

23 FOOD PREPARATION AND HANDLING IN THE CATERING DEPARTMENT

23.1 Health and hygiene

23.1.1 Catering staff should be properly trained in food safety and personal hygiene, as they are responsible for ensuring that high standards of personal hygiene and cleanliness are maintained at all times throughout the galley, pantry and mess rooms. Further guidance for

food preparation is contained in merchant shipping notice MSN 1845(M). Where food is prepared outside the confines of the galley (e.g. food that is provided ready prepared by an outside caterer), equivalent precautions will have been applied at the premises where the food is cooked.

MSN 1845(M)

23.1.2 There should be no smoking in galleys, pantries, store rooms or other places where food is prepared or stored.

23.1.3 Hands and fingernails should be washed before handling food using a dedicated hand basin, a bacterial liquid soap from a dispenser and disposable towels. It is important to thoroughly wash and dry hands after using the toilet, blowing your nose or handling refuse or contaminated food. An alcohol gel may be used to supplement the use of soap and water.

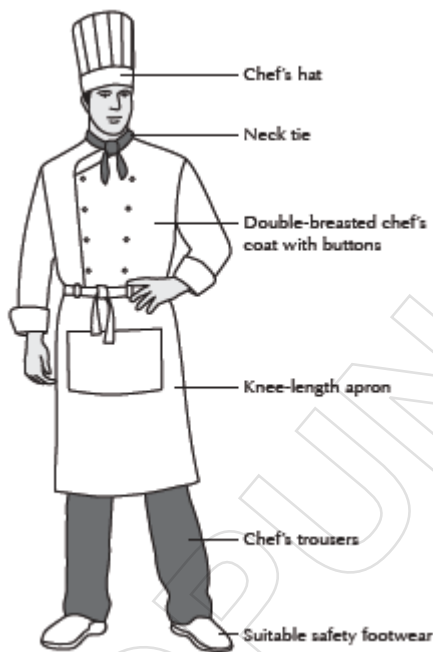
23.1.4 All cuts, however small, should be reported immediately and first-aid attention provided to prevent infection.

23.1.5 An open cut, burn or abrasion should be covered with a blue waterproof dressing which must be changed regularly. Anyone with a septic cut or a boil, sty, etc. should stop working with food until it is completely healed.

23.1.6 Illness, coughs and colds, rashes or spots, however mild, should be reported immediately when the symptoms appear.

23.1.7 A person suffering from diarrhoea and/or vomiting, which may be signs of food poisoning or a sickness bug, should not work in food-handling areas until medical clearance has been given.

23.1.8 Catering staff should wear clean protective clothing, including appropriate protective gloves if necessary, when handling food and preparing meals.



23.1.9 Catering staff should not wear jewellery, apart from a plain wedding band.

23.1.10 The cleanliness of all food, crockery, cutlery, linen, utensils, equipment and storage is vital. Cracked or chipped crockery and glassware should not be used. Foodstuffs that may have come into contact with broken glass or broken crockery should be thrown away.

23.1.11 Fresh fruit and salad should be thoroughly washed in fresh water before being eaten.

23.1.12 Foodstuffs and drinking water should not be stored where germs can thrive. Frozen food must be defrosted in controlled conditions, i.e. an area entirely separate from other foods in cool conditions. Food should be prevented from sitting in the thaw liquid by placing it on grids in a container or on a shelf. Frozen food that has been defrosted is not to be refrozen.

23.1.13 The risks of cross contamination should be eliminated by thoroughly stripping and cleaning the relevant parts of equipment when successive different foods are to be used (especially raw and cooked foods). It is important to wash hands after handling raw meat, fish, poultry or vegetables.

23.1.14 Raw food should be kept apart from cooked food or food that requires no further treatment before consumption (e.g. milk). Separate refrigerators are preferred although, if stored in the same unit, the raw food must always be placed at the bottom to avoid drips contaminating ready prepared food. Food should also be covered to prevent drying out, cross contamination and absorption of odour.

