

How to?



14) Prevent physical contamination

Why is this important?

Controlling physical contamination is an essential element of safe food production with a number of simple controls to be taken in order limit the risk posed to food safety.

What to do?

In order to ensure that sufficient measures are in place to control the risk to food from the presence of physical contaminants, all team members need to be aware of the basic controls which should be put in place to ensure the safety of the food produced.

Physical contaminants include a huge variety of different objects which can get into the food.

They can come from the person delivering the food, the food handler, the food packaging or even the kitchen or building itself.

Possible contaminants would include plasters, flakes of paint, broken glass, broken tiles, staples and plastic wrapping as well as other objects from the human body, such as finger nails or hair.

Without sufficient pest control measures in operation, this will obviously lead to an increased likelihood of problems, for example, without fly screens in use over windows, flies or other insects would get into the food, creating a physical contaminant.

All contaminants mentioned can lead to the food becoming unsafe for customers to eat, and to then serve this would become a legal offence.

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Check your understanding by:

Give an example of:

- A contaminant with a human source?
- A contaminant from the kitchen or building infrastructure?
- A contaminant resulting from the delivery process?

State two simple measures which can be taken to reduce physical contaminants?

You can tell it's correct if:

All potential sources of contamination are being controlled e.g. hair nets or hats are in use when required or fly sheets over windows are in use.

There should be no obvious debris or food packaging being stored near food.

Hints and tips:

Ensure that hair nets are worn and a high standard of personal hygiene is maintained as this will ensure that controlling contaminants is a lot easier.

Ensure that the procedures detailed in the 'Personal habits' and protective clothing' How To cards are followed, as these provide a number of simple controls to assist in ensuring food safety.