

Ice is widely used in food premises for a number of reasons. Normally ice is either made by machines on premises (generally as ice cubes or ice flakes) or supplied by a specialist supplier (as packaged ice).

2. If not properly handled, ice can be a vehicle of spreading foodborne diseases. It is the responsibility of the management of a food premises to ensure that sufficient instruction and training are given to employees on good hygiene practice in order to minimise the potential for contamination of ice.

3. **Mode of ice production**

(a) Packaged ice

(i) *Source*

Packaged ice intended for human consumption should be obtained from reliable and reputable suppliers.

(ii) *Transport and storage*

Packaged ice should be transported and stored in a hygienic manner so as to minimise contamination of the external surface of the package.

(iii) *Re-filling ice buckets*

Ice should be handled hygienically when being transferred from the package into ice buckets –

- Clean ice buckets and the surrounding surfaces before loosening packaged ice;
- Clean and dry the surface of packages with a clean cloth before re-filling ice buckets;
- Use clean utensils to open ice packages; and

- External surface of packages and bare hands should not touch the ice.

(b) Ice produced on premises

(i) *Source*

The ice machine should be connected to a mains water supply to ensure that ice is not made from water already contaminated by microorganisms.

(ii) *Machine location*

The machine should be sited in an area away from potential sources of contamination.

(iii) *Machine servicing*

The machine should be serviced in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Most machines require servicing at least twice a year.

(iv) *Machine cleaning*

- The ice storage compartment should be cleaned regularly (e.g. daily according to the instructions of the manufacturer) to prevent the build up of bacteria.
- The ice that has been removed from the machines to allow for cleaning should be disposed of and it should not be returned to the ice machine.
- The exterior of the machine particularly the door/hatch of the ice storage compartment should be cleaned on a regular basis.

4. **Handling, storage and service of ice**

- (a) The person dispensing ice from the machine or the storage bin should wash and dry their hands thoroughly before starting the task.
- (b) The ice should always be removed from the machine using a clean utensil such as a scoop (hand should never be used). Do not use breakable utensils such as a drinking glass to dispense ice.
- (c) Scoops and other utensils in contact with the ice should be cleaned at the end of every working day. This equipment should be checked throughout the day for any sign of contamination, and cleaning should take place when necessary.
- (d) Ice buckets should be cleaned at the end of each day and any ice remaining in ice buckets should be disposed of. After cleaning, ice should not be returned to the ice buckets.
- (e) The handle of the scoop should not come into contact with the ice. The scoop should be positioned in such a way that staff does not touch the ice when taking hold of the handle.
- (f) Ice storage bins and ice buckets should be kept covered.
- (g) Ice storage utensils should not be used for the cooling/storage of other items (e.g. bottles of beer, cans of soft drinks or cartons of milk).

For related information, please contact the Communication Resource Unit, FEHD.

Tel.: 2381 6096

Address: 8/F, Fa Yuen Street Municipal Services Building, 123A Fa Yuen Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Enquiry Hotline 2868 0000
Email enquiries@fehd.gov.hk
Website www.fehd.gov.hk

Guidelines on Hygienic Production and Handling of Ice in Food Premises

(These Guidelines apply to ice intended for human consumption)

