

Shared-use Kitchen

Food Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses



Introduction and scope

In Hong Kong, the demand for communal cooking spaces is on the rise. By using shared commercial kitchens, which supply utilities, processing equipment, and storage for an affordable fee, new food businesses can be launched at a lower start-up cost. Furthermore, electronic platforms offer a channel for selling food products made from shared-use kitchens. Kitchen owners also occasionally offer support on marketing, packaging and information on food business licences and permits.

This guideline is intended for food business operators (FBOs) who own or lease shared-use kitchens, as well as those who prepare food in these premises. The document aims to assist FBOs in implementing food safety measures in their operations to ensure that foods processed in shared-use kitchens are safe for human consumption, and that food processing establishments where such foods are manufactured or processed adhere to proper operating and sanitary standards. While this is not a legal document and its use is voluntary, it addresses important parameters related to **Good Hygiene Practices (GHPs)** and offers best practices that any FBO should consider in order to provide safe food to consumers.



Characteristics of shared-use kitchens

A shared-use kitchen, also known as a cloud kitchen or leased commercial kitchen, is a food preparation facility that rents or leases kitchen space and provides access to commercial kitchen equipment. In this setup, the owner of the kitchen facilities usually acts as the lessor but is not necessarily an operator of the facility or licence holder of the premises.

Shared-use kitchens that house a number of different brands where multiple operators or business entities using shared facilities can complicate food safety verification and monitoring. Therefore, it is vitally important to clearly define the individual and **shared responsibilities of the owner, licensee and operators** to ensure compliance with safety standards. **Good record-keeping and supervision** by the operator also play an important role in ensuring safe food processing.

Cooking on a large scale in a commercial kitchen differs significantly from home cooking. Amateur food handlers may become overwhelmed by the workload from bulk cooking and may overlook essential food safety measures. Common issues include inadequate personal hygiene, undercooking, incorrect food holding temperature, and cross-contamination of cooked or ready-to-eat foods with raw foods.

Shared-use kitchen operators should ensure that **sufficient manpower** is available throughout the food production process, and that food handlers must possess the skills and knowledge necessary to handle food safely. Staff must be trained in **food safety practices** (e.g. maintain safe food temperatures) and **food hygiene practices** (e.g. maintaining cleanliness to prevent food contamination).



Advice for Lessors of Shared-use Kitchens

Obtaining a food licence for your business

In accordance with the laws of Hong Kong, any person who intends to prepare and/or manufacture food for sale for human consumption off the premises in the territory must obtain an appropriate food business licence issued by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) before commencing business. Lessors of shared-use kitchens should ensure the premises are issued with such a licence even if they simply own the shared-use kitchen and do not operate food businesses themselves. Lessors should not rent, lease, or allow the use of their kitchens for food businesses unless the premises have obtained a valid food business licence from the FEHD. This ensures that the food premises, food processing and food business are subject to regular licensing and regulatory control. Owners, lessors and licensees of the shared-use kitchens should ensure that relevant legal provisions, licensing requirements, and conditions are complied with. Special care should be taken to ensure that the food licence covers retail business (instead of only wholesale business) if the food products manufactured on the premises will be sold directly to customers.



Businesses involved in food preparation and manufacturing need to be covered by a Food Factory licence or another type of food business licence. Please scan the QR code for **further details**.

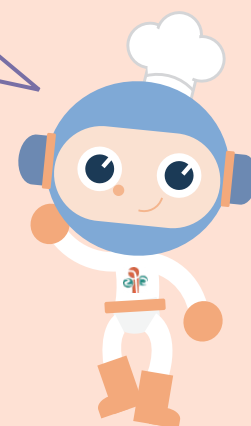


Structural requirements and kitchen equipment

The licensee of the food premises used as a shared-use kitchen should ensure that the building, property and equipment meet the standards stipulated by the FEHD and other departments under the corresponding Food Business Licence.

