

Food & Safety news

Communicable Disease  | Food Hygiene & Standards  | Health & Safety at Work  | Working with Business 

Keeping Ice Safe

Advice on Maintenance, Cleaning and Managing Ice Machines

Ice is widely used by businesses to chill drinks. Microbiological sampling has shown the presence of E-coli and indicators of faecal contamination from ice being used in drinks.

We sampled the ice machines of 46 businesses between 2017 and 2019 with 32 of those surveyed requiring action or having unsatisfactory results.

Keeping Ice Safe - The water used to make ice must be of drinking water quality and it is essential that ice machines are connected to a potable mains water supply and not a storage tank. Water filters or softeners must be maintained and serviced according to manufacturer's instructions.

Machine Location - The machine should be sited in an area that is free from dirt and dust and has adequate ventilation. It should be off the ground and away from heat sources which could cause a freeze/thaw effect within the machine. Due to the risk of contamination from aerosols, the ice machine should not be sited near the WC and there should be a lobby between the WC and the ice machine.

Machine Servicing - It is important to have machines serviced by a competent and qualified engineer in line with manufacturer's instructions, which will help to keep parts of the machine clean, especially if they are hard or unsafe to reach during routine cleaning. **We recommend an annual service.**

This needs to form part of your Food Safety Management System or HACCP as it is easily overlooked.



Cleaning the Machine - Ice machines must be part of a cleaning schedule and we would **recommend that you empty, clean and disinfect the machine weekly.**

- This needs to be a 2 stage clean to first remove all visible dirt and debris from the surface/equipment with hot water and a detergent, followed by the use of a sanitizer which conforms with either BS

EN1276:1997 or BS EN 13697:2001 to kill any bacteria that may be present.

Any ice that is taken out of the machine needs to be disposed of to reduce the risk of contamination on the ice.

Another important area to clean is the exterior panels and in particular any hand contact points on the door panel, as these are prime harbourage points for bacterial growth.

In this edition:

- An Indian restaurant owner tells us how they got their '5'
- A takeaway owner is fined thousands after officers find his kitchen in a very poor condition
- Improve your knowledge of allergens – this time we focus on milk
- How to tackle the dreaded Norovirus over the winter months
- Find out more about the training courses we're launching this autumn

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“Running a successful restaurant starts with a well organised, clean kitchen.”

In each edition of our newsletter, we feature a business which has been highly commended after an inspection by our Environmental Health Professionals. This time round, we visited The India Gate in Whitchurch, Cardiff.



It's fair to say that Cardiff residents, as well as its twenty million or so annual visitors, have a wide and varied choice of Asian restaurants to choose from.

The result of this is a significant variation in the food hygiene ratings of these restaurants, with some scoring way below average and others hitting the magic '5'.

One of those restaurants is The India Gate in Whitchurch, which has been owned by Mr Harunur Rahman for 32 years. We visited him shortly after his restaurant received a food hygiene rating of 5, to ask him how he manages to maintain such high standards after all these years.

“We are very much a traditional restaurant in terms of the food we serve to our customers – I believe in buying only

“ I invest heavily in my kitchen, particularly on equipment that helps me create a safe environment for my staff. ”

fresh, high quality products – but I like to think that we innovate when it comes to food hygiene” says Harunur, who is also the restaurant's head chef, and manages a team of about 12 staff members.

“I invest heavily in my kitchen, particularly on equipment that helps me create a safe environment for my staff. For example, I have purchased an industrial pizza oven which is used only

for baking naan bread. Although the oven was expensive to buy, it means that the chances of my kitchen team being burnt is minimised.”

Having a tour of Harunur's kitchen tells us why the inspecting officer was so pleased with its structure.

“The layout of my kitchen meant that the officer was very happy with my storage methods. I have created space which allows me to keep two fridges, and this helps me separate raw and ready to eat foods.

“Avoiding cross contamination must always be a high priority – it only takes one food poisoning incident to seriously damage the reputation of a food business.”

Harunur also carries out daily tasks which ensures he doesn't forget the basics.

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"I have a routine which I must perform every day. I have a list of checks that need to be done first thing in the morning and last thing before we close for the day. These checks are now second nature to us. I have reminders for staff on the kitchen walls, but these spot checks are now habitual."

“ it only takes one food poisoning incident to seriously damage the reputation of a food business ”

What did Harunur think after his most recent inspection?

