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Health, Safety and Security in the Bar

Aims and learning outcomes

This chapter introduces the areas central to health and safety, and security. It also explores how to manage waste in bars. On completion the learner should be able to:

- Explain the rationale for food safety, HACCP and personal hygiene and its effect on food safety.
- Explain the importance of labelling foods.
- Act on safety statements and the essential safety and security issues in bars.
- Apply best practice procedures for reducing risks and handling potentially violent situations in the bar
- Explain techniques for improving safety in pub cellar operations
- Compare and contrast insurance premium covers for bars.
- Outline the challenges of waste in bars and broadly explain prevention techniques for reduction, reuse and recovery.
- Conduct a waste audit for identifying waste and managing waste streams
- Identify energy saving innovations for their bar.

7.1 Introduction

In the majority of countries around the world it is a legal requirement that all staff involved in a food environment, which includes bars, are adequately trained and supervised commensurate with their work activity. The responsibility for the training and supervision of staff lies with the proprietors of the bar and food businesses. This is the case for all staff members whether they are part-time, full-time or casual, and whether they are employed in the public or private sector.

Bar owners also have to be more concerned about their establishment's safety and security issues. This is the result of a variety of factors, most notably recent legislative changes at national and international level and the subsequent high

costs of accidents (including costs relating to litigation and compensation). Poor safety and security standards place staff members and customers at risk of serious injury if not death; employers suffer in terms of lost productivity and potentially higher premiums; and the morale of the staff, as well as the industrial relations climate in the bar, can be adversely affected. At a minimum, bar owners should have a practical understanding of the local and national legislation in this area. They should also ensure, if necessary by enforcement, that their staff members follow proper safety and security standards.

7.2 Rationale for food safety

Food safety and hygiene is a subject which is taken more seriously by bar owners nowadays. The concerted efforts to improve hygiene standards has been brought about by outbreaks of food poisoning, resulting in sickness and in some circumstances fatalities. Government agencies have tightened up local and national rules and regulations on food hygiene for licensed premises in line with international standards, and these regulations are now enforced more strictly than in the past.

Bars, because they are traditionally regarded as high risk, have started to receive more visits from the local environmental health officers (EHOs) with new owners, or owners switching their food offerings, coming under particularly close scrutiny. The EHOs are charged by the local government with the responsibility of carrying out the evaluation of procedures for compliance with the relevant legislation for food safety and hygiene in bars. EHOs will generally arrive at a bar unannounced and will want to ask lots of questions and look at all aspects of the food and beverage operation. They will also assess in detail the maintenance procedures which the bar uses to set the high standards of food hygiene which are required by law.

Enforcement and closure

EHOs usually have a contract with the local government health boards and they can issue enforcement orders ranging from:

- Closure orders
- Prohibition orders
- Improvements orders
- Improvement notices

Bars with a high volume of food will be inspected on a more regular basis. A typical EHO during their visit to a bar will:

- 1 Announce themselves – by warrant
- 2 Take detailed contemporaneous notes and temperatures, any particular problem will be photographed for file
- 3 Visit the kitchen

- 4 Look for signs of infestation
 - 5 Ensure correct storage of products
 - 6 Check ice
 - 7 Carry out a general inspection of the premises and check HACCP and training documentation and notices.
- They will then return to the office to write up their report.

Closure orders

A closure order is normally served where it is deemed that there is or is likely to be a grave and immediate danger to public health. Typical causes include:

- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate storage or refrigeration
- Inadequate cooking or re-heating
- Cross-contamination from raw to cooked food
- Infected food handler
- Inadequately trained or supervised staff.

7.3 The bar layout

You must constantly examine the layout of your bar in relation to the products and services which it offers. The objective of your workplace study is to ensure that you always have the correct products, equipment and stock for use and in the right place to avoid excessive and unnecessary movement or action for yourself and fellow hospitality staff members. This examination is also of critical importance in relation to the care of your customers, as it helps to save you time and energy and to improve the overall speed of service.

The famous French culinary genius Auguste Escoffier (1921) preached 'Le mise en place', which translated simply means 'everything has its place', and this statement applies to all areas of the bar. This professional approach to organisation helps to improve the method and speed of how we can work, which results in increased customer satisfaction. A rigorous study of yourself and your bar surroundings is crucial to customer care and health and safety. The study should include all equipment layout and design, and how you and your fellow members of staff work in relation to your efficiency and effectiveness, for example, within certain time periods.

For a further discussion on the bar layout and design issues see Chapter 1.