



Planning for health and safety when selecting and using catering equipment and workplaces

Catering Information Sheet No 9

Introduction

This guidance has been produced by the Health and Safety in Catering Industry Liaison Committee.

Catering Sheet No 8 *Managing the health and safety of catering equipment and workplaces* (CAIS8 1997 HSE Books) emphasised how important it is to plan carefully when you buy and use equipment. **This guidance follows on from that and gives you the important health and safety points you need to plan at each stage of selecting, modifying and using equipment and workplaces.**

Planning the tasks

Each catering task must be suitable for the equipment used to carry it out and must be suitable for your premises too. Safety will depend on the relationship between the building, the equipment, the type and extent of catering activities and the competence of your staff. Any one of these items may impose limitations on the way you carry out your catering - for example lack of space or ventilation may mean a new fryer you are thinking of buying may not be safe.

Planning the layout

The key to good health and safety in your premises is a good layout. When you plan a new layout or review an existing one, you must take into account the importance of eliminating risks altogether, or reducing them as far as possible. You need to consider the building, the equipment, processes, work flow, staff and hygiene.

Any arrangements you make should meet hygiene, as well as health and safety, requirements (for example equipment design, floor surfaces and workroom temperature).

Make sure the workplace is suitable

The walls, floors, lighting, ventilation and other environmental aspects of your workplace must meet legal requirements. Safe floor surfaces, ventilation and lighting are of particular importance. These are often ignored in catering premises.

Floors

Information about floors is given in Catering Information Sheet No 6 *Slips and trips: summary guidance for the catering industry* (CAIS6 1996 HSE Books).

Ventilation

- Steam and combustion fumes must be extracted close to their source.
- The workroom should be cooled and smells should be removed by circulating fresh air.
- Make up air should be introduced to replace air that is extracted or consumed by combustion.
- Routine testing of general air quality is not normally required. If you are in doubt about a particular situation, then ask your trade association for help.

Lighting

- Adequate levels should be provided so employees can see hazards.
- Adequate levels should be provided in corridors and work areas so employees can carry out tasks correctly and safely.

Selecting suitable equipment

Only take into use equipment which is 'suitable' with respect to health and safety. Identify all the possible risks involved with a new piece of equipment, before buying it. You must also identify all the possible risks involved with existing equipment. Equipment must only be used in operations for which it is suitable. Equipment must only be used in suitable work locations, and by staff who are competent to use it safely. Consider the following when choosing equipment.

Is it suitable for the operator?

Is the equipment ergonomically suitable for the people who are using it? It is important to make sure that the equipment is neither too awkward nor too heavy for staff who may be short or who lack strength.

Size and robustness

- Equipment which is too large may make work areas cramped and dangerous.
- Equipment which has been designed for use in the home is usually unsuitable for catering use and may not be robust enough.

Working life

Don't use equipment beyond its working life. The safe life of a piece of equipment will depend on its size, how much it has been used, how suitable it is and how well it has been maintained. Additionally, newer equipment may now incorporate better safeguards.

Safety standards - equipment in use before 1 January 1993

If work equipment was in use before 1 January 1993, then safeguards must meet the health and safety requirements in force at the time of its purchase. Information on this is given in HSE publications^{1,2,3,4}.

Equipment in use before 1 January 1993 will also now have to meet certain new specific requirements on guarding, risks from catching fire or discharging gas (for example refrigerants), or dust, substances which might cause people to slip, protection against burns and scalds, safe controls, lighting, marking, warnings and safe methods of maintenance. Existing equipment had up until 31 December 1996 to comply.

However, it has been agreed that no catering equipment other than ovens needs to be upgraded retrospectively, providing it meets the requirements in force before 1 January 1993. In particular, it is not thought appropriate to modify existing machines to provide emergency stop controls, machine braking or 'no-volt' release where this had not been required originally.

However, advice on a replacement or modification programme for gas-fired, manually ignited ovens, now pilot flame or flame failure protection is reasonably practicable, are given in Catering Information Sheet No 3 *Precautions at manually ignited gas-fired catering equipment* (CAIS3 1995 HSE Books).

Safety standards - equipment taken into use after 1 January 1993

You must take reasonable steps to ensure that all new equipment brought into use after 1 January 1993 meets the requirements in European Product Safety Directives. Suppliers must comply with national legislation to implement these.

Harmonised European Standards are being prepared for most items of catering equipment. These Standards will be adopted in all EU Member States. They will become British Standards in the UK, and will guide manufacturers on how to meet the Directives' requirements.

