

The Importance of Maintaining Hygiene Standards

Does your food business incorporate hygiene into its business strategy?
Have you considered why your business should maintain good standards of hygiene?

The development and maintenance of hygiene standards is a preventative food safety tool which can minimise food safety incidents and protect your business and brand? It will assist you to compete for new business and retaining market share. Sound hygiene practices builds consumer trust and confidence.

Many food businesses miss the opportunity to review hygiene standards as they fail to recognise the inherent risks associated with key business practices. Responses such as“we have been doing it this way for years and we haven’t poisoned anyone yet” has an all too familiar sound for the regulator.

The international food standards agency Codex Alimentarius describes hygiene as:

“All conditions and measures necessary to ensure the safety and suitability of food at all stages of the food chain.” (Codex Alimentarius, Food Hygiene Basic Texts, 1997).

This concept focuses on a preventative approach from hygienically well designed facilities and equipment to having a preventative maintenance program, a structured cleaning program and well trained staff who demonstrate high standards of personal hygiene.

The underlying principle of good food hygiene provides many benefits for all food businesses up and down the food supply chain, by reducing the likelihood of introducing a food safety hazard which could make food unsafe. It also provides benefits for the consumer and society as a whole by reducing the incidence of food borne illness. Practicing good standards of hygiene can provide cost savings to food manufacturers, food service and retailers by minimising product loss, or food recalls through product contamination or cross contamination of ready to eat foods. Having evidence of good food hygiene practices can also be a defence against prosecution by health authorities.

For food safety to be guaranteed, training is essential at all levels within a food business. Managers need to have a high degree of understanding of hygiene and food safety to ensure effective control. Training provided by a food business must be linked to the goals and directions of its business plan.

Consumers and regulators demand food that is safe for consumption. All companies in the food supply chain need to meet this requirement by having a clear focus on hygiene standards and food safety to maintain profitability and consumer confidence and trust.

