

PART TWO**7. PERSONAL HYGIENE**

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7.1 WHY IS PERSONAL HYGIENE IMPORTANT?

People employed in, or visiting, food plants are an important potential source of microbiological and physical hazards. Procedures are needed to minimise the risk of such hazards causing illness or injury to consumers.

For example:

- Bacteria (germs) may be transferred from people to food through handling food, by coughing over food or from contact with dirty clothing.
- People who are sick may be suffering from an infection that can be transmitted by food, such as Salmonella food poisoning, viral gastro-enteritis, bacterial skin infections, even typhoid or dysentery.
- Foreign objects such as hair, pieces of jewellery, pencils, buttons, fibres from clothing etc. may fall on to food.
- People may also cause cross contamination as they move around a food plant, by transferring dirt and bacteria on clothing or footwear, especially if they pass from dirty to clean areas

7.2 WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONAL HYGIENE?

7.2.1 WHICH OPERATIONS DOES THE LAW APPLY TO?

<i>Operations</i>	<i>Relevant sections of 7.2.2 below</i>
Red Meat Slaughter	A, B, C
White Meat Slaughter	A, B, C
Approved Farm Slaughter	A, B1, C
Farmed Game Handling	A, B, C
Wild Game Handling	A, B1, C
Meat Cutting and Production of Meat Products, Mince Meat, Meat Preparations and MSM	A, B, C
Edible By Products	A, B1, C

7.2.2 WHAT ARE THE OPERATOR'S LEGAL OBLIGATIONS?

A. PERSONAL CLEANLINESS & BEHAVIOUR

- 1 Every person working in a food-handling area is to maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and is to wear suitable, clean and, where necessary, protective clothing.

*852/2004 Annex II **Personal Hygiene**: Chapter VIII point 1*

- 2 Food business operators are to ensure that food handlers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activity.

*852/2004 Annex II **Training**: Chapter XII point 1*

B. HANDWASHING FACILITIES

1. An adequate number of washbasins is to be available, suitably located and designated for cleaning hands. Washbasins for cleaning hands are to be provided with hot and cold running water, materials for cleaning hands and for hygienic drying.

852/2004 Annex II **Food Premises:** Chapter I point 4

2. The equipment for washing hands used by staff engaged in handling exposed meat must have taps designed to prevent the spread of contamination

853/2004 Annex III: **Slaughterhouses:** Section I Chapter II point 4 & Section II Chapter II:

point 4 / **Cutting:** Section I Chapter III point 4 & Section II Chapter III: point 1(d) / **Farmed**

Game: Section III points 1 & 2 / **Production Establishments:** Section V Chapter I point 4 &

Section VI point 2

C. ILLNESS

1. No person suffering from, or being a carrier of a disease likely to be transmitted through food or afflicted, for example, with infected wounds, skin infections, sores or diarrhoea is to be permitted to handle food or enter any food handling area in any capacity if there is any likelihood of direct or indirect contamination. Any person so afflicted and employed in a food business and who is likely to come into contact with food is to report immediately the illness or symptoms to the food business operator.

852/2004 Annex II **Personal Hygiene:** Chapter VIII point 2

7.2.3 What are the official control requirements?

Audits by officials of good hygiene practices shall verify that meat plant operators apply personal hygiene procedures continuously and properly.

854/2004 Article 4 point 4(d)

7.3 HOW MAY OPERATORS DEMONSTRATE COMPLIANCE?

Food Business Operators may demonstrate compliance with their legal obligations for personal hygiene on an ongoing basis by providing evidence, including appropriate documentation, that:

- Procedures are in place to maintain a high degree of personal hygiene by:
 - Setting standards of acceptable personal cleanliness and behaviour, including handwashing and use of protective clothing.
 - Providing training/instruction to staff on the standards required of them.
 - Providing adequate facilities and supplies, particularly for handwashing, to enable staff to meet the standards.
- Procedures are in place to ensure that individuals who may be a source of foodborne disease do not handle food or enter food handling areas by:
 - Establishing the health status of prospective food-handling staff.
 - Instructing staff to report illnesses and infections that could be a food safety hazard.
- Arrangements are in place to maintain and monitor personal hygiene procedures and take corrective action if there is a failure.

GUIDE TO COMPLIANCE

ADVICE FOR OPERATORS

7.3.1 PERSONAL HYGIENE PROCEDURES

GUIDE TO COMPLIANCE	ADVICE FOR OPERATORS
<i>Training, instruction and supervision</i>	<i>Training, instruction and supervision</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food handling staff are supervised and receive instruction or training on food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activity. <p>A2</p>	<p><i>Give clear and simple written instructions to all staff (in various languages if necessary) before they start to handle food or to work in food-handling areas on the company's requirements for personal behaviour, particularly handwashing and including the use of protective clothing and the reasons for them.</i></p> <p><i>Supervise as appropriate and issue reminders if lapses occur. See also Chapter 6 (Training).</i></p> <p><i>Staff may be asked to sign a statement that they have read and understood the instructions.</i></p> <p><i>Try displaying signs and notices (e.g. 'now wash your hands') in appropriate languages in key areas to remind staff of the company's rules.</i></p> <p><i>Keep accurate individual training records to show what instruction/training has been given.</i></p>
<i>Cleanliness and behaviour</i>	<i>Cleanliness and behaviour</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every person working in a food-handling area maintains a high degree of personal cleanliness. <p>A1</p>	<p><i>Make sure that everyone, including managers, supervisors, engineers, cleaners, quality control and maintenance staff, working around a plant complies with appropriate personal hygiene procedures wherever they are working.</i></p> <p><i>Visitors and enforcement officials should comply with the same personal hygiene procedures as company staff.</i></p> <p>Handwashing – see topic below</p> <p>Personal items – prohibit the wearing of jewellery (except plain wedding rings and sleeper earrings), watches, badges, false nails, nail varnish, perfumed hand cream and strong perfume/aftershave, mobile</p>

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	<p>phones or other items that may contaminate the product, in food production areas.</p> <p>Personal hygiene – prohibit smoking, chewing gum, eating and drinking except in designated areas (prohibit spitting entirely). Discourage other practices likely to spread contamination (e.g. licking fingers, chewing fingernails, scratching). If possible, move people with minor coughs and colds to work where they are not likely to contaminate the product.</p> <p>Movement between ‘clean’ and ‘dirty’ areas – if movement between different work areas is necessary it should be from ‘clean’ to ‘dirty’ areas to minimise the risk of cross contamination e.g. by soiled protective clothing and footwear. Where movement from ‘dirty’ to ‘clean’ is unavoidable staff should change coats and headgear if necessary, washing or changing boots and washing hands. This applies if staff removing SRM are to handle food.</p> <p>Drinking Water - if drinking water is supplied, provide drinking fountains or single-use disposable cups.</p>
<p>Handwashing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number and location of designated washbasins for cleaning hands are adequate for the number of staff. Hand cleaning and drying materials and hot running water are supplied and used. <p>B1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The equipment for washing hands used by staff who handle exposed meat have taps designed to prevent the spread of contamination. See 	<p>Handwashing</p> <p>Instruct staff in effective hand washing. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washing and drying hands thoroughly using an effective procedure. Washing hands at the start of work and on entering a production area, after a visit to the toilet, after handling waste, after handling dirty equipment or utensils, after a contamination incident and after cleaning. The above applies whether or not gloves are worn. Wash gloves with the same frequency as hands. <p>Where possible, combine hand washing facilities with tool washing equipment to encourage frequent use.</p>

GUIDE TO COMPLIANCE	ADVICE FOR OPERATORS
<p>Chapter 1 (Design & Facilities).</p> <p>B2</p>	<p>Cleaning Materials – bactericidal soaps and hand sanitising products, such as alcohol-based gels and bactericidal wipes, can be used at hand washing stations. These may reduce microbial contamination on hands but will not compensate for inadequate hand washing.</p> <p>Nailbrushes – nailbrushes can harbour bacteria and if provided should be disposable.</p> <p>Hand drying – multiple use fabric towels are unacceptable. Disposable paper towels are recommended (with bins for their disposal) rather than hot air dryers, which can create aerosols that may contaminate surfaces.</p> <p>Barrier Creams – food-safe, unperfumed barrier creams to protect the skin may be supplied.</p>
<p>Protective clothing – suitability</p>	<p>Protective clothing – suitability</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All personnel in food-handling areas wear suitable protective clothing. <p>A1</p>	<p>The main purpose of protective clothing is to protect food from contamination from people. It also keeps people and their clothing clean and dry.</p> <p>'Protective clothing' - when used below this is taken to mean coats, overalls, gloves, aprons, headgear and footwear e.g. rubber boots or shoe covers.</p> <p>In food handling areas coats/overalls should completely cover all personal clothing, headgear should completely contain and cover hair and snoods should cover beards and moustaches. Staff who lift beef quarters etc. should wear clean protective neck shields, or hooded overalls.</p> <p>Design - use protective clothing designed to avoid contamination of the product (e.g. coats with press-studs rather than buttons and with no external pockets) and is preferably light coloured so that contamination is</p>