In general, structural requirements should include:

- A kitchen or preparation area kept in good repair and of sufficient size (a minimum aggregate food room area of 6 square metres) for the type and volume of food handling;
- Walls, floors, ceilings and work surfaces in good repair and easy to clean;
- An adequate number of wash-hand basin(s) of not less than 350 mm in length (measured between the top inner rims) with liquid soap and hand drying facilities;
- Sufficient wash-up sink units large enough to wash any equipment or food. These sinks should be of not less than 450 mm in length (measured between the top inner rims) and fitted with grease traps connected to drainage system;
- A mains water supply and proper drainage system;
- Mechanical ventilation suitable for the cooking activities being carried out;
- Proper lighting facilities; and
- Adequate sanitary fitments.

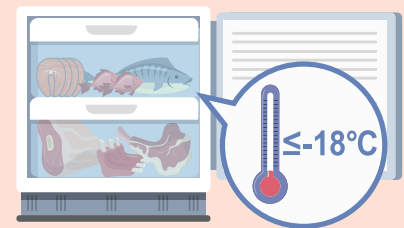


The lessor or licensee of the shared-use kitchen should repair any structural damage in the kitchen, such as broken tiles or holes in walls or windows, as soon as possible to facilitate cleaning and to prevent dirt and pest entry. The licensee should also ensure that all the equipment and facilities in the licensed food premises are in proper working order.

Advice for Lessors of Shared-use Kitchens

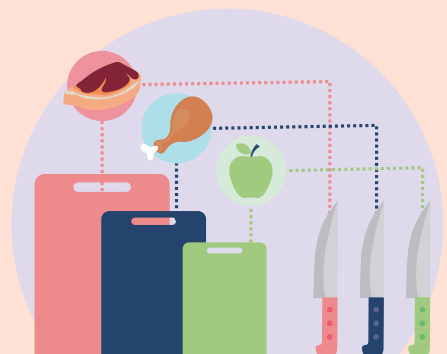
While kitchen users may bring their own small equipment, the lessor or licensee of the shared-use kitchen should provide or ensure the availability of the following essential facilities:

- Refrigerators with thermometers, ideally one for raw foods and one for cooked or ready-to-eat foods;
- Cooking appliances;
- Food-grade detergents and approved bactericidal agent or approved utensil washing machines with sterilizing functions. Please scan the QR code for ***lists of approved bactericidal agents and approved dishwashing machines***; and
- A suitably sized washable waste bin with a close-fitting lid.



Additionally, it is advisable to provide the following items to facilitate the implementation of Good Hygiene Practices in the kitchen:

- A digital probe thermometer with probe wipes;
- Colour-coded chopping boards and utensils (e.g. knives) for handling raw and cooked food separately;
- Blast chiller(s) and hot-holding equipment;
- Disposable dishcloths;
- Cleaning tools such as brushes, mops and buckets; and
- Bin liners.



The licensee or operator has to verify that all equipment is thoroughly cleaned and sanitised before and after use, and make sure all cooking, hot-holding and chilling equipment, as well as food thermometers, are well maintained and functioning properly.

Supervision and record keeping

Under the FEHD's Hygiene Manager and Hygiene Supervisor Scheme, all licensed food premises are required to appoint at least one qualified hygiene supervisor (HS) or hygiene manager (HM) as appropriate, or both for large food establishments or those producing high-risk foods. HS or HM are responsible for advising food handlers on proper food handling practices, ensuring compliance, conducting daily checks on the personal, environmental and food hygiene conditions of the food premises, and keeping records of their findings.

When the premises are rented out as a shared-use kitchen, the licensee should ensure that personnel are present to fulfil the HS or HM role when the kitchen is in use, so as to comply with the relevant licensing conditions of the Food Business Licences. Additionally, a facility timetable/calendar containing the date and time of processing, nature of products as well as the name and contact number of the operator, should be kept and made available upon request during inspection.

Logging accurate temperature records and cleaning schedules is an essential component of a food safety management system. Appendices 1 and 2 provide templates for kitchen operators to use when recording cleaning schedules and temperature logs.





Pay attention to environmental hygiene

It is crucial to maintain good environmental hygiene to prevent food contamination and pest infestation. The key practices for each specific area are highlighted below:

Cleaning and sanitisation



- Use of boiling water or food-grade disinfectants for regular disinfection of food contact surfaces (such as kitchenware, cutting boards, knives).
- Use a 1:99 diluted bleaching solution or other safe cleaning agents for regular disinfection of non-food contact surfaces (such as walls and floors).

Pest control



- Properly cover trash bins and tie up trash bags to prevent pests from accessing food residues.
- Clean and disinfect hidden areas, such as behind and underneath appliances regularly.

Chemical handling



- Chemicals used for cleaning or disinfection should be handled carefully to avoid food contamination.
- Chemicals must be stored separately from food, food packaging materials and other operational equipment.

Repair and maintenance



- Replace chopping boards that are badly scratched, pitted or scored, as well as dishes and other tableware that are cracked or chipped.
- Ensure that cooking appliances, hot-holding units and refrigerators are well maintained and functioning properly.

Waste management



- Place food waste and other rubbish in trash bags and dispose of them as soon as practicable.
- Keep drains clear to avoid the formation of unpleasant odours.

Advice for Shared-use Kitchen Operators

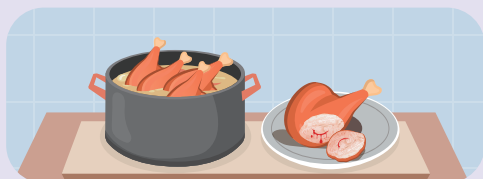
Finding a licensed kitchen

Food businesses should prepare food in licensed food premises, which are under regular inspection by the FEHD. Sale of restricted foods (e.g. cut fruit, frozen confections, siu mei, lo mei, sushi, sashimi, oyster to be eaten in a raw state, meat to be eaten in a raw state) requires relevant permission in writing. If the food business licence is not endorsed with any permission from the FEHD, such kind of restricted food cannot be prepared for sale in the shared-use kitchen.

Good Hygiene Practices

In shared-use kitchens, food is often prepared in advance in large quantities due to the high volume of portions required. Bulk cooking presents several challenges:

Undercooking



During bulk cooking, the heat from the heat source may not evenly reach all parts of the food, leading to incomplete cooking.

Prolonged cooling



When cooling cooked food, it must be cooled to 20°C in two hours or less, then cooled further from 20°C to 4°C in four hours or less. Cooking and storing large amounts of food, especially when cooling is not fast enough, can often lead to cooked food or ingredients being kept in the *Temperature Danger Zone* (4°C–60°C) for too long before consumption, allowing disease-causing bacteria to grow.

Cross-contamination



Poor hygiene and a lack of kitchen space increases the risk of cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods, especially when cooking large quantities of food.

Good Hygiene Practices (GHPs) can help kitchen operators to ensure food safety and safeguard consumers' health. The following simplified checklist is adopted from the CFS' [*Safe Kitchen: Illustrated Guide on Food Safety for Food Handlers*](#), covering essential GHPs.

Advice for Shared-use Kitchen Operators

Prerequisites 1

- Conduct a pre-operation inspection to ensure that adequate facilities (e.g. stoves, refrigerators, hot-holding equipment) are available and functioning properly. See Appendix 3 for a pre-operation inspection checklist.
- Ensure there is enough trained personnel for purchasing, storing, preparing, cooking and distributing food.
- Understand your responsibilities in keeping the kitchen clean, and clarify with the licensee if necessary. Please see P. 13 for details.

Purchase 2

- Purchase ingredients from reliable and approved sources and keep records for the sources of raw materials.
- Ensure that chilled and frozen food ingredients delivered to the kitchen are kept at 4°C or below and at -18°C or below respectively.
- Check the quality and expiry dates of ingredients upon receipt.

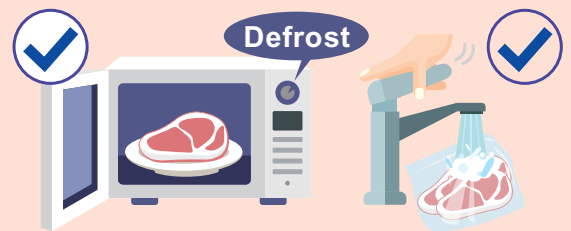
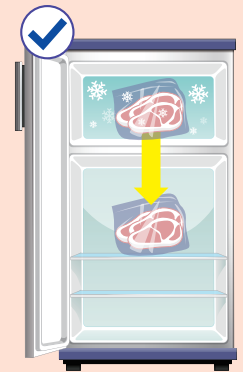


Storage of raw materials 3

- Store perishable food in a refrigerator immediately upon arrival to the kitchen – chilled food at 4°C or below and frozen food at -18°C or below.
- Keep raw foods separate from cooked and ready-to-eat foods to prevent cross-contamination.
- Store food away from chemicals.
- Regularly check and record refrigerator temperatures, ensuring that the temperature of chillers are maintained at 4°C or below and the temperature of freezers are maintained at -18°C or below.

