

Ice in Drinks

Ice is defined as food and must be made, stored and handled so that it is not contaminated. This is a requirement of the food hygiene regulations.

Surveys of ice used in drinks have shown that high levels of bacteria are present in up to 50% of samples. Some ice has been found to contain food poisoning bacteria.

Hazard Analysis

Contamination of ice should be controlled as part of the hazard analysis that is required by the food hygiene regulations. Your hazard analysis should help you to:

- Be aware of the hazards that relate to ice;
- Decide how to control those hazards;
- Decide how to check to ensure that your controls are working; and
- Provide you with information that you can use to train your staff.

The following advice may help you to make, store and handle ice hygienically. It will not cover every eventuality and you may need to add details depending on your own equipment, cleaning methods etc.

Hazards

Ice can be contaminated by:

- Bacteria, including food poisoning bacteria, from people, raw foods, and other objects that may come into contact with the ice such as contaminated scoops;
- Chemicals including misused cleaning and maintenance chemicals;
- Physical contaminants including dust, dirt, people, pests, raw foods, poor maintenance, etc.

Hazard Controls

Ice Machines

Hazard: General Contamination

Controls

- Connect the machine directly to the main water supply;
- Site the machine in a food room, away from sources of contamination such as cleaning chemicals;
- Use the machine in accordance with the manufacturers instructions

Hazard: Contamination from poor cleaning and maintenance

Controls

- Service the machine in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, at least twice a year;
- Clean and disinfect the machine in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, usually at least once every two weeks. This should include removal of all ice from the machine; it can be bagged and frozen for later use.
- Scoops, tongs or spoons used to remove ice to be washed and disinfected daily and kept in good order.
- Correct use of chemicals.

Hazard: Contamination from poor personal hygiene and handling

Controls

- Wear clean overclothing and ensure hands are clean before washing ice machine;
- Wash hands **before** removing ice from the machine;
- Scoops should **not** be left in the ice machine as the handle may come into contact with the ice;
- Store scoops in a clean place;
- Keep lid closed;
- **Never** scoop ice by hand;
- **Never** store bottles or other foods in the ice machine;
- Do **not** use glasses as scoops; this prevents hands touching ice and contamination from glass fragments.

Storing and Serving Ice

Hazard: Contamination from poor cleaning and maintenance

Controls

- Ice buckets must be in good order and provided with a lid;
- Ice buckets should be thoroughly cleaned after each use, preferably in the glass or dishwashing machine. If washed in sink, the bucket should be disinfected before use;
- Where ice is produced from a mould in the freezer, the ice should be removed without being touched and the moulds washed and disinfected before reuse.

Hazard: Contamination from poor personal hygiene and handling

Controls

- Ice should be thrown away once it starts to melt;
- Ice should be removed using tongs or spoons which should be cleaned and disinfected before use;
- The handles should not be allowed to touch the ice in between use;
- Ice remaining in the ice bucket at the end of the service period should be thrown away;
- Ice buckets should be kept behind the bar, rather than on the bar, to prevent customers from using them;
- Never use fingers to remove ice;
- Never re-freeze ice

Checks

- Daily checks should be carried out by the person in charge of the area.
- Weekly checks should be carried out by the proprietor or manager.
- Records should be kept of all controls not being fully complied with and the action taken to deal with them

Training

Use the above to help train your staff.

All staff handling ice, cleaning ice machines or equipment and persons in charge of those staff should be clearly aware of the hazards detailed above and the controls needed to deal with them. This training should include instruction on

- how to clean the machine and,
- how to handle ice without causing contamination.

Managers and staff carrying out checks need to be trained, in addition to the above, on how to carry out checks, and how to record problems that arise and the action taken to deal with it.

Health and safety training should also be included, for instance, the switching off of electrical power to machines before cleaning.

For further advice please contact:

The Commercial Team, Environmental Health Department, North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN
Tel: 01263 516008 e mail commercial@north-norfolk.gov.uk

A guide to

Safe Ice for Drinks

