dry Areas Of The Plant?**

If an area or piece of equipment has NO water, like a flour silo or a dry ingredient storage room, you will want to keep it dry to avoid microorganism growth. Even a little moisture can start growth so keeping dry areas dry is very important. Dry cleaning techniques include scraping, vacuuming, sweeping and wiping. An alcohol sanitizer can be used if a sanitizer is needed. Sometimes air is used in this environment, but high-pressure air hoses can spread the food residues and soils to a wider area.

### **Developing A Sanitation Schedule**

The sanitation schedule is a list of all the sanitation tasks that need to be done. These infrequent jobs can easily be forgotten, so a schedule is needed to make sure they are not missed.

To make a schedule that works for your facilities, consider using a large chart that is posted in a public place and includes who is responsible for the job and when it needs to be completed (the frequency).

Detailed information concerning Sanitation Procedures are covered in the Food Handler Training Course and the *HACCP Advantage* Guidebook.