Guidelines on Use of Ice-Making Machine and Safe Handling of Ice

A public health document prepared by:
National Environment Agency

INTRODUCTION

Ice is commonly used at food establishments, however, many people do not realise that ice can be contaminated and can cause serious foodborne illnesses if not handled hygienically. Ice can be contaminated if it has been made using a dirty ice-making machine or handled with bare hands or contaminated utensils. Hence, food operators should take extra precautions to ensure that the ice served to consumers is free of harmful bacteria and safe for human consumption.

The set of guidelines presented in this document details the necessary measures that a food retail outlet should implement in order to prevent any foodborne illnesses caused by contaminated ice.

GUIDELINES

1) Handling of Ice

a) All food handlers are required to be adequately trained to observe good hygiene practices when handling ice. Do not handle ice or any other food if you are feeling unwell with vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

b) Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, and dry hands before handling the ice.



c) Use a clean ice scoop to handle the ice. The scoop should be made of smooth and easy-to-clean material (e.g. stainless steel or food-grade plastic). ALWAYS treat ice like ready-to-eat food and do not handle ice with bare hands.



d) Hold the ice scoop by the handle; do not touch other parts of the scoop that will come into contact with the ice.

e) Place ice scoop in a clean container. The ice scoop should not be left in the ice storage compartment as the handle may come into contact with the ice.



f) Clean the ice scoop and container daily with detergent and water.

g) Do not break up or loosen bags of ice on the floor or other unclean surfaces, as this can contaminate the ice.

2) Storage of Ice

a) Store only food-grade ice in the ice storage compartment.



b) Keep the lid of the ice storage compartment closed when not in use.



c) Do not return unused ice to the ice storage compartment.

d) Do not store bottles of beer, cans of soft drinks, cartons of milk, or any other items in the ice storage compartment.

e) Avoid storing dirty plates and placing refuse bins near the ice storage compartment.

f) Limit access to the ice storage compartment, by minimizing the number of food handlers handling ice.

3) Use of Ice-Making Machine

a) Cleaning the ice-making machine

i. Clean and sanitise the ice storage compartment regularly. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions on cleaning the ice-making machine correctly.

ii. Discard all ice and clean the inner surfaces using water and detergent.

iii. Rinse thoroughly before using the machine to make ice again.

iv. The exterior surfaces of the ice-making machine - particularly the door or hatch of the storage compartment - must be kept clean.

v. Inspect the interior of the ice storage compartment such as gaskets, door tracks and guides regularly to ensure there is no build-up of mould.

b) Servicing the ice-making machine

i. Check for the need to repair any part of the machine from time to time, especially the filters, broken seals or any leakage problems.

ii. Service the ice-making machine at least twice a year to make sure it is in good operating condition.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on hygiene guidelines, please visit the National Environment Agency's website at www.nea.gov.sg.