

Guide for Use of 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 United States Public Health Service Food Code (Food 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 and d); Food Code Section 4-801.11)

Whenever a sanitizing solution becomes turbid or heavily permeated with food particles and juices, or no longer meets a concentration as stated in CA H&S Code Section 114060, 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
- **Other sanitizing solution** – must be approved by the department, meet the requirements of Section 178.1010 of Title 21 of the CFR and be used as directed by manufacturer's product label.

CA H&S Code Section 114060 (a) 1-5, Food Code Section 4-501.114 (a) (b) (c)

Common misuses of wiping cloths:

1. **Cook or wait staff reusing the same wipe cloth without sanitizing or replacing between uses.** (e.g.) cook uses same wiping cloth to clean food debris off of 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.** (e.g.) Using the same sanitizing bath for wiping cloths used to clean vegetable cutting boards and meat cutting boards.
3. **Not enough contact time is provided to ensure sanitization of wiping cloth between uses.** (e.g.) foodhandler dips wet wiping cloth in sanitizer solution and immediately removes it before enough contact time has lapse to provide sanitization to occur.
4. **Not allowing adequate time for sanitizer from wiping cloth to air dry on food contact surface.** (e.g.) foodhandler wipes food contact surface with wiping cloth containing sanitizer and immediately begin processing food on the surface, not allowing sanitizer to dry.