4 Preparation

- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under potable running water.
- If washing raw meat and poultry is necessary, thoroughly clean and sanitise the sink and the surrounding areas before and after use, as bacteria can splash onto nearby surfaces, equipment and other foods.
- Use separate areas, equipment and utensils for handling raw and cooked or ready-to-eat foods.
- **Do not defrost food at room temperature.** Food should be defrosted thoroughly before cooking, otherwise the cooking time will be longer, and the food may be cooked on the outside but raw on the inside.
- Defrost food in a designated refrigerator compartment. As defrosting takes time, plan the time required and arrange early with the lessor when renting the kitchen for short periods.
- Food can also be defrosted in a microwave oven or under running cold tap water. Food defrosted by these methods should be cooked immediately after defrosting.



5 Cooking

- Cook food thoroughly. Use a probe thermometer to ensure that the core food temperature reaches at least 75°C or above for 30 seconds.
- Cooked food not for immediate consumption should be cooled down quickly using safe chilling methods, such as blast chilling or dividing food into smaller portions for two-stage cooling. It should be cooled down to 20°C in 2 hours, and then to 4°C in 2 hours.
- When reheating food, the core temperature of the food should also reach at least 75°C for 30 seconds. **Reheat the food only once** and do not refrigerate again.



Accurate temperature records are critical components of a comprehensive food safety management system. Appendix 2 is a template that kitchen operators can use to keep track of food temperatures during cooking, cooling and chilling.

Advice for Shared-use Kitchen Operators

Delivery 6

- Keep food for delivery at the proper storage temperature before packing and during delivery, that is, cold food should be kept at or below 4 °C and hot food at above 60 °C.
- Make sure the food is properly packed, ideally with anti-tampering designs (e.g. tamper-evident tape or tear strips), and positioned well to avoid seeping, spillage, crushing of food or damage to food containers.
- All food products must be separated from non-food items during delivery.
- Keep records of time and temperature control for delivery items.
- Deliverers should aim to bring the food to customers in person whenever possible. In other cases, such as when a customer asks for a no-contact drop-off, the food should be put in a designated and clean spot. Confirm the location of drop-off with the customer beforehand and notify the customer upon arrival.



Third-party delivery agents and food delivery

Third-party delivery agents are sometimes used to deliver the food produced at a shared-use kitchen. These agents should adhere to the food safety advices outlined above to reduce the risk of foodborne diseases when providing food delivery services. For further details, scan the QR code to access the food safety advice for food businesses and consumers on [*Takeaways and Meal Delivery*](#).



7

Personal and environmental hygiene

- Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water for at least 20 seconds before wearing gloves and handling food or after going to the toilet. Use gloves properly and change a new pair if they are soiled or torn.
- Clean and sanitise thoroughly all the utensils that come in contact with food (especially blenders for cooked food and feeding spoons) before use.
- Implement effective cleaning procedures and schedules.
- Adopt a 'clean as you go' approach (cleaning and disinfecting at once after use) to help keep areas constantly clean and tidy.
- Sanitise or disinfect utensils by using bactericidal agents or immersing them in boiling water for at least one minute.
- Food handlers with symptoms such as diarrhoea and vomiting should not handle food.



Be a professional food handler

The Safe Kitchen campaign aims to assist food handlers in implementing the necessary measures and applying the GHPs into their daily practice to ensure food safety. Scan the QR code to access the training materials under **Safe Kitchen**.



Food labelling

Food businesses are required to put a food label on *prepackaged* food products that are made in a shared-use kitchen. Prepackaged food means any food packaged, whether completely or partially, in such a way that the contents cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging and the food is ready for presentation to the ultimate consumer or a catering establishment as a single food item. At present, the law requires the following information to be legibly marked on the food label of all prepackaged food, unless otherwise exempted:

1 Name of the food

2 List of ingredients (including allergenic substances and additives)

3 Indication of durability (e.g. use by or best before date)

4 Count, weight or volume

Information of Food Label



5 Special storage conditions or instruction for use

6 Name and address of manufacturer or packer

Nutrition Information of Food Label



7 Nutrition label



For further details on *food labelling*, please scan the QR code.



