

Sanitation Review Committee

Process Description

Role of the Committee

The role of the Review Committee is to determine the effectiveness of our sanitation program. The products that we bring to market are food that is intended for consumption. It must be free from any contamination that would lower its quality or make it unfit to eat. As processes and products evolve, our sanitation procedures must be evaluated and updated in a timely manner to ensure we meet our standards. State and Federal requirements must be reviewed and followed to ensure compliance with mandated programs for food safety.

A strong sanitation review committee must be able to evaluate existing procedures including SSOP's and have the knowledge and the ability to modify them as needed.

This program must have a strong base of support and an audit trail that shows proof that existing procedures and processes have been reviewed and modified as needed.

Starting Point

The committee must include at the very least the following individuals:

1. A member of the Quality Assurance Department
2. A member of the Maintenance Department
3. A member of the Production Department
4. A member of the Management
5. A member of your Sanitation Chemical Provider
6. A member of the Sanitation Crew

From time to time, depending on the issues presented, there may be the temporary requirement of additional personnel from any of these departments.

At the first meeting a Chair should be chosen to lead the Committee. This individual should be from the management department or Quality Assurance.

One member should be charged with the responsibility of documenting notes from each meeting and drafting those notes in the form of a memo or minutes to be distributed to every one of the committee members. This individual is usually the Quality Assurance Committee member.

Committee Protocol

1. The members of this committee are expected to have knowledge of the food safety aspects as they relate to their departments.
2. They must maintain confidentiality.
3. They must be able to function as a team.
4. They must be committed to food safety
5. They must be committed to following through with correcting and modifying processes and procedures in a timely manner.

Activities Prior to Each Meeting

Each member of this committee is charged with the responsibility of understanding how the company's sanitation program applies to their respective department. They must be aware of the current policies and procedures and will be expected to bring forth any current issues facing their department as they relate to the sanitation program. They must review the current status of ongoing tasks and be prepared to share progress on these issues. It is expected that each member have the ability and willingness to openly discuss areas of concern and offer suggestions for corrective actions.

Activities during the Meeting

The meeting should be held at a time that will allow for full attendance.

The meeting should be held in an area that is quiet and one where interruptions are kept to a minimum.

The meeting should start with review of ongoing issues from prior meetings. The Chair should read each unfinished item and direct a response of status from whomever was charged with addressing that task.

At a minimum, the individual responsible for this item should be able to update the committee as to the current status. What has been done since the last meeting, and if the task has been completed or is still in progress. If the task is yet to be finished, the individual responsible should be ready to offer a time line to completion. If additional help or discussion is needed it should be brought out at this time to facilitate its completion. Keep in mind that everyone there has a job to do and time is very important. Try to keep comments to the business at hand to allow the meeting to progress.

All individuals present are expected to take good notes and properly document all information relative to their tasks.

Once all of the existing tasks have been addressed you should move on to new tasks. All new tasks should be documented on the "Sanitation Review Committee Report" form.

Once the task has been brought to the committee it should be openly discussed and assigned to the appropriate committee member for action. If more than one department is to be involved this should be decided at the time of discussion. If possible, an estimate of time till completion should be stated.

Tasks can be anything from revision of SSOP's to modifications of equipment, or requests for additional or different cleaning products and supplies or equipment. They may be safety related as well.

Once all existing business has been completed the committee should agree to the next meeting time and date. This is important to ensure that everyone can be present at each meeting to maximize its effectiveness.

Summary

The long term success of our sanitation efforts can be dramatically affected in a positive way by a strong sanitation review committee. Food safety is a constant challenge and requires ever changing procedures and practices to ensure compliance with FDA guidelines. Food spoilage microorganisms, pathogens, and allergens constantly challenge us in our daily operations. The more proactive we become, the less we will be caught off guard when it comes to protecting our jobs and the success of our company.