Personnel are a key element in a food facility. They work with sensitive materials: bulk dry and liquid ingredients, food equipment, utensils and food contact surfaces etc. Given their normal activities, they may represent a potential source of physical contamination to the products if proper food safety procedures and practices are not followed.

Personnel practices are thoroughly addressed in 21 CFR Part 117.10 (Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk–based Preventive Controls for Human Food). Under this rule, requirements have been established for personnel, and the management of the food processing establishment must take reasonable measures and precautions to ensure disease control and cleanliness.

As a responsible and regulation-compliant entity, a food company must document and implement appropriate personnel practices to minimize the risk of product contamination. Such risk can be managed by implementing and adhering to a personnel practices program. This program establishes a set of standards and procedures of minimum hygiene that people must observe in order to ensure that they do not become sources of product contamination.

Sources of Contamination: Originating from employees due to inadequate use of PPE or insufficient personal hygiene. These objects can include, jewellery, plasters, gloves, aprons, sleeves, gum, pens, hair or nails.

Effect on consumers: Cuts, Infection, Choking, Broken teeth and depending on the severity may require surgery to remove.

Controls:

- Removing all unsecured jewellery and other objects that might fall into food, equipment or containers, if such hand jewellery cannot be removed, it may be covered by material which can be maintained in an intact, clean, and sanitary condition and which effectively protects against the contamination by these objects of the food, food-contact surfaces, or food-packaging materials.

- Maintaining gloves, if they are used in food handling, in an intact, clean, and sanitary condition.

- Wearing, where appropriate, in an effective manner, hair nets, headbands, caps, beard covers, or other effective hair restraints.

- Storing clothing or other personal belongings in areas other than where food is exposed or where equipment or utensils are washed.

- Confining the following to areas other than where food may be exposed or where equipment or utensils are washed: eating food, chewing gum, drinking beverages, or using tobacco.

- A policy should be in place for any employee who has to bring medication into the workplace. This should include having a separate area or locker to store the medication. The medication should be consumed in a separate area away from any food processing or storage area.
Recall of product due to foreign objects from personnel being found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tesco 4 Chocolate &amp; Nut Cones</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Due to presence of pain relief tablets being found in two individual cones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Foods recalled approx. 712 pounds of raw beef and pork products</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Due to possible product contamination after an employee had cut themselves during production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow and Gate Cheesy Broccoli Bake</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Due to possible presence of pieces of blue rubber glove.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY TABLE

Sources  • Poor employee practice  
• Inadequate use of PPE

Effects  • Cuts
• Infection
• Choking

Controls  • Maintain PPE in good condition
• Clothing and personal belongings to be stored areas where food is not produced
• Consumption of food, beverages or smoking to be in designated areas away from food production

Published Article  • Verner Wheelock Associates Training Blog: Food handlers – how to dress for success #personalhygiene #dresscodeforfoodhandler https://www.vwa.co.uk/blog/news/food-handlers-how-to-dress-for-success-personalhygiene-dresscodeforfoodhandler/

References