

## **Targeted Sanitation Procedures**

Listeria monocytogenes (Lm) is found almost everywhere and can be present in most environments, including the soil, plants, humans, equipment, animals, foods, drains and supplies. The two categories listed below identify areas that could likely harbor Lm within a retail food establishment. The items listed in the areas of concern category would generally have a higher probability of Lm contamination than the items listed in the areas that might need special attention category. All items listed below are not exclusive and each operator should do a risk analysis to identify specific areas and priorities within their own operation.

### **“Areas of Concern”**

#### Food Contact Areas:

Meat slicers

Cutting boards, knives, knife racks, tubs, bowls, platters and utensils

Food containers and trays in display cases and refrigerators

The interior of display cases, and walk in coolers especially condensate, drip pans, drains and door tracks

Cleaning tools for food contact surfaces such as brushes and cleaning cloths

#### Non- Food Contact Surfaces:

Floors, drains, in preparation areas

Drains inside walk in coolers and equipment

Cleaning tools such as mops and buckets

Wet floors, standing water

### **“Additional Areas That Could Require Special Attention”**

Door handles and handles of equipment

Pallets, pallet jacks

Push carts, especially the wheels

Exterior of equipment or unused equipment

Maintenance tools

Non- disposable gloves, such as cleaning or safety gloves

Walls and ceiling

Hollow table and/or equipment legs/supports

Seams and seals around cooler, freezer and refrigerated doors

Trash containers

Air filters, blowers, vents and fans

Motor housings on food processing equipment

Unsealed joints in food preparation areas, such as riveted information tags or plates on equipment

Scales

Food wrapping machines

Hand contact surfaces, such as on-off switches, knobs, handles, phones and intercoms.

Hoses and nozzles

Ice machines and the drain areas under and behind ice machines

### **Maintenance Concerns**

Defective walls & ceiling, overhead pipes

Worn or cracked rubber seals around doors

Cracked hoses

Defective and unused equipment

Bringing in used equipment from another location to replace broken equipment

### **Cleaning and Sanitizing Practices**

The primary focus should be on sources most likely to cause contamination in high-risk food preparation areas. Refer to the list above identified in the food contact and non-food contact sections.

All equipment should be easily cleanable and free of defects. Equipment should comply with the specifications listed in the FDA Plan Review Guidance Document. Remove any defective or unused equipment from food preparation areas.

LM intervention as related to a sanitation program consists of three areas: effective removal of soil, an effective rinse step, and then proper application of a sanitizing agent, which includes contact time, concentration and temperature. Cleaning effectiveness depends upon the formulation and how the product is used and various other issues specific to the cleaning being attempted, such as type of soil, water hardness, tools used, and even the training on the proper procedure and the execution of the procedure by the person doing the cleaning.

A food establishment should implement written procedures for proper cleaning and sanitizing food contact and non- food contact surfaces. These procedures should include frequency of cleaning, chemicals to use, instruction on how to perform the task and the monitoring to verify it is being done correctly. A visual examination should be done of all food contact surfaces before the start of operations to ensure appropriate compliance with cleaning procedures and to take corrective action if necessary.

Food establishments' written procedures should include cleaning and sanitizing maintenance tools. Maintenance tools and ladders can easily get contaminated and can transfer Lm from one area to another if not cleaned and sanitized appropriately. Store maintenance tools and ladders away from food, food contact equipment, utensils and food packaging material.

The cleaning and sanitizing procedures should also include floor drains in food preparation areas. Remove drain cover and basket, remove all organic debris and discard into the trash container. Use a drain brush to scrub and remove organic material from the drain hole. Use quaternary ammonium compounds to sanitize floor and drain area. Consider using bactericidal drain rings where RTE food is prepared and stored. Enzymatic cleaners can also be effective in removing organic material.

Only a dry cleanup should be done during food production. Avoid mid shift wet cleaning and use only low pressure or foaming hoses. Splash from a wet cleanup can easily contaminate a cleaned surface. Low-pressure foaming guns and sanitizer rinse guns may be used only after removal or protection of all foods, previously cleaned equipment, and single service articles. Remove or protect all food from contamination before cleaning display cases or coolers. Keep the area where food- packaging and wrapping material is stored clean.

Clean as you go, remove food spills quickly. Bacteria like cool damp areas so limiting standing water helps control Lm and most other bacteria. Bacteria from wet areas can easily be transferred to employee shoes, carts or other equipment if not wiped up quickly.

### **Sanitizers**

All cleaners and sanitizers used in a food establishment must have at least the following information: product description, instructions on how to use the product, properties, yield or effective concentration, and safety information.

Sanitizing agents shall be used in accordance with EPA-approved manufacturer's label use instructions. Effective sanitization could be achieved only when preceded by thorough cleaning and rinsing steps.

### **Cleaning Frequencies**

A master-cleaning schedule should be developed for each facility to include all food and non-food contact surfaces. Follow equipment manufacturer's instructions to assure complete disassembly and thorough cleaning of all equipment parts. Cleaning and sanitizing frequencies are listed in the FDA Food Code.

### **Additional Important Information**

Try to avoid using high- pressure sprays. Splash can aerosolize and spread contamination throughout the entire area. Do not use low- pressure hoses for cleaning when there is any food preparation or exposed food, equipment, utensils or food packaging.

Avoid mid shift wet cleanup because it can produce aerosols and add water contamination into the food preparation area.

Minimize splash from hoses into floor drains. Plugged drains must be repaired immediately. Do not place equipment over floor drains. This practice would make it difficult to clean the floor drain.

Avoid pooling of water on low spots of floor in food prep areas and walk-in coolers. Also avoid collection of water beneath service and display cases from condensate or water trapped under cases following case or floor cleaning.

Avoid water accumulation in condensate pans in service cases or coolers, which may potentially fall on open product.

Never clean display cases or coolers until all food is removed or protected from contamination.

Damaged, pitted, corroded or cracked equipment cannot be used and must be repaired or replaced. Do not repair equipment on site without protecting food and food contact surfaces. Avoid keeping unused equipment in food preparation areas.

Avoid floor cracks and other floor surfaces in disrepair that can harbor bacteria.

Never use cleaning tools used in raw food production for cleaning in ready to eat food preparation areas. Consider color- coding these items.

Direct hand contact with previously cleaned surfaces and food products after touching unclean surfaces is prohibited.

Avert poor employee practices and inadequate cleaning by providing appropriate employee training.