The CE mark on new equipment will tell you that the supplier declares they have conformed to the relevant Directives.

The CE mark had to be on new machines supplied after 1 January 1995. It had to be on new equipment subject to the Low Voltage Directive by 1 January 1997, and on new equipment subject to the Gas Appliances Directive by 1 January 1996.

Safety standards - second hand, hired and leased equipment

If such equipment has been brought into use after 1 January 1996, it will be regarded as new and you will be responsible for seeing that it meets the legal

requirements for new equipment in the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992 (PUWER).

The person who first supplies the equipment into the EU after 1 January 1993 must make sure that it meets the relevant Product Safety Directives or the requirements of current national legislation. Legally, anyone who sells, hires or leases any equipment must make sure it is safe, as far as reasonably practicable. They must also provide information. Exceptionally, suppliers must make sure that equipment meets the requirements of the Low Voltage Directive, if this is relevant.

Installation

Standards of installation

Equipment, services that are installed and the fabric of the building must be safe. When you design the layout of your premises or arrange installations, it will usually be necessary to refer to the technical specifications or installation instructions provided by the manufacturer or supplier.

BS6173: *Installation of gas catering appliances* gives guidance on safe standards for installation of gas appliances.

Electrical installation should meet The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and a guide to good practice is BS 7671: 1992 *Requirements for electrical installation*.

Competent installers

You must take all reasonable steps to choose installation contractors who will work safely and provide safe installations. The installer has the main responsibility for safe installation. Equipment should only be installed by trained and competent people.

Gas work, other than in industrial premises, must only be carried out by registered CORGI installers.

Electrical work must be installed by a person who is competent.

Relevant trade and professional associations maintain lists of contractors who have completed the relevant training.

Health and safety instructions

It is strongly recommended that all operating and maintenance instructions are kept carefully in the kitchens in an easily accessible place for reference.

Maintenance

Standard of maintenance

Where health and safety is concerned, equipment and workplaces must be maintained in efficient working order and in good repair.

Regular inspection is essential to make sure everything is maintained and in good working order. The preventive maintenance recommended by the manufacturer needs to be carried out as well as that shown to be needed by local experience. A full maintenance contract with a reputable company (for example, approved by the manufacturer) may be cheaper and at the same time more thorough.

Deep cleaning may also be necessary from time to time, along with routine cleaning and waste removal. It is advisable to remove redundant equipment.

The person responsible for equipment or buildings should make sure areas where asbestos is present are identified. They should also keep records and make sure warning labels are posted. This will help to make sure that people such as maintenance engineers don't disturb asbestos without wearing adequate protection.

Ventilation systems should be maintained and a record kept of the maintenance. After 1 January 1996 ventilation systems should include an effective device which gives a warning that can be seen and heard if a system breaks down.

It is recommended that maintenance log books be kept. Where they are, they should be kept up to date.

Competence of maintenance staff

Only competent people who have received adequate information, instruction and training should carry out maintenance work.

Inspections and tests

Buildings and equipment need to be inspected to identify hazards and check controls:

- safety related features, such as guard interlocks which may need to be checked on each shift to make sure they remain effective;
- the premises, structures and fittings, to make sure that signs of wear (for example, slippery or holed floor surfaces) and damage have been identified.

Certain equipment has to be inspected and tested by law. Equipment suppliers or engineering inspection companies will carry out these inspections:

- lifting machines (passengers or goods) should be inspected and tested before they come into use. They should also be tested, from time to time, throughout their working life. Records should be kept of the inspections;
- pressure systems, such as steam jacketed pans, require a safe operating limit to be set and that written schemes of inspection are drawn up and carried out by competent persons.

Certain equipment needs regular inspection and testing to check that it meets the 'good working order' requirement:

Portable, hand held electrical equipment, owned or on long-term hire, will require a visual examination for signs of damage. This could take place every 6-12 months, to begin with. It is recommended^{5,6} that this equipment also has a combined inspection and test, initially every 1-2 years. For equipment transported from place to place (for example, for event catering and short-term hire) it is recommended^{5,6} that a visual examination takes place before its issue and after its return.

To ensure safety, non-portable equipment should be inspected and tested as frequently as your experience shows it is necessary^{5,6}.

Gas appliances and installations need to be inspected often enough to make sure they are in a safe condition. If anyone owns a gas appliance in premises let by them (for example to caterers), they have a duty to see that safety checks are carried out at least once a year.

Ventilation systems need to be inspected and maintained to make sure they stay in good working order.