"I actually look forward to food hygiene inspections because I am confident in my

methods and I change very little in between visits from officers. I enjoy discussing ideas with the inspecting officer."

Although Harunur's wealth of experience in running a restaurant gives him a sense of confidence, he explains that he sometimes finds the job as challenging as ever.

"It is very difficult these days to find good, loyal, hard working staff. I do employ students during term time and also during the holidays, but finding the right people to help me maintain high standards is not as easy as it once was."

Despite the challenges, Harunur tells us that even after 32 years he still has a deep love for cooking simple, traditional Indian food and has a real sense of pride and happiness when his customers walk out of the door with smiles on their faces.

Handling of Ice - This is one of the easiest ways to contaminate otherwise clean ice, and any point where ice is being touched or moved needs to be a key element of training and supervision. Always wash your hands before removing ice from a machine and ensure that the utensil or scoop being used is freshly cleaned and sanitised and not stored on top of the ice.

- Don't use glass utensils to scoop ice as there is a risk of glass fragments being lost within the machine should the glass chip or crack during removal.

Ice buckets that are used should be kept in a clean place, and must be washed and sanitised at least daily. **We would recommend that you do so before each use.**

Disease causing pathogens have been linked to ice machines so it is particularly important to use the sanitizer correctly and the 2 stage cleaning process is adhered to.

Do you have a question for our officers?

In this edition we're giving you the chance to send us questions which we will pass on to our Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers to answer.

We'll then print the questions and answers in our next edition of Food & Safety News, which should be in your mailbox by March 2020.

What concerns you most about running a food business? Is there anything you wish you'd asked an officer after your last inspection? Would you like to know more about the inspection process before you have your next one?

Please drop us a line by emailing businessadvice-srswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk and we'll print as many questions and answers as we can in Edition 6.





Improve your knowledge of allergens

As a food business, it is your legal responsibility to ensure that you know, understand and apply the laws around allergens and ensuring your food is safe.

One way of doing this is to undertake training. The Food Standards Agency has made available a free allergy awareness course which is available online here: allergytraining.food.gov.uk/english/

Shared Regulatory Services offer a number of formal training courses, including the Level Two Award in Food Allergen Awareness and Control in Catering course. This course is an accredited qualification and is taught by our Trading Standards professionals, who will not only help to increase your knowledge and understanding of allergens but understand what we look for on inspections of business premises.

Who should take the course?

This training will be of interest to food business operators, those involved in selling or producing food or anyone wanting to learn more about food allergies.

What does the course involve?

The course is aimed at food handlers and other staff involved in food preparation. It is supported by Allergy UK and can form part of the application for businesses who wish to sign up to the Allergy Aware Scheme. The qualification is achieved by attending a half day training course and then sitting an end-of-course multiple choice examination.

Where does the training take place?

Regular training dates are available at City Hall in Cardiff and we also offer training dates in Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan. Dates for our up-coming courses can be found on our website (www.srs.wales), along with the course booking form, course fees and details of our other training courses. If you have several members of staff that you would like to have trained, contact our training team on training-srsrwales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk to discuss how we can help you.

We can also deliver bespoke training to your business, which can be tailored to your specific needs so please contact us on the above email address for more information

Spotlight on allergens - In this edition we focus on milk

Many food businesses are aware of the allergy risks surrounding nuts and peanuts but it is important to ensure that you have allergen controls in place for all of the fourteen allergens set out in the law.

Milk allergy occurs when the body's immune system mistakenly recognises the proteins found in cow's milk as harmful and goes into defence mode by producing an allergic response. This is known as an anaphylactic attack.

Anaphylaxis usually develops suddenly and gets worse very quickly.

The symptoms include:

- feeling lightheaded or faint
- breathing difficulties – such as fast, shallow breathing
- wheezing
- a fast heartbeat
- clammy skin
- confusion and anxiety
- collapsing or losing consciousness

There may also be other allergy symptoms, including an itchy, raised rash (hives), feeling or being sick, swelling or stomach pain.

Like other food allergies, milk allergy is more common in young children. Many children who have an allergy to milk in early life will grow out of it by the time they start school but those that don't are likely to have a lifelong allergy.

