

Deep Cleaning To-Dos After a Food Manufacturing Facility Shutdown

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting normal operations for countless food and beverage manufacturers. This disruption may occur due to limited staff numbers (as a result of social distancing requirements, layoffs, or staff sickness); additional sanitation requirements in relation to the control of COVID-19 transmission; changes in the level of production (up or down); and even site shutdown. These in turn can lead to a loss of resources for, or focus on, food safety sanitation.

Food manufacturers have a legal obligation to produce safe food and it is therefore essential that routine sanitation practices continue and that additional sanitation is undertaken after a period of shutdown. Employers also have a legal obligation to ensure the safety of their workforce, including minimising their risk of COVID-19 infection.

SANITATION FOR FOOD SAFETY

Review your Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) and ensure you have the right tools for the job

- Review SSOPs for required cleaning tools and equipment
- Review your colour-coding plan
- Check all shadow boards, tool racks, and storage locations for tools that need to be replaced

Check individual work stations to ensure the correct food handling tools are present

- Ensure that all tools are present in their correct areas
- Make sure tools match the established colour-coding plan

Discard any tools that are damaged or that are in poor condition

- Damaged tools can harbour microorganisms and allergens in deep gouges or cracks
- Pieces or materials may break off in production areas, causing foreign body contamination

Clean brand new tools before their first use in your facility

- Even new tools could be contaminated with allergens, microbes, or foreign bodies
- Manufacturers of cleaning and food handling tools do not clean, disinfect or sterilise tools before they are shipped to end-users unless they specifically state otherwise
- Even tools that are individually wrapped should be cleaned before their first use

Clean existing tools

- Tools that are not properly cleaned and dried after use or prior to shutdown may become a source of contamination on re-use
- Cleaning and food handling tools themselves can be vectors for pathogens

Clean the nooks and crannies

- Include spots or areas within the facility, equipment, or tools that are hard-to-reach or inspect
- They are much more difficult for the sanitation crew to properly clean and disinfect. It's critical to carefully clean:
 - Gaskets
 - Hollow tubes and supports
 - Rough welds
 - Gaps in equipment
 - Dead-ends
 - Joints and crevices

SANITATION FOR COVID-19 CONTROL

This cleaning is what should be done on an ongoing and frequent basis when the plant is back in operation

- Surfaces that are commonly touched by employees should be cleaned more frequently.

These include:

- Handrails
- Door push plates
- Turnstiles
- Utensils
- Trolley and bucket handles
- Taps
- Hoses
- Cleaning tools
- Machine control panels
- Scales
- Bulk ingredient bins
- Consider adding a unique colour to your colour-coding plan to specifically clean these non-food contact surfaces
- Tools should also be cleaned between use by different people to reduce the chance of spreading COVID-19

TRAIN STAFF ON THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD SAFETY AND COVID-19 SAFETY PLANS

Training is an important step in building and maintaining a food safety culture. This applies to general food safety plans and enhanced COVID-19 safety plans. A culture of food safety includes:

- Strong leadership that encourages cooperation
- Ongoing food safety training for employees and Managers
- Engaged and informed employees
- Self-audits built into the work structure
- Empowered employees who share responsibility for and are rewarded for practicing food safety
- A robust food safety plan that contains pre-requisite measures and controls

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Vikan have numerous resources available online: [Vikan content related to Covid-19](#)



FURTHER INFORMATION

www.vikan.com
sales@vikan.co.uk
+44 (0)1793 716 760