

Cleaning & Sanitising - The Low Down

So far in 2025, while well-managed businesses uphold high standards, routine Council inspections reveal a need for improved cleaning and sanitising efforts across most food businesses to ensure the food being made in your food business is safe.



Food businesses must maintain their premises at a high standard of cleanliness

Ensure all fixtures, fittings, and equipment, including vehicle parts used for food transport, are clean and free of garbage, food waste, dirt, grease, and other visible contaminants. Using dirty equipment to process fresh food can transfer harmful bacteria. Clean and sanitise utensils and equipment before each use, especially between raw and ready-to-eat food. Surfaces in contact with food, such as benches, chopping boards, meat slicers and knives, must also be cleaned and sanitised.

Cleaning and sanitising are two distinct separate processes; staff must be trained to perform these tasks correctly. This includes the fixtures, fittings and equipment, as well as those parts of vehicles that are used to transport food.

The standard of cleanliness must ensure that there is no accumulation of garbage, recycled matter, food waste, dirt, grease or other visible matter.

Cleaning is the process that removes visible contamination such as food, waste, dirt and grease. This process is usually achieved with hot water and detergent.

During the cleaning process, microorganisms will be removed but the cleaning process is not designed to destroy microorganisms.

Sanitising is a process that reduces the numbers of microorganisms present on a surface. This is usually achieved by the use of both high heat and water (dishwashers), or by chemicals such as food grade sanitisers.

For maximum effectiveness, cleaning should be completed before sanitising. Chemical sanitisers are less effective when the surface being sanitised is not free of debris and grease.



Planning for cleaning

When planning your cleaning and sanitising program, remember the following points:

- ▶ Ensure that appropriate products (e.g. chemicals, detergents) and equipment (e.g. mops, buckets, brooms, cloths) are provided for each task.
- ▶ Equipment used for cleaning, must also have a cleaning, and if necessary, sanitising step applied to them, to ensure such items are clean prior to use.
- ▶ Determine the frequency for cleaning areas and equipment within the kitchen and record on a cleaning and sanitising procedure.
- ▶ Determine the procedure to be used for cleaning and sanitising (e.g. use of dishwasher, manually washing, rinsing with a chemical food grade sanitiser).
- ▶ Disassemble all equipment such as stick blenders, food processors, vitamisers and meat slicers to ensure that they can be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised.
- ▶ Use single-use paper towels rather than tea towels or cloths. If you use tea towels, they must be washed in hot water and allowed to dry after each use.
- ▶ Use food-grade detergents and sanitisers, always following the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and application.
- ▶ Keep cleaning chemicals away from food storage areas.
- ▶ A commercial dishwasher will sanitise most small equipment, cutlery, plates and glasses.



Cleaning procedures and records

A **cleaning procedure** is a set of written instructions that describe everything that needs to be included to keep your business clean. It sets out the tasks of cleaning and sanitising, how often each job needs to be done, how it should be done, and who should do it.

A **cleaning record** is a way of documenting that the cleaning tasks have been done by the personnel responsible.

If you are handling potentially hazardous foods recording your cleaning and sanitising processes is now mandatory (Food Safety Standard 3.2.2A).

Daily cleaning and sanitising			Week starting / /						
Areas or equipment to be cleaned on a daily basis			Completed by (please sign)						
Area / Equipment	Responsible person		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

A cleaning and sanitising record template can be found [here](#).



What does a cleaning procedure look like?

Begin at the back of your premises and write down every piece of equipment, or surface that needs to be cleaned as you walk towards the front.

Next, write down how you will clean that piece of equipment, how often you will clean it, what materials and chemicals will be used and who will do the cleaning. These instructions will be noted on the cleaning procedure.

How to Sanitise

Most food poisoning bacteria are killed if they are exposed to chemical sanitisers, heat, or a combination of both.

To sanitise:

- ▶ soak items in water at 77°C for 30 seconds; or
- ▶ use a food grade non-rinse sanitiser, following the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and application



Six steps to proper cleaning

- 1 Pre-clean**
Scrape, wipe or sweep away food scraps and rinse with water.
- 2 Wash**
Use hot water and detergent to take off any grease and dirt. Soak if needed.
- 3 Rinse**
Rinse off any loose dirt or detergent foam.
- 4 Sanitise**
Use a sanitiser to kill any remaining germs.
- 5 Final rinse**
Wash off sanitiser (read sanitiser's instructions to see if you need to do this).
- 6 Dry**
Allow to air dry.

Additional Resources:

- ▶ [Food Safety Tips](#)
- ▶ [Cleaning and Sanitising Guide](#)

Assistance - Where do i go?

The Council's Environmental Health Officers are there to ensure food business comply with the Food Act and Food Safety Standards. They can also provide advice and assistance to Food business owners.

Should you require any posters, fact sheets, pamphlets or advice on any aspect of food safety please do not hesitate to contact Hazel or Crystal for advice on 1300 790 919 or health@livingstone.qld.gov.au