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	<p>easily seen.</p> <p>Fit – protective clothing should fit reasonably well e.g. coats that are too small may not cover outer clothing properly, and clothing or footwear that is the wrong size may limit movement and lead to accidents.</p> <p>Quality - non disposable protective clothing needs to be made of durable material that is able to stand frequent washing at high temperatures.</p> <p>Defects – inspect protective clothing regularly for damage or wear and have defective items repaired or replaced when necessary as they could fail to prevent contamination.</p>
Protective clothing – cleanliness	Protective clothing – cleanliness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protective clothing worn in food-handling areas is clean. <p>A1</p>	<p>Protective clothing/headgear/footwear needs to be cleanable or disposable.</p> <p>All personnel, including visitors should wear clean protective clothing when entering food-handling areas and change that clothing if it becomes excessively soiled and change or wash protective footwear. Where possible, install apron washers close to workstations to encourage frequent use.</p> <p>Dirty tasks – protective clothing worn in a lairage needs to be clearly differentiated from that worn in food-handling areas. Rubber gloves used for cleaning jobs need to be clearly differentiated from food-handlers gloves so that they are not used for that purpose.</p> <p>Colour coding – this is an effective way of differentiating between clothing/footwear intended for use in different work areas.</p> <p>Supplies – Arrange to have adequate supplies of protective clothing available so that staff have clean clothing every day and can change if items become</p>

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	<p><i>excessively soiled. The supply of protective clothing, footwear and the provision of laundry services may be contracted out.</i></p> <p>Storage – store protective items in suitable facilities where they are kept clean and protected from outdoor clothing and other potential sources of contamination.</p>
Additional Protective Wear	Additional Protective Wear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All personnel in food-handling areas wear suitable protective clothing. <p>A1</p>	<p><i>Make sure that, where worn, other protective items (e.g. heavy-duty rubber gloves, chain-mail gloves, wrist guards, visors etc.) are clean and suitable. They should be clean when first worn, and be cleaned during shifts to remove excessive soiling. Difficult to clean items, such as chain mail gloves, may be protected in use by covering with a disposable glove. Earplugs should be clean and linked.</i></p>

7.3.2 HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

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Health status	Health status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are not knowingly allowed to handle food or to work in food processing areas if suffering from or being a carrier of a foodborne disease or if suffering from, e.g. infected wounds, skin infections, sores or diarrhoea. <p>C1</p>	<p>Health declarations - ask prospective employees to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire and sign a declaration stating that there is no medical reason why they should not be permitted to handle food or to work in food processing areas.</p> <p>Medical examinations - new employees can be required to have a medical examination and provide a faecal sample in case they are symptom-less carrier of a foodborne disease (e.g. Salmonella), although such examinations cannot guarantee to identify carriers.</p> <p>Visitors –ask visitors entering food handling areas to sign a health declaration stating that they are not suffering from sickness or a foodborne disease and</p>

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	<p><i>whether they have recently been abroad.</i></p> <p>Foreign travel - travel abroad can increase the likelihood of suffering from gastroenteritis or other foodborne diseases. Staff working in food-handling areas can be asked to complete a brief medical questionnaire on their return to work, and should be excluded if there is reason to think that they are carrying an infection.</p> <p>Injuries - any non-infected cuts, sores, or abrasions are covered with a waterproof, brightly coloured (preferably metal-detectable) dressing.</p>
<p>Illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff likely to be in contact with food are instructed to report any illness or infection immediately to management, especially any symptoms that are a health risk in a food-handling environment such as: diarrhoea; vomiting; fever; jaundice; infected boils, cuts or wounds; discharges from eyes, nose or ears. Staff reporting or showing these symptoms are excluded from food handling areas <p>C1</p>	<p>Illness</p> <p><i>Clear written instructions (which may be given in appropriate languages) should set out what staff and managers are to do about reporting illnesses or symptoms and possible exclusion from working with or near food until they have been either medically treated and cleared, or have been completely free of symptoms for at least 48 hours.</i></p> <p><i>Staff can be asked to sign an agreement to report illness and close contact with others suffering from these symptoms.</i></p> <p>Exclusion - local authorities have powers to formally exclude individuals suffering from food poisoning, typhoid, paratyphoid, or dysentery from working with food. Anyone formally excluded in this way cannot return to work before by the same authority given clearance.</p> <p>Sickness Records - the health of employees (as far as it may affect food safety) should be monitored and records, such as health declarations, medical certificates and reports of illness, kept showing that the required actions have been followed.</p>

7.3.3 MAINTAINING AND MONITORING PERSONAL HYGIENE PROCEDURES

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Operator Responsibilities	Operator Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The operator is responsible for food safety in the food business. <p>852/2004 Article 1 point 1a</p>	<p>Operator Responsibility includes maintaining and monitoring company personal hygiene procedures and taking corrective action if there is a failure.</p> <p>Delegation – responsibility for maintaining and monitoring personal hygiene procedures may be delegated to a nominated person to whom problems are reported, and who has sufficient authority to ensure that corrective action is taken when necessary.</p> <p>Monitoring – check throughout the day that staff are following handwashing and other personal hygiene procedures. Check periodically that training procedures and health rules are being followed.</p> <p>Records – keep an accurate, dated account of personal hygiene checks when these require action to be taken; other periodic monitoring checks and any action taken.</p> <p>Corrective action - take action when failures of the company's personal hygiene procedures are identified to ensure that control is restored. Such action may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with any product that has been contaminated; Establishing the underlying cause and what needs to be done to prevent similar incidents in the future; Disciplinary action; Improving staff instructions and training.