

Overcoming Challenges - Food Contact Surfaces

Food establishment management and staff often encounter many challenges when it comes to cleaning of food contact surfaces and utensils.

Parts 4-6 and 4-7 of the 2013 FDA Food Code states that food contact surfaces, equipment surfaces, and utensils shall be clean to sight and touch, sanitized, and cleaned at particular frequencies using particular methods.

Common Challenges

There are many challenges associated with cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces, but three main root causes can be directly correlated to controlling this hazard:

Staff Behavior

- Pressure for speedy service and profits result in shortcuts being taken
- Wiping cloths are not stored in sanitizer buckets
- Frequency of cleaning and sanitizing is not meeting requirements
- Staff do not check warewashing equipment prior to use

Warewashing Equipment

- Warewashing equipment is insufficient for demand
- Warewashing equipment is not maintained in good condition

Management Behavior

- Employees not trained on:
 - Warewashing procedures and cleaning frequencies
 - Correct sanitizer levels and use of test strips
 - Operating and monitoring warewashing equipment
 - Proper use and storage of wiping cloths
- Managers may be under pressure for profits, causing food safety to be lower priority
- Lack of accountability/shared contribution to a food safety culture
- Management does not make time to monitor employees in kitchen

Overcoming Challenges

There are effective options to consider when overcoming challenges related to cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces.

- Create Policies**
- Train Staff**
- Verify Policies are Working**