
 <p>SMALL SCALE FOOD PROCESSOR ASSOCIATION <small>SUPPORTS INDEPENDENT FOOD PROCESSORS &amp; GROWERS</small></p>	<p>Document No. HUB.HP.REC.115 Effective Date: 01-June 2022 Revision Date: New</p>
<p><b>General Hygiene Practices SOP</b></p>	<p>Revised By: MDaskis Approved By: NRoss Reason for Revision: New</p>

This document is a useful reference for training HUB Users on General Hygiene Practices that should be followed in a processing facility.

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## General Hygiene Practices

### Employee Health

No employee who:

1. is known to be suffering from any communicable disease;
2. is a known "carrier" of any disease; or
3. has an infected wound or open lesion on an exposed part of his body shall work in the processing areas of the plant.

NOTE:

An employee who is suffering from the "common cold" and who is observed to be coughing or sneezing or wiping his nose must be removed from the working area;  
Employees having wounds or lesions on exposed parts of the body are not permitted in the working area unless adequate protection is provided to prevent the possibility of contaminating the product.

#### **Explanation**

A person suffering from a communicable disease is likely to be noticed by the supervisor, whereas the carrier escapes notice; i.e. the person who is a carrier appears healthy.

A person suffering from a communicable disease or who is a carrier can infect the food product with bacteria capable of causing food poisoning. Persons who have open lesions or infected wounds must not be employed in the working areas because there is a danger of infecting the product with food poisoning organisms.

Continuous watchfulness on the part of the supervisors for sign of illness in employees, coupled with cooperativeness on the part of all HUB Users is the best way to comply with this policy.


### Employee Appearance

Employees shall present themselves for work exhibiting a clean, tidy appearance.

#### **Explanation**

Clean hair, clean, short fingernails, clean skin, clean garments, and clean hand habits are essential to reducing contamination of the product with microorganisms for which the food handler is both the primary source and the middleperson (i.e., the hand and garments of workers may spread microbes from other sources).

The main reason for this rule is, of course, for product protection. However, product protection combined with smart appearance is the most desirable condition for efficient production.

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**NOTE:**

What is meant by "hand habits" is that employees must be trained to keep their hands away from their nose, mouth, hair, clothing, or other potential contaminating surfaces after they have washed and sanitized their hands.

**Fingernail Polish**

Employees engaged in the handling of the product shall not wear fingernail polish unless wearing gloves.

***Explanation***

The prolonged contact of fingernail polish with moist or wet environment may cause the polish to peel and, therefore, contaminate the product.

**Jewelry**

Employees shall not wear rings, earrings, hair clips, or other jewelry while processing food.

***Explanation***

It is very easy for jewelry, such as rings and earrings, to come loose and fall into the product. This is very objectionable and should not be tolerated.

NOTE: The obvious contentious issue in the compliance of this rule is the wearing of wedding rings. The discretion of the HUB Management is very important here since a smooth, snug-fitting wedding band may be permissible, whereas, a wedding ring with a high stone setting would not be permissible.

**Smoking/Spitting/Eating/Gum Or Tobacco Chewing**

No person shall smoke, spit, or chew gum or tobacco in the processing area.


***Explanation***

Smoking is objectionable because of the danger of contamination to the product with ash, cigarette stubs, matches, and the smoker's saliva.

Eating is objectionable because of the risk of contamination to products and equipment.

Spitting is objectionable because of aesthetic reasons. It is also objectionable because of public health reasons since even a healthy person may carry microorganisms of public health significance and through the act of spitting, these microorganisms may contaminate the product, work surfaces and equipment.

Chewing gum or tobacco is objectionable because of aesthetic reasons and due to risk of

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contamination of the product and public health reasons.

## Handwashing

Employees shall thoroughly wash, with warm water and soap, and sanitize hands following each absence from duty.

### **Explanation**

The presence in food products of organisms associated with sewage or human disease or infection is highly objectionable. Poor sanitary practices are significant contributors to the spread of contamination. Adequate handwashing is the most important single factor in establishing sanitation.

The contamination of hands is inevitable. Effective handwashing practices are required to reduce the risk of cross contamination to food contact surfaces, clothing, utensils, and inevitably the finished product. Even the best of handwashing does not sterilize the hands, but the number of bacteria can be very greatly reduced.

Even a healthy person may carry a microorganism of public health significance on or in his body. These microbes, when allowed to contaminate food and multiply, may cause serious food borne illnesses in persons who consume this food.

Bactericidal hand dips are to be used to supplement thorough handwashing and will provide a residual effect on the hands which may reduce the number of bacteria which are not physically removed in the process of washing.

