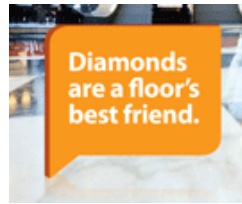




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Correlating Products and Procedures For Food Preparation Areas

Understandable and regular training must take center stage in proper foodservice sanitation and infection control

By Cynthia Kincaid
[Email the SM editors](#)

Products and procedures for sanitizing and disinfecting, especially around food preparation areas, must meet the requirements for the task at hand.

"Disinfectants should be EPA registered and carry the proper kill claims," says Teresa Kincaid, a sustainability consultant for Knoxville, Tenn.-based [Kelsan Inc.](#) "And products used in foodservice should be purchased based on performance, not price. This should not be an area where someone saves money."

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says Rathbun.

While there is myriad disinfecting products on the market, distributors say quaternary-based products are the most widely used.

"They give a full kill range on organisms, and they're economical," says Steve Rathbun, janitorial sales manager for Chicago-based [Martin Brothers Distributing Co., Inc.](#) "While economical, there are certain surfaces, like fabrics, that don't take bleach on. And bleach can be dangerous if you mix it with other chemicals. So the quaternary-based products are so economical."

Most stainless steel cleaners, a staple in the foodservice cleaning arsenal, are petroleum-based and will need to be rinsed thoroughly with potable water.

"There are some soy mineral oil-based products that don't need to be rinsed, and that makes the job easier,"



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Surfaces that hold food, such as preparation boards and tables where people sit to eat, should be cleaned with clean cloths.

“A table shouldn’t be cleaned with a damp rag that is used over and over,” says Farmer. “A sanitizer should be used, along with either a microfiber or disposable cloth. Carrying a dirty rag from one area to another on a dirty rag is a major cause of cross-contamination.”

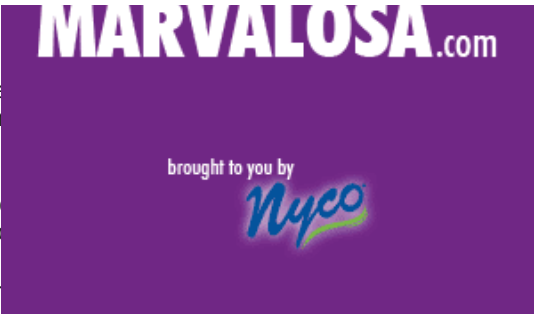
If possible, gloves should be worn by the people preparing food and by the person cleaning the tables. This provides additional protection to foodservice workers and to eating patrons.

Kitchens in most restaurants, hospitals and business cafeterias are sophisticated, high-tech environments. Still, they need to be cleaned with an attention to mopping and scrubbing detail. To get to that level of clean, many companies are turning to the use of specialty machines to clean floors.

“There are more tile floors in kitchens, which are difficult to keep clean,” says Rathbun. “Floors are generally mopped and mopping doesn’t clean the floor very well. So we’re starting to turn towards specialty equipment, which will get grease off the floor better.”

To prevent cross-contamination, and keep things more organized, the jan/san industry has developed a multitude of color-coded products and chemicals. For instance, if the produce section is deemed green, all the cutting boards, brushes, mops and brooms should be color-coded green.

“Then we can take the next step and color-code the chemicals [with labels],” says Tom Dougherty, a healthcare and janitorial sales manager for Philadelphia-based [Penn Jersey Paper](#). “The use of bleach where we shouldn’t be using bleach.”



Emphasize Continuous Training

To be assured of proper foodservice sanitation and infection control for customers, thorough, understandable and regular training must take center stage.

“I was training in the kitchen of a large winery. They are incredibly concerned about sanitation,” says Leland Fishman, president of Petaluma, Calif.-based [Fishman Supply Co.](#) “We went over with the housekeeping staff, and then we did a 20 minute training session on how to use the sanitizer used in cleaning bar tops. This winery has been completely remodeled, and all of their cleaning procedures are going to change.”

One of the biggest difficulties in providing consistent food sanitation training is getting restaurant or cafeteria staff together at one time.

“Getting all the staff together is best, but if you’re trying to train employees in a 24-hour restaurant, that’s pretty impossible,” says Rathbun. “In that case, set up an appointment and do one-on-one training with employees.”

Many distributors also are relying on teaching aids, such as training cards. These cards show cleaning processes and procedures in a step-by-step picture format.

“That kind of simple training works really well because you tend to have a lot of language barriers, depending on the cleaning staff,” says Dougherty. “Simplistic training videos, cards and other documentation can be very effective training devices. Keep it as simple and efficient as possible. And make sure you are doing reinforcement training on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis.”

Farmer agrees, adding internal routine inspections to the mix to ensure that employees are properly cleaning around food preparation areas.

Partnership is also the key. By showing customers how to effectively use sanitation and disinfecting products around food and food service areas, along with demonstrating the proper training of staff, it can go a long way in preventing an unwanted foodborne outbreak.

“We don’t so much need to give them ways to cut costs as to show them more efficient and effective ways to sanitize and disinfect,” says Dougherty. “The onus is on us, the distributors and manufacturers, to show them better ways.”

Fishman couldn’t agree more.

“Our industry has to get better at consultative selling; that is being a consultant on top of being a salesperson,” he says. “We’ve got to do this better.”

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This is particularly true in foodservice sanitation and infection control, where the advice a distributor gives, and the training a distributor conducts, just might save a reputation – and a life.

Cynthia Kincaid is a freelancer based in Columbus, Ohio.

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