23.1.15 Separate work surfaces, chopping boards and utensils should be set aside for the preparation of raw meat and must not be used for the preparation of foods that will be eaten without further cooking. Colour coding is an established way of ensuring separation between the two activities.

23.1.16 Ensure all food is kept at the correct temperature to prevent the multiplication of bacteria.

23.1.17 Crockery and glassware should not be left submerged in washing up water where it may easily be broken and cause injury. Such items should be washed individually as should knives and any utensils or implements with sharp edges. Crockery, glassware and utensils should preferably be washed in a dishwasher, where much higher temperatures can be achieved compared with hand washing.

23.1.18 Some domestic cleaning substances contain bleach (sodium hypochlorite) or caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) whilst some disinfectants contain carbolic acid (phenol). These substances can burn the skin and they are poisonous if swallowed. They should be treated with caution and should not be mixed together or used at more than the recommended strength. Inadvertent contact with toxic chemicals or other harmful substances should be reported immediately and the appropriate remedial action taken. Cleaning substances and materials should be stored in a suitable locker/cupboard separate from food-handling areas. Wherever possible, cleaning products that are not injurious to individuals or the environment should be used.

23.1.19 Food waste, empty food containers and other garbage are major sources of pollution and disease and should be placed in proper covered storage facilities safely away from foodstuffs. Their discharge into the sea is prohibited except in circumstances specified in MSN 1807(M+F).

23.2 Slips, falls and tripping hazards

23.2.1 Suitable footwear, with slip-resistant soles, should be worn at all times. A large proportion of injuries to catering staff arise because they wear unsuitable footwear such as sandals, plimsolls or flip-flops, which do not grip greasy decks or protect the feet from injury, burns or scalds if hot or boiling liquids are spilt.

23.2.2 Decks and gratings should be kept clear from grease, rubbish, ice, etc. to avoid slipping. Any spillage should be cleared up immediately.

23.2.3 Broken glass or crockery should be cleared away with a brush and pan and never with bare hands.

23.2.4 The area of deck immediately outside the entrance to refrigerated rooms should have an anti-slip surface.

23.2.5 Care should always be taken when using stairs and companionways; one hand should always be kept free to grasp the handrail.

23.2.6 Trays, crates, cartons, etc. should not be carried in such a fashion that sills, storm steps or other obstructions in the path are obscured from view.

23.2.7 Lifts that involve reaching up too high or too low should be avoided. Personnel should not stand on unsecured objects to reach articles which are out of reach.

23.3 Galley stoves, steamboilers and deep fat fryers

23.3.1 Ships using oil-fired stoves should operate safety procedures according to the manufacturer's instructions, particularly when lighting the stove. Instructions should be clearly displayed in the galley.

23.3.2 Catering staff should not attempt to repair electric or oil-fired ranges or electric microwave ovens. Defects should always be reported so that proper repairs may be made. The equipment should be kept out of use and a warning notice displayed until it has been repaired.

23.3.3 The indiscriminate use of water in hosing down and washing equipment in the galley can be very dangerous, particularly when there are electrical installations. Whenever the galley deck is washed down, power to an electric range and all electric equipment should

be switched off and isolated from the supply, and water kept from contact with the electric equipment.

23.3.4 Range guardrails should always be used in rough weather. Pots and pans should never be filled to the extent that the contents spill over when the ship rolls.

23.3.5 All catering staff should be fully instructed in avoiding burns from hot surfaces on hot serving tables, bains-marie, steamers and tilting pans.

23.3.6 Dry cloths or pot holders and heatproof oven gloves that are long enough to cover the arms should always be used to handle hot pans and dishes. Wet cloths conduct heat quickly and may scald the hands.

23.3.7 No one should be directly in front of an oven when the door is opened – the initial heat blast can cause burns.

23.3.8 The steam supply to pressure cookers, steamers and boilers should be turned off and pressure released before their lids are opened.