There are two main proteins in cow's milk that can cause an allergic reaction:

1. Casein, found in the solid part (curd) of milk that curdles
2. Whey, found in the liquid part of milk

that remains after milk curdles

Consumers might be allergic to only one milk protein or to both. Unfortunately, these proteins may be hard to avoid because they're also found in many processed foods.

Most people who react to cow's milk will also react to sheep's, goat's and buffalo's milk.

Cow's milk can also cause a digestive problem where the body is unable to digest milk protein or lactose, a type of sugar mainly found in milk and dairy products. This is known as milk or lactose intolerance.

Milk or lactose intolerance can develop at any age. Many cases first develop in people aged 20 to 40, although babies and young children can also be affected.

All food business must therefore be mindful that if a food contains any milk or milk products (cheese, butter, yoghurt etc.), casein or whey then it must be considered to be unsafe for a consumer with a milk allergy or intolerance.

Systems and records must be in place to enable you and your customers to quickly identify those foods where milk or a derivative of milk is an ingredient so that they can be avoided.

"Dairy Free – What Does it Mean?"

Care should be taken by businesses using "Dairy Free" as a statement to indicate that there are no milk or dairy products such as cheese, butter and yoghurt contained within a food product or restaurant meal.

We are aware that some consumers and even some food businesses believe that egg is a dairy product, leading to potential confusion and an increased risk at the point of sale.

Takeaway owner ordered to pay over £7,000 for food hygiene offences

Rat droppings, mouse droppings and accumulations of food debris and fat were found at a pizza restaurant on Cowbridge Road East in Cardiff when an inspection was carried out at the business



In July 2019 the owner of the business attended Cardiff Magistrates' Court to receive his sentence following a previous guilty plea to four offences and was fined £4,800, ordered to pay £2,217 in costs as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

In mitigation, his legal representative told the court that the defendant had 'rested on his laurels' following being the sole trader of the business.

“ Businesses are reminded that we will take legal action against those who breach the legislation, which exists to protect public safety ”

He accepted that he hadn't carried out staff training but since the visit had deep cleaned the premises, ensured that all of

his staff were trained and had employed a commercial pest controller to ensure the rodent infestation was dealt with.

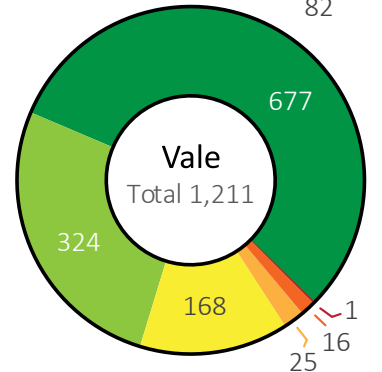
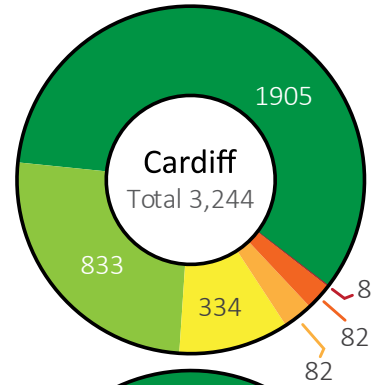
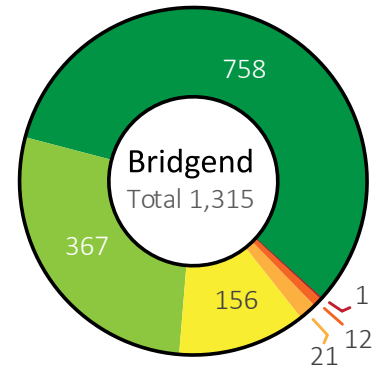
The case came to light following a routine inspection by council officers who found a significant amount of rat and mouse droppings which hadn't been controlled for at least 6 months.

Cllr Michael Michael, Cabinet Member responsible for Shared Regulatory Services at Cardiff Council said:

"They say a picture speaks a thousand words and in this case, the pictures certainly do. Thankfully the owner voluntarily chose to close the business when a zero rating was issued. Businesses are reminded that we will take legal action against those who breach the legislation, which exists to protect public safety."

Following the remedial work that was carried out by the owner of the business, our officers re-visited the premises in September 2018 which resulted in a food hygiene rating of 4 being issued.

Food hygiene ratings for businesses in Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan



Food Hygiene Ratings as of June 21st 2019

FOOD HYGIENE RATING





Vydex Corporation benefits from SRS's advice and training packages

The world of sports nutrition can be somewhat tricky to navigate when it comes to complying with the law.