## Headgear

Employees, while in the processing areas, shall wear headgear that completely covers the hair. All employees must wear hairnets.


### **Explanation**

Headgear is necessary to protect the product from contamination with hair. Head coverings for employees shall be of such a nature that the use of bobby pins is not required to hold them in place, since the pins themselves may inadvertently find their way into the product.

## Bearded Employees

Male employees wearing beards shall wear headgear that completely covers the beard.

### **Explanation**

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The reason for this requirement is the same as that for headgear, i.e. product contamination.

## Outer Garments

1. Employees wearing smocks and aprons shall ensure that these garments are clean before reporting to their work stations.
2. These garments shall not be worn off the establishment or inside toilet areas.
3. These garments shall not be placed on processing tables or equipment during breaks.
4. Employees must keep their shirt, blouse, and sweater sleeves rolled up past the elbow.

### *Explanation*

- a. Unless the clothing of employees handling the product is clean, there is danger of contamination of the product.
- b. It is undesirable to allow workers to travel to work in uniform since the garments may become quite unsanitary enroute. The risk in allowing these garments to be taken into toilet areas is even greater and, therefore, must not be tolerated.
- c. If employees' outer garments are placed on processing tables or equipment during breaks, there is a chance of these garments contaminating processing surfaces and ultimately contaminating the product.
- d. If employees' inner garment sleeves are not rolled up, the rubbing of the sleeves against the product may contaminate the product.

## Protective Hand Coverings


Protective hand coverings (i.e. gloves) shall be washed and sanitized before work and after each absence from the work area, at each break and at the end of each shift. Disposable gloves will be replaced at least daily or when gloves are damaged.

### *Explanation*

Large numbers of bacteria accumulate on protective hand coverings; particularly those made of cloth. After such coverings have been in use for some time, the accumulation becomes so great that they contaminate everything with which they came in contact. Unless they are frequently cleaned and disinfected, they become a serious source of contamination. The large surface area and the dampness of fabric gloves provide an excellent environment for the rapid growth of bacteria.

## Toilet Areas

Employees shall not loiter in toilet areas.

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**Explanation**

If loitering in toilet areas is permitted, these areas tend to become meeting places wherein employees lean against walls or sit on the floor. It has been well documented that the walls, doors, and floors of toilet facilities are subject to contamination with micro-organisms associated with sewage. Therefore, if employees are permitted to loiter, the risk in the transfer of contamination from the toilet areas to the processing area increases drastically.

**Personnel Permitted in Processing Area**

Only authorized personnel are permitted in the food processing areas.

**Explanation**


Friends, relatives, and delivery people may not feel obliged to comply with the sanitary rules and, therefore, should not be permitted within the processing area. No one, under any circumstances, should enter the processing area unless wearing a suitable head covering.

**Foot Dips**

Employees shall make use of foot dips where these structures are provided.

**Explanation**

Foot dips can be a very valuable asset to a sanitation program. These structures are generally provided in heavy traffic areas in order to guard against the introduction of contamination to processing areas by way of footwear. Foot dips can only be of value if all employees make use of them. Therefore, supervisory personnel should ensure that employees do not avoid foot dips when entering processing areas.

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## Personal Hygienic Checklist

- ✓ No person who is suffering from a communicable disease, is a known carrier of any disease, or has an infected wound shall work in the processing area of the plant.
- ✓ Employees shall present themselves for work exhibiting a clean and tidy appearance.
- ✓ Employees engaged in the handling of the product shall not wear fingernail polish unless wearing gloves
- ✓ Employees shall NOT wear exposed rings, hair clips, earrings, or other jewelry in the processing area.
- ✓ No personnel shall smoke, eat, spit or chew gum or tobacco in the processing area of the plant.
- ✓ Employees shall thoroughly wash, using warm water and soap, and sanitize their hands following each absence from duty.
- ✓ Employees shall wear hairnets that completely cover the hair.
- ✓ Male employees with beards shall wear headgear that completely covers the beard.
- ✓ Employees shall wear supplied overcoats over their own clothes. These clothes must be brought to work in a bag (including shoes). When dirty, they are brought home and washed.
- ✓ Overcoats are changed:
  - ✓ When taking out the garbage
  - ✓ Between work areas
- ✓ Employees' gloves shall be washed and sanitized after each absence from the register area (breaks, etc.) and at the end of each shift.
- ✓ There is to be NO loitering in the toilet areas.
- ✓ Only authorized personnel are permitted in the registered areas of the plant.
- ✓ Employees shall make use of foot dips where these structures are provided
- ✓ No glass shall be brought into the processing area.



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