

 West Lothian Council	Environmental Health		SUBJECT: HAND CONTACT POINTS
	✓	Food Safety/Food Hygiene	NUMBER: FH17
Reviewed: 29/06/15		Health & Safety	
		Public Health	
STATUS: TRADE ADVICE		Pollution Control	
Data label: Public		Pest Control/Dog Warden	

Information Sheet FH17

Hand Contact Points

Introduction

Anything that your hands touch can pick up and pass on bacteria. These are called hand contact points. We regularly check hand contact points in food rooms during our inspections, and often find that they are carrying large numbers of bacteria because they have not been cleaned thoroughly or often enough.

Dirty hand contact points can cause serious contamination of food, leading to food poisoning.

What are the hand contact points in my business?

We often find that hand contact points are not cleaned because they have not been identified as a particular problem, and therefore get missed during regular cleaning. So first we have to know where they are.

Typical hand contact points in a food business include:-

- Refrigerator & freezer handles or door grips
- Taps at the wash hand basins and sinks
- Cupboard and drawer handles or grips
- Control knobs on cookers, machinery, slicers etc.
- Weighing machine controls
- Room doors handles and door edges – not forgetting the outside door, and doors to separate stores etc.
- Probe thermometer casing and probe
- Telephone receivers in food rooms
- Cash till controls
- Anything which you need to touch to open a window, and replace the insect proof screen
- Rubbish bins and lids
- Light switches or pulls
- Electrical plugs where equipment is connected/disconnected to the mains during the shift

This is not an exhaustive list – just think of the number of things you touch regularly when working with food – those are your hand contact points.

Controlling hand contact points

Proper control depends on thorough cleaning, at the right time, using the right method.

All food rooms and equipment need to be cleaned thoroughly after use of course, but hand contact points are a special case and therefore need extra attention.

So, as well as the normal clean after use, it is good practice to clean hand contact points again, just **before** food production begins. This will greatly reduce the number of bacteria which could contaminate food. At the start of every shift someone should go round each food room with a bactericidal cleaner to wipe all these surfaces. This should not take more than a few minutes even in a large kitchen, since all they need is a wipe over. Extra care is needed when wiping over any electrical equipment or switches so that no liquid drips onto electrical connections.

It is important to use the correct cleaning chemical for this. The label should say that the cleaner is “Bactericidal” meeting BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697. This means that it is strong enough to kill bacteria quickly. Antibacterial chemicals are not normally strong enough for commercial use, and ordinary detergents do not kill bacteria at all. We recommend that you use commercial standard chemicals in your food business. **See information sheet FH06** Further information can be found on

<http://www.disinfectant-info.co.uk/>

Food handlers should, of course, be washing their hands frequently whenever they might have become contaminated. This is one of the main ways to stop bacteria spreading in food handling areas. **See information sheet FH30**

Further help

Remember it is your responsibility to ensure that the food served to your customers is safe. If you would like help, or need any further advice, then please contact us on 01506 280000 or environmentalhealth@westlothian.gov.uk