Setting safe procedures

You should assess catering activities and other tasks such as cleaning and maintenance to identify potential risks and hence set up safe working procedures. It is useful to keep a record of these procedures to help staff training and supervision. The setting up of safe working procedures for the use of chemicals in maintenance and cleaning and for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) are particularly important.

Chemicals

You should choose the chemical which has the fewest hazards and which staff can apply without risk of exposure. Always read the manufacturer's instructions and information when choosing chemicals. If exposure is unavoidable, then it must be controlled adequately (for example by using enclosed transfer systems and PPE).

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Even if other safeguards are already in place, staff may still need to wear PPE. You must identify these particular situations. Remember, PPE is the last resort, although sometimes PPE may be required as an interim measure, while other safeguards are being set up. You need to make sure that the type of PPE you select is correct for the type of risk, the member of staff involved and your particular work environment and that it is easy to clean and keep hygienic. You should make sure that PPE is stored properly and that it is maintained in good condition. Your PPE requirements are likely to include:

- non-slip shoes where there is a slipping risk;
- 100% cotton garments (for example, chef's whites) where there is a risk that the material garments are made of will aggravate burns in the event of a fire;

- long sleeve vinyl gloves, goggles or visor, and protective respiratory equipment for staff who handle caustic cleaning substances;
- there will also be other clothing which may be required for food hygiene reasons.

Safe operation

Instruction, information, training and competence

It is important that you set up arrangements which make sure that everyone, who is responsible for installing, maintaining, cleaning or operating any equipment, or any other item in your workplace, and supervisors have the necessary knowledge and skills to protect themselves against risks. They should also know how to protect others.

- Arrange training in general awareness and training in procedures.
- Only give employees tasks for which they have the correct information and training. Also, make sure staff are competent to carry out the tasks.
- Where potentially dangerous machines are involved (for example, mincers, dough brakes, choppers, mixers and attachments, pie and tart machines and slicers), staff operating them should be fully instructed in the dangers. These staff must also have received sufficient training, or work under adequate supervision.
- As soon as you recruit staff, they must be trained. Likewise, when particular risks increase or when new risks are introduced. Training should be repeated from time to time, as and when it is appropriate.
- Give information to staff about risks and the measures set up to safeguard against them. Written instructions should be made available where appropriate. Information and instructions about work equipment should include the correct conditions in which equipment should be used and the correct methods of operation. Information and instructions should also list any unusual situations that might occur and the correct action to take.

These steps will help staff to meet their legal duties to co-operate with you in following your safety systems and in reporting any potential hazards.

Co-ordinating with others

Contractors: Both you and your contractors should organise a system whereby you tell each other of likely risks and co-operate with each other in the co-ordination of safety measures. Your catering activities could cause risks for a catering engineer. Likewise, a catering engineer could cause risks. Consider appointing someone to make sure hygiene, as well as health and safety, risks remain under proper control.

Landlords and owners: A person in charge of premises, or a person who owns equipment used by an event caterer or contract caterer, is legally responsible for the risks associated with the premises and the equipment. The contractor is responsible for any equipment it owns and brings and for the actions of its employees.

Arrangements should cover liaison to make sure that each party is aware of its responsibilities and has acted upon them. Where the contract caterer is working on a long-term basis in another employer's premises, much more detailed arrangements for co-operation, co-ordination and the allocation of respective responsibilities, will be required.

Supervision

Adequate supervision should be organised to make sure that equipment and premises remain safe, and that safe procedures are followed.

References

- 1 *Catering safety: Food preparation machinery* HS(G)35 1987 HSE Books ISBN 0 11 883910 1
 - 2 *Safety in meat preparation: Guidance for butchers* HS(G)45 1995 HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 0781 X
 - 3 Health and safety in kitchens and food preparation areas HS(G)55 1990 HSE Books ISBN 0 11 885427 5
 - 4 *Work equipment. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992* Guidance on the regulations L22 1992 HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 0414 4
 - 5 *Maintaining portable and transportable electrical equipment* HS(G)107 1994 HSE Books ISBN 0 7176 0715 1
 - 6 *Maintaining portable electrical equipment in hotels and tourist accommodation* IND (G)164(L) HSE free leaflet
- HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from: HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 6FS Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995
- HSE priced publications are also available from good booksellers. For other enquiries ring HSE's InfoLine Tel: 0541 545500, or write to HSE's Information Centre, Broad Lane, Sheffield S3 7HQ

British Standards are available from BSI Sales and Customer Services, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL Tel: 0181 996 7000 Fax: 0181 996 7001

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