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Guide for Using Wiping Cloths in Food Facilities

This guide is to clarify the proper use of wiping cloths in food facilities. The information is based on the California Health and Safety Code (CA H&S Code), the California Retail Food Code (Cal Code) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

Wiping cloths can be either dry or wet depending on their intended use. The following illustrate the accepted uses for dry and wet cloths and the limitation of their use.

Dry wiping cloth: Clean linens free from food debris and visible soil. To be used for single purpose (e.g. wiping customer tables and seats). Only used once until laundered.

Wet wiping cloth: Clean linens free from food debris and visible soil. May be used repeatedly for single purpose if held in approved sanitizing solution concentrations as defined in (H&S Code Section 114060 and Section 114160 (9)(c & d); Cal Code Section 114185.1)

Whenever a sanitizing solution becomes turbid or heavily permeated with food particles and juices, or no longer meets a concentration as stated in Cal Code Section 114099.6, it shall be replaced.

[Sanitizing Solutions Concentrations](#)

- Chlorine Solution - 100 ppm with contact for 30 seconds at or above 55°F
- Iodine Solution - 25 ppm with contact for 1 minute at or above 75°F
- Quaternary Ammonium - 200 ppm with contact for 1 minute at or above 75°F

[Common Misuses of Wiping Cloths](#)

1. ***Cook or wait staff reusing the same wipe cloth without sanitizing or replacing between uses.***
Ex. Cook uses same wiping cloth to clean food debris off knife and to wipe food debris off his/her hands.
2. ***Kitchen staff using the same sanitizing solution bath for wiping cloths used to clean foods of animal origin as well as other food spills.***
Using the same sanitizing bath for wiping cloths used to wipe vegetable cutting boards and meat cutting boards.
3. Not enough contact time is provided to ensure sanitization of wiping cloth between uses.
Ex. Food handler dips wet wiping cloth in sanitizer solution and immediately removes it before enough contact time has lapsed to allow sanitization to occur.



4. ***Not allowing adequate time for sanitizer from wiping cloth to air dry on food contact surface.***
Ex. Food handler wipes food contact surface with sanitizing wiping cloth then immediately begins processing food on the surface without allowing sanitizer to dry.