23.4 Liquid petroleum gas appliances

23.4.1 Suitable means for detecting the leakage of gas should be provided and securely fixed in the lower part of the galley as gas is heavier than air. A gas detector should incorporate an audible and a visible alarm, and should be tested frequently. A suitable notice, detailing the action to be taken when an alarm is given by the gas detection system should be prominently displayed.

23.4.2 Equipment should be fitted, where practicable, with an automatic gas shut-off device which operates in the event of flame failure.

23.4.3 When gas burning appliances are not in use, the controls should be turned off. If they are not going to be used again for some length of time, the main regulators close to the storage bottles should be shut. Marine guidance note MGN 312(F) gives further guidance on the safe operation of liquid petroleum gas appliances.

MGN 312(F)

23.4.4 A safe system of working, training and supervision over lighting and operating procedures should be established.

23.4.5 Defects in joints, valves and connections can be detected by smell. Catering staff should not attempt to repair electric, oil or gas appliances.

23.5 Deep fat frying

23.5.1 Water should never be poured into hot oil; the water turns to steam, throwing the oil considerable distances. This may cause severe burns to personnel, and possibly start a fire.

23.5.2 If fat catches fire in a container, the flames should be smothered using a fire blanket if practicable and the container removed from the source of heat. Otherwise a suitable fire extinguisher should be used. In no circumstances should water be used.

23.5.3 Reference should be made to the manufacturer's safety data sheet (SDS) to establish the flash point of the cooking medium and then the thermostat(s) used to monitor temperature to ensure this is not reached.

23.5.4 Deep fat fryers should be provided with suitable safety lids, which should be kept in position when the fryers are not in use.

23.5.5 To minimise the risk of fire from failure of the control thermostat, all deep fat fryers should be fitted with both a primary and a backup thermostat, with an alarm to alert the operator in the event of failure of either thermostat. The thermostats should be maintained and checked in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

23.5.6 Electrically operated deep fat fryers should be switched off immediately after use. Arrangements should be in place for automatically shutting off the electrical power upon activation of the fire extinguishing system.

23.5.7 A safe system of work for cleaning and draining fat fryers should be established.

23.5.8 A strict schedule of cleaning for galley uptakes/grills should be established so that fat deposits are not allowed to accumulate.

23.5.9 A notice should be displayed prominently, detailing the action to be taken in the event of a deep fat fryer fire.

23.6 Microwave ovens

23.6.1 When microwave ovens are used, it is important to ensure that the food is cooked thoroughly and evenly. This is particularly important with deep frozen foods, which should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking. The instructions issued by the oven manufacturers should be followed carefully, in conjunction with the information on the packaging of the foodstuff.

23.6.2 No microwave oven should be operated if the oven door or its interlock is out of use, the door broken or ill-fitting or the door seals damaged. Each microwave oven should carry a permanent notice to this effect. Microwave radiation checks should be carried out at regular intervals.

23.7 Catering equipment

23.7.1 Except under the supervision of a competent person, no one should use catering equipment unless trained in its use and fully instructed in the precautions to be observed.

23.7.2 Dangerous parts of catering machines should be properly guarded and the guards kept in position whenever the machine is used.

23.7.3 Any machine or piece of equipment should be inspected routinely for faults, wear and tear, damage or defective parts. Any machine or piece of equipment that is found to be damaged, faulty or defective in its parts, guards or safety devices should be reported and taken out of service, with power disconnected, until repaired.

23.7.4 When a power-operated machine has to be cleaned or a blockage in it removed, it should be switched off and isolated from the power supply. Some machines will continue to run down for a while thereafter, and care should be taken to see that dangerous parts have come to rest before cleaning is begun.

23.7.5 A safe procedure for cleaning all machines should be established and carefully followed. Every precaution should be taken where cutting edges (e.g. on slicing machines) are exposed by the necessary removal of guards to allow thorough cleaning. Guards should be properly and securely replaced immediately the job is done.

23.7.6 Unless properly supervised, a seafarer under 18 years of age should not clean any power-operated or manually driven machine with dangerous parts that may move during the cleaning operation.