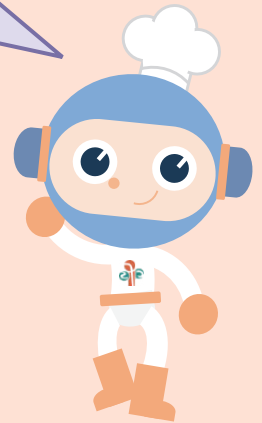
Shared Responsibilities between Kitchen Owners, Lessors, Licensees and Operators

All parties (kitchen owners, lessors, licensees and operators) share responsibilities for keeping the kitchen hygienic and ensuring food safety, though the licensee is ultimately accountable for compliance with the licensing conditions under the food business licence. Some premises may employ a separate cleaning agent to take up some parts of the cleansing work, e.g. cleaning of the metal hoods. Each facility user should be made aware of their responsibilities, such as properly cleaning up and removing waste after their session if no cleansing staff are employed. The responsibilities of each party should be made clear in a written agreement, preferably in the hire contract between the operator and the owner or lessor or licensee, before the operator starts using the kitchen.



Shared responsibilities that need to be delineated may include:

1. Pre-operational sanitation inspections;
2. Post-operational sanitation inspections;
3. Sanitation verification actions and relevant documentation; and
4. Taking corrective actions when sanitation issues are identified.



The lessor, usually the owner, or licensee should ensure that basic cleaning equipment and materials are available for use in the kitchen. The kitchen should have an adequate supply of food-grade cleaning agents to effectively clean and sanitise the area. To avoid misunderstandings, operators should confirm the availability of various materials in advance, including consumables and non-consumables. Besides, to avoid cross-contamination from other areas like the washroom, all mops, buckets or cloths should only be designated for use in the kitchen.

Appendix 1

for kitchen owner/lessor/licensee/operator

Cleaning schedule record form

Equipment to be cleaned		Location of the equipment	
Cleaning agents to be used		Cleaning frequency	
Cleaning method			

Date	Time	Signature	Remarks

Audited by: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2

Temperature log sheet

Device/ Process*	Freezer / Chiller / Hot holding apparatus / Cooking / Chilling	Location / Code:	
Standard	≤-18°C / ≤4°C / >60°C / ≥75°C	Check Frequency :	
Corrective Action		Remarks:	

[illegible]

Audited by:

Date: _____

* Please delete where appropriate

Appendix 3

for kitchen operator

Pre-operation sanitation inspection checklist

Checked by: _____ Date: _____

I. Personal hygiene

Standard	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks
• Hand-washing facilities, including wash-hand basin, liquid soap and disposable tissue paper/drying facilities, are available				
• Food handlers wear proper clothing and hair restraints, disposable gloves are available for use				
• Food handlers have adequate training on personal hygiene and food hygiene (e.g. attending training courses for Good Hygiene Practices and at least one attained qualification as hygiene supervisor)				

II. Utensils and Equipment

Standard	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks
• All equipment and utensils are cleaned and disinfected before use				
• All work surfaces are clean to sight and touch and disinfected before use				
• Refrigerators with a thermometer are in good working order: chiller are maintained at 4°C or below, and freezers are maintained at -18°C or below				
• Storage area/cabinet are clean and free from pest infestation				
• Probe thermometer(s) are available				

III. Cleansing and Sanitising

Standard	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks
• Equipment washing facilities are available, such as a three-compartment sink set up for wash, rinse and sanitise and boiling water or a ware-washing machine				
• Food-grade chemical sanitizer with manufacturer's instructions for use				
• Adequate clean wiping clothes/disposable wiping clothes are provided				

IV. Waste Disposal

Standard	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks
• Adequate clean waste disposal bins with liners				
• Waste storage area is insect- or rodent-proof				
• Cleansing tools and chemicals are available and stored separately from the food preparation area				

V. Pest Control

Standard	Yes	No	N/A	Remarks
• Screens are put on open windows and doors and properly maintained				
• A pest control program is in place				
• No evidence of pests is present				