For businesses manufacturing as well as retailing and distributing, it can be even more of a challenge. This is one of the reasons why Vydex Corporation Ltd, based in Cardiff, agreed to start working with SRS in 2017.

Established in 1988, Vydex are an industry leader in health, nutrition and sports supplements manufacturing and labelling. With clients across the UK and further afield, the company has a lot on its plate.

"Our industry is heavily regulated" says Sales Director, Craig Coombs "which is great in one sense but over the years we found a lot of inconsistency in the advice we were receiving from different local authorities."

After a meeting with SRS back in 2016 it was felt that Primary Authority would provide the consistent guidance and support the company were looking for.

"The best thing for us about Primary Authority is having someone to turn to when we need an answer to a question. If we want to try something new and innovative then we pick up the phone to SRS to see if it can be achieved, within the boundaries of the law."

Because of the scale of Vydex's manufacturing operation, they receive

“ We always have really positive feedback from businesses, including Vydex, when we train their workforce within their own surroundings. It makes the whole experience much more rewarding. ”

food hygiene inspections as well as trading standards visits. For that reason, they have chosen to receive Primary Authority advice and support in both these areas.

"It makes complete sense for SRS to help us fine tune our food hygiene practices whilst also guiding us on the wording and layout of our sports nutrition labels. Because the partnership is managed by a Business Engagement Officer, I can just contact him and he'll find the answer from a really knowledgeable team of officers." says Craig.

And 2019 has seen SRS deliver bespoke training to Vydex employees on both food hygiene and allergens. In four sessions delivered over two days, SRS were able to train 30 members of Vydex staff at their head office.

Business Engagement Officer, Ellis

What is Primary Authority?

Primary Authority is a legal partnership between a business and a local authority. It enables businesses to receive tailored advice on environmental health, trading standards or fire safety regulations. Partnerships are available to any type of business, whether starting out or established, as well as other types of organisations such as charities and trade associations.

Roberts said:

"This type of training is really engaging for employees because we're teaching them about important subjects such as allergens, but within the context of their daily work. Sometimes, sitting through long training sessions on a subject which you know little about can be disinteresting.

"We always have really positive feedback from businesses, including Vydex, when we train their workforce within their own surroundings. It makes the whole experience much more rewarding."

Over the next few months, SRS will be advising Vydex on their range of animal feed products as they look to expand this aspect of their business, and will continue to work with the company on their food labels, which will help strengthen the relationship with their numerous clients.

New training courses to be launched by SRS this autumn

Ensuring your staff are adequately trained in their role is an important part of running any food business and is also a legal requirement.



Good staff training can reduce the chances of food being unsafe, increase your chances of getting a higher food hygiene rating score and can help to reassure your customers that you take their safety seriously.

Did you know that Shared Regulatory Services can help with your training needs?

We offer a range of training courses relating to food businesses, which are expanding all the time. They currently include:

- Level Two Award in Food Safety for Catering
- Level Three Award in Food Safety for Catering
- Level Two Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace

- Level Three Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace

We are also launching our new **Level Two Award in Food Allergen Awareness in Catering** and our **Level Two Award in HACCP for Catering** this summer. Both courses are taught by our experienced Officers, who are not only experienced trainers but they also give delegates a unique opportunity to ask questions about best hygiene practices. More details about our training courses can be found on our website www.srs.wales.

We can also cater for larger groups, deliver training at your workplace or design a bespoke training course to meet your business needs. Contact our training team on training-srs.wales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk for more information.



IN FOCUS Level Two Award in HACCP for Catering

Overview

The law states that anyone responsible for developing and maintaining HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control points) must have received adequate training in the HACCP principles. This Highfields accredited course helps you to meet these legal requirements by providing an introduction to HACCP.

Who is the course for?

Anyone who is interested in learning about HACCP or who requires a refresher in the principles of HACCP. The course also supports those who are, or will be part of a HACCP team within a catering environment. The course is suitable for anyone over the age of 16 who can read and understand English.

What is involved?

The course covers areas such as:

- The role of the food handler in implementing a Food Safety Management System based on HACCP principles
- The importance of prerequisite programmes
- Guidance on the steps required to develop a Food Safety Management System based on HACCP principles
- Hazard analysis and critical control points
- Evaluating and monitoring

Assessment

The course is a one day training course which is assessed by a 30-minute, 15-question multiple-choice examination, where the learner must answer at least 9 out of 15 questions correctly to pass.

New Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) guidance on acrylamide

Safer Food Better Business for Caterers (SFBB) has new guidance for small and medium-sized businesses to



manage the risks of acrylamide, which is a chemical substance formed when starchy foods such as potatoes and bread, are cooked at temperatures above 120°C. Acrylamide also has the potential to cause cancer in humans.

The new acrylamide safe method is placed in the following SFBB packs:

- Caterers pack (English & Welsh): Cooking section, placed after 'Ready-to-eat food'.
- Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan Cuisines pack: Cooking section, placed after 'Hot holding and delivery'.
- Chinese cuisine pack (English & Cantonese): Cooking section, placed after 'Hot holding and delivery'.

Making changes to your business? Let us know!

Did you know that all food businesses have a duty to inform us of any significant changes to their business? This includes:-

- Changes to the name of the business;
- Changes of ownership;
- Closure of the business;
- Significant changes to your procedures or practices such as serving less than thoroughly cooked burgers, sous vide cooking or moving from wet sales to providing food;
- attendance at events.

If you are thinking of significantly changing your procedures or practices such as those described above, you must let us know so that we can assess your procedures.

Please contact us by phone 0300 123 6696 or email businessadvice-srswales@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Bridgend Employers Engagement Programme: Healthy lungs for healthy lives

SRS was heavily involved in the Bridgend Employers Engagement Programme (BEEP) which culminated in an event in January 2019 at the Waterton Centre in Bridgend.

The event was geared towards supporting small businesses in the Bridgend area involved in woodworking, metal fabrication and vehicle body repair.

It was run as a joint working partnership with the Health and Safety Executive, Shared Regulatory Services, Ford, Healthy Working Wales, Bridgend Business Forum

and Oracle Risk, and included a number of exhibitors.

The event included talks, practical demonstrations and free lung function tests.

Feedback from the event was positive with candidates finding the sessions on face fitting, health surveillance, importance of LEV and smoking cessation particularly informative.





Food hygiene and safety breakfast event draws a large crowd of businesses

Businesses from across Bridgend, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan attended a free breakfast event in March which provided informative advice and support on food hygiene and health and safety matters.

Over 170 delegates booked onto the event at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff, representing a diverse range of organisations, including cafés, health boards, nurseries and hotel chains. Environmental Health and Trading Standards professionals from Shared Regulatory Services took to the stage to advise delegates about health and safety in catering and how the food hygiene rating system works in practice.

There was a handy section on preventing the spread of norovirus, as well as hints and tips on how to improve and maintain a food hygiene rating. A very topical section on food allergens was also covered, which gave attendees the chance to understand their responsibilities in law whilst ensuring the safety of their customers.

The event provided an opportunity for delegates to mingle with officers and to ask questions which affected their individual businesses.

“ **Gaining a high food hygiene rating is hugely important for food businesses, and this type of event gives us the chance to help them achieve these aims.** ”

Richard Cox from Innovate Trust, a charity which provides support to disabled people, enjoyed the morning: “What an amazing conference! It was very well thought out, planned and managed to a professional yet welcoming level. The information was so well conveyed to the audience at the right pitch, getting rid of the jargon and focussing on what matters really captivated the audience.”

Member of the Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee, Cllr Michael Michael said: “Working with businesses

in this way provides a number of benefits for the local economy. It gives us as regulators that chance to help businesses reach the highest possible standards, which should set the foundations for a strong customer base.

“Gaining a high food hygiene rating is hugely important for food businesses, and this type of event gives us the chance to help them achieve these aims. Getting things right on the allergens front is a challenge in itself, but we hope the event increased the knowledge and confidence of business operators in this area of food law.

“It was really encouraging to see so many people from the food community coming together to discuss, debate and listen over some coffee and pastries.”

Delegates were also informed of the services on offer from SRS, such as mock food hygiene inspections and bespoke health & safety advice visits, along with training and Primary Authority support.

Meet the Team

In each edition we catch up with a member of the SRS team to find out more about the support we can offer food businesses. In this edition, we get to know **Jennifer Goddard** from our **Health & Safety / Communicable Disease Team**



How long have you been a Commercial Services Technical Officer?

