

Facilities Management from A to Z



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Food Safety

Many facility managers have responsibility for overseeing catering services which may be provided by contract or in-house staff. It is therefore important that FMs are aware of the need for food safety and hygiene and for compliance with the various regulations relating to the safe handling of food.

Food safety is an important defence against food poisoning. According to the Food Standards Agency, about one in 60 people suffer from food poisoning in England and Wales every year. In 2007, there were just over 92,000 reported cases of food poisoning in England and Wales

The Food Safety Act 1990 sets out the standards for the preparation and sale of food for human consumption. It requires food to be fit for consumption when sold, properly labelled and described, free from foreign objects, free from adulteration and generally non-injurious to health.

The Food Safety Act 1990 applies to 'food business proprietors' so it is important that contractual agreements clearly state who is running the food business and on behalf of whom. In addition to the food business proprietor, 'any person' can be prosecuted for an offence involving the selling or rendering of food unfit for consumption.

There are a number of other regulations covering food safety and hygiene notably the the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2005 and its Welsh and Irish equivalents which unified food safety standards across Europe and revoked 19 sets of existing regulations.

Facilities managers must ensure that their catering operations fully comply with all relevant food safety regulations and should implement audit controls to monitor compliance.

Key areas of particular concern for FMs include the condition of the premises within which food is stored prepared and consumed; The provision of easily cleanable surfaces for food preparation; The pest proofing of food rooms; The maintenance of building services like hot and cold water, drainage and temperature control; Systems for the safe management and disposal of waste including that from kitchen grease traps; Inspections and maintenance of pressure vessels and kitchen equipment.

A food business proprietor must put in place a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point process (HACCP) to identify and control hazards and the facilities manager should be satisfied that the caterer has addressed these issues.

Full information on all matters relating to food safety is available at www.food.gov.uk