



THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD GALLEY HYGIENE STANDARDS



MAINTAINING HYGIENE STANDARDS DURING FOOD PREPARATION AND STORAGE IS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT ILLNESS ON BOARD SHIPS AND TO ENSURE THAT THE CREW HAS CONFIDENCE IN THE FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS.

ANTHONY GARDNER, LOSS PREVENTION MANAGER, BRITANNIA P&I

There are several elements that contribute towards healthy and hygienic food practices.

CATERING CREW

Those who handle and prepare food play a crucial role and must be adequately trained, equipped, and supported.

All catering crew must be trained in food safety and hygiene requirements and untrained personnel must not handle or prepare food. Hygiene training records should be maintained to ensure compliance.

Catering staff must wash their hands and fingernails before entering the galley and before handling any foods or liquids. Handwashing should be frequent, especially after handling raw food, cooked food, visiting the toilet, touching the nose or mouth, or smoking. For this reason, catering staff should be provided with a dedicated hand basin with antibacterial soap. Disposable paper hand towels or hand driers should be available for use.

Catering staff should be issued with enough protective clothing to allow clean attire for each shift. Any cuts, spots, or sores should be covered by coloured waterproof dressings.

If galley staff are experiencing vomiting or diarrhoea (or have been in close contact with someone with these symptoms), they should not handle food for at least 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped. Illness reporting should be encouraged and monitored.

CLEANING

Bacteria thrive in warm, humid environments like the galley. Methodical and regular cleaning is the most effective way to keep bacteria at a safe level. Frequent cleaning also prevents tripping hazards and ensures sharp objects and crockery are safely stored.

The galley and all equipment, cutlery, and crockery should be cleaned by the end of each working day. Work surfaces should be made of non-absorbent, easy to clean material with sufficient space to allow cleaning underneath and around equipment, work surfaces, cabinets, etc. Drains within the galley must be kept clear for efficient washing down.

Daily cleaning should be supplemented by a regular deep clean of all cupboards, stores, deck, bulkheads and extractor fans, especially the galley extractor, to prevent fatty deposit build-up. It is recommended that deep cleaning is incorporated in the ship's planned maintenance system.

Any materials or equipment that may trap germs and

bacteria, such as cloths, towels, mops, and garbage receptacles should be regularly washed or disposed of.

Broken floor tiles, splash backs, damaged crockery should be replaced, repaired, or disposed of as appropriate.

STORAGE & HANDLING

To prevent contamination, food storage locations must be hygienic. This is achieved by ensuring cleanliness, separation of foodstuffs, and temperature management.

Ships typically keep food in one or more of the following locations: dry store, cold room/refrigerator, and freezer compartment.

The dry store should be well ventilated, adequately lit, and kept below +10°C. There should be sufficient shelving to prevent storage of goods directly on the deck.

Refrigerators and freezers must be maintained in a clean state and should be capable of maintaining their contents at certain temperatures. Refrigerators should maintain temperatures at +5°C or below and freezers at -18°C or below.

Maintaining food at safe temperatures is essential to reduce or prevent the growth of bacteria. The temperature ranges from +5°C to +63°C is where food is most likely to experience rapid bacteria growth. Time spent in this zone should be minimised. Food intended for chilling or freezing must be cooled rapidly. Defrosting should be done in a controlled manner, preferably in a refrigerator, to avoid bacterial risk. Raw and cooked foods should be stored separately. If using the same refrigerator, raw food must be placed below cooked food in covered containers.

Different coloured chopping boards should be used for different food types to prevent cross-contamination. The FIFO (First In, First Out) method should be implemented and expiry dates checked regularly. Pest control measures must be in place to protect food stores.

REGULAR CHECKS

The master's weekly inspection is an important check for maintaining hygiene standards and should not be missed. This role should be delegated if the master is not available.

Shipboard Safety Officers should include the galley and provision stores in their regular health and safety inspections, with hygiene audits conducted regularly.

For more information, please contact
lossprevention@tindallriley.com