11 years. I began working as a Technical Officer in Cardiff Council in 2008.

Tell us more about your job

I investigate cases and outbreaks of infectious diseases, mainly those associated with gastrointestinal infections that are caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *E.coli*, *Cryptosporidium* and *Norovirus*. Typical symptoms for these pathogens are diarrhoea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. I identify what caused the illness, to prevent the spread of infection and offer advice.

What appealed to you about this line of work?

Micro-organisms are fascinating, I have been interested in them for quite some time and in 2003 I completed a degree in Applied Microbiology. I had previously worked in university research labs and I was keen to try something a bit different that also involved interacting and helping members of the public. Investigating food poisoning and other infectious diseases seemed like an ideal opportunity for me to do this.

What do you like most about your job?

I enjoy the challenge of identifying what organism or activity has caused a person to become unwell and preventing onward spread of illness. The conversations I have whilst talking to people who have tested positive for an infectious disease are often very positive. People are happy to talk to me about their illness and are very grateful for the knowledge and advice I have shared with them.

What is the worst thing that you have seen in your years in Environmental Health?

I have to interview people suffering with food poisoning and other illnesses and this sometimes involves visiting them in hospital. Seeing someone extremely ill in hospital is not particularly pleasant, especially when it is a young child, but the investigation still needs to be done. Sometimes, the case is so ill that next of kin has to be interviewed on their behalf.

Can you offer any words of wisdom to a food business when it comes to infection control?

Businesses should ensure that their staff sickness policy is adequate and adhered to by all staff, who should not return to work until they have been 48 hours clear of any diarrhea or vomiting symptoms. Relapse of symptoms is common and should this happen in the workplace, (even in the toilet), the risk of an outbreak is increased.

What is the most rewarding aspect of the job?

The knowledge that by doing my job, I am protecting the health of the public is very rewarding, however the gratitude of people when I explain their illness, the causes and preventative measures is equally as rewarding.

Any tips for those thinking of setting up a food business

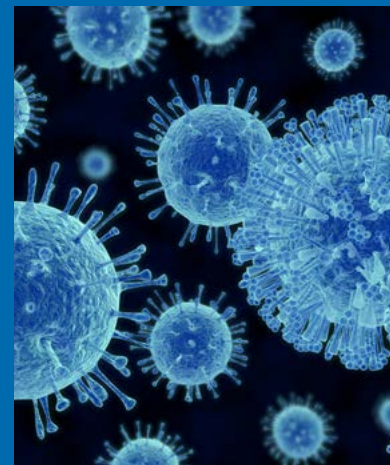
Learn about food poisoning pathogens, especially those that are typically associated with the foods that you are selling and the processes that you are using to produce your food. For example, not many people know that Hepatitis A virus can be contracted from eating unwashed fruit that has been imported from countries where the virus is endemic.

Ensure that you and your staff are adequately trained to carry out their jobs safely.

If you retired tomorrow, what would you do?

I have not really thought about this before as it's a long way off! I would definitely visit my family a lot more as most of them do not live in Wales. I am an outdoors person so would spend more time exploring the UK and abroad. Maybe I would get back into landscape and wildlife photography again, which I stopped doing due to lack of time and I would also spend more time on my allotment.

How to tackle the dreaded Norovirus



Outbreaks of Norovirus within a food business can affect many unrelated customers who visit businesses on different days as Norovirus can be passed through food but also via an infected food handler or from contamination of the businesses environment such as a customer vomiting in the restaurant or toilet area.

It is important for a business to know how to deal with such situations to minimize the spread of infection and to protect their business' reputation, as an outbreak could lead to temporary closure of the business and negative coverage in the media.

Following anyone suffers any vomiting or diarrhea at your premises, ensure the area and a 2 meter radius is cleaned immediately with detergent and hot water, using a disposable cloth.

Disinfect the contaminated area with freshly made 1000ppm (0.1%) hypochlorite solution (bleach) and ensure sufficient contact time according to manufacturer instructions to ensure it kills any viruses or bacteria.

Move any mobile equipment within the contaminated area to allow effective deep cleaning and dispose of all materials that cannot be sufficiently cleaned and disinfected.

Soft furnishings and carpeted areas where bleach cannot be used should be steam cleaned and soiled articles such as clothing should be washed at 60 degrees or above.