23.7.7 Appropriate kitchen tools, not fingers, should be used to feed materials into processing machines.

23.7.8 Electrical equipment should not be used with wet hands.

23.7.9 All electrical equipment should be regularly inspected by a competent person.

23.8 Knives, meat saws, choppers, etc.

23.8.1 Sharp implements should be treated with respect and handled with care at all times. They should not be left lying around working areas where someone may accidentally cut themselves. They should not be mixed in with other items for washing up but cleaned individually and stored in a safe place.

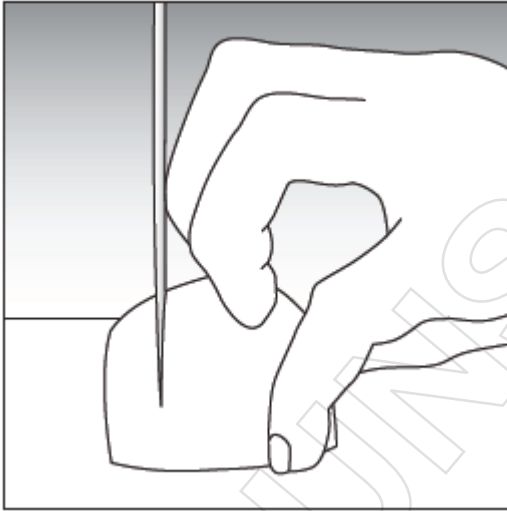
23.8.2 Knives should be kept tidily in secure racks or sheaths when not in use.

23.8.3 The handles of knives, meat saws, choppers, etc. should be securely fixed and kept clean and free from grease. The cutting edges should be kept clean and sharp.

23.8.4 Proper can openers in clean condition should be used to open cans; improvisations are dangerous and may leave jagged edges on the can.

23.8.5 Chopping meat requires undivided attention. The chopping block must be firm, the cutting area of the meat well on the block and hands and body clear of the line of strike. There must be adequate room for movement and no obstructions in the way of the cutting stroke. Particular care is required when the vessel is moving in a seaway. Appropriate gloves for use when cutting meat should also be supplied.

23.8.6 Foodstuffs being chopped with a knife should not be fed towards the blade with outstretched fingers. Fingertips on the free hand should be tucked in towards the palm of the hand with the thumb overlapped by the forefinger. The knife blade should be angled away from the work, with the knuckles as a guide so away from the fingers.



23.8.7 A falling knife should be left to fall, not grabbed.

23.8.8 A meat saw should be guided by the forefinger of the free hand over the top of the blade. The use of firm even strokes will allow the blade to feel its way; if forced, the saw may jump, possibly causing injury.

23.9 Refrigerated rooms and store rooms

23.9.1 All refrigerated room doors should be fitted with a means of opening the door from both sides. It should be possible to sound an alarm from inside the room.

23.9.2 A routine testing of the alarm bell and checking of the door clasps and inside release should be carried out regularly, at least at weekly intervals.

23.9.3 Those using the refrigerated room should make themselves familiar with the operation, in darkness, of the inside release for the door and the location of the alarm button.

23.9.4 All refrigerated room doors should be fitted with an arrangement of adequate strength to hold the door open in a seaway and should be secured open while stores are being handled. These doors are extremely heavy and can cause serious injury to a person caught between the door and the jamb.

23.9.5 Anyone going into a refrigerated room should take the padlock, if any, inside with them. Another person should be informed.

23.9.6 Cold stores or refrigerated rooms should not be entered if it is suspected that there has been a leakage of refrigerant. A warning notice to this effect should be posted outside the doors.

23.9.7 All stores and crates should be stowed securely so that they do not shift or move in a seaway.

23.9.8 When wooden boxes or crates are opened, protruding fastenings should be removed or made safe.

23.9.9 Metal meat hooks not in use should be stowed in a special container provided for the purpose. Where hooks cannot be removed easily, they should be kept away from passageways or areas where people are working.

23.9.10 For entry into meat and fish storage rooms, appropriate thermal personal protective equipment should be readily available.