

Seven Steps to the Sanitary Process

A sanitary processing environment is essential to food safety, and ensuring sanitary food surfaces and implements, means implementing cleaning standards as well as sanitation standards.

Cleaning and sanitation are different because the cleaning steps address physical soils that are loose or adhering to a surface. Sanitation is directly related to microorganisms.

Removing these soils enables the sanitizers to work effectively. Thus, attaining a sanitary environment involves seven essential steps:

1. Inspection
2. Sweeping and Flushing
3. Washing
4. Rinsing
5. Sanitizing & Rinsing
6. Air Dry
7. Validation

1. Inspection

Prior to beginning the cleaning program, equipment should be broken checked, and an inspection conducted to identify any areas needing particular attention. It is important to determine what cleaning products are best suited to your needs.

2. Sweeping and Flushing

The physical removal of gross solids and large particles, including the use of brushes and scrapers or simply physical lifting and disposing of items. The more food residues removed ahead of time, the cleaner the wash water will stay.

This is often followed by flushing or rinsing of the surfaces to remove as much of the solids and particles prior to cleaning as possible. The water should be 40° to 145°C be used for rinsing. "If the water is too hot, it can cause the soils to become more adherent," he said.

3. Washing

The second step of cleaning is the application of a detergent. This may be applied manually, but a mechanical foamer is generally preferred, this gives a very good cling to the surface so the contact time can be enhanced and it is particularly effective on vertical surfaces.

4. Rinsing

Following washing, a potable-water rinse is conducted to ensure that all the detergent is removed. The rinse step is critical because detergent residues will neutralize many

sanitizers. Detergents are alkaline, whereas most sanitizers are acidic; detergents have a negative charge, while most sanitizers have a positive charge.

5. Sanitizing and Rinsing

Once the surfaces and equipment are verified as “clean,” the sanitizing steps have begun. Using boiling water will help to eliminate any residual soap residue and any remaining bacteria.

6. Air Dry

Allow the equipment to air dry. The introduction of a tea towel can re-introduce bacteria.

7. Validation

Validation should be conducted through both visual inspection. It's important to go through your equipment at regular intervals to clean it intensively.