

SALSA Requirement: “In High Risk/High Care areas, cleaning and disinfecting processes shall effectively control any microbiological risk to the safety of the product.”

Why?

Foods produced in high risk/high care areas are, by their nature, vulnerable to the growth of pathogens. If cleaning & disinfection systems do not control microbiological hazards on machines and work surfaces, your products can be contaminated, reducing shelf-life and potentially harming consumers, *eg* if contamination occurs in ready-to-eat salads.

Tools

- Professional, ‘food-industry cleaning chemicals’ with disinfectant properties complying with BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697 standards
- A HACCP Hazard Analysis identifying the micro-organisms of concern in your business
- Swabs
- Cleaning procedures

Tips

- ‘Rapid Hygiene Swabs’ give numeric readings relating to surface cleanliness and can cost less than using a laboratory for routine tests.
- Follow manufacturers’ instructions on how to use chemicals safely and effectively.
- Disinfectants need to be in contact with organisms to kill them. If the equipment is soiled, the chemicals can’t do their work.

What do I need to do?

- This requirement is specifically concerned with microbiological risks in high risk/high care areas.
- Using your Hazard Analysis, identify which micro-organisms are a risk in your business and how your cleaning methods control them, use appropriate ‘food industry’ cleaning chemicals containing disinfectant ingredients which help to kill micro-organisms that cause food poisoning.
- Your cleaning procedures need to be effective in removing microbial contaminants. You can check this by using swabs. Use a (local) microbiology laboratory and ask them to do some swabs before and after cleaning. The results will show if the methods/chemicals were effective in reducing microbiological numbers to safe levels. The laboratory (or a SALSA Mentor) can advise you what micro-organisms to test for and what the ‘safe levels’ are.
- Continue to **monitor the effectiveness of cleaning** in controlling microbial levels ‘periodically’. Frequency of checks will depend on whether your products are ‘ready to eat’, ‘high risk’ (capable of supporting microbiological growth) or require thorough cooking before consumption. For high risk ‘ready to eat’ products, *eg* sandwiches, a suitable frequency for ongoing microbiological testing, for validation of cleaning, might be monthly (if no out-of-spec results are obtained).
- Train staff to follow cleaning procedures.

Need more help?

- See **Tools & Tips** for 1.3.2 Cleaning Schedules; 1.3.3 Effectiveness of Cleaning for more on testing effectiveness of cleaning.
- SALSA Guidance Notes for Section 1.3 Cleaning.**