



Section 2, Premises

In this section you are introduced to the requirements for appropriate premises and how they contribute to food safety and hygiene.

When planning your meat establishment, take the sensible placement of the following premises and functions into account:

- Food processing, production and storage facilities
 - The required equipment and utensils
 - Cold storage facilities
 - Water fixtures and plumbing
 - Non-toxic, easy-to-clean and smooth surface materials
- Space for the cleaning and storage of dishes and delivery boxes
- Waste and by-product storage facilities
- Facilities for the storage and maintenance of cleaning equipment
- Other necessary storage spaces
- Floor drains in facilities whose cleaning requires washing
- Toilet facilities
- Staff dressing rooms
- Smoking areas

Food processing, production and storage facilities

When processing and storing food, it is vital to ensure that the foodstuffs are protected from dirt, harmful bacteria, viruses and harmful substances.

This requires adequately sized facilities that enable the different functions to be placed in a sensible manner. In addition, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be safe and may not leave harmful substances in the food.

The layout of the premises must enable the separation of raw materials and finished products.

You must also be able to segregate allergens. They must be kept separate from each other as well as from food they are not intended for. A list of substances and products that cause allergies or intolerances is provided in the “Food information management” section of this guide.

Examples of foods to be kept separate from each other

- Keep raw materials and finished products separate from each other. For example, meat must be kept separate from tartare steaks and minced meat, and carcasses must be kept separate from cut meat.

- Keep raw poultry meat separate from other foods. Store and handle unpackaged raw poultry meat so that it cannot come into contact with other unpackaged foods.
- Meat from different species of animal must also be kept separate by handling different species either at different times or in different areas.
- Keep ingredients and products that cause allergies and intolerances separate from each other and from foods they are not intended for. Significant work stages to consider with regard to separation of foods and handling of cross-contamination are for example: purchasing and accepting ingredients, labeling, storage and handling of foodstuffs, planned order of work and cleaning.
- Keep packaged and unprotected meat or processed meat separate from each other. Also, separate packing operations from other meat handling so that the packaging material does not contaminate meat or processed meat.
- Foods that are subject to special conditions for placing on the market should be marked and kept apart from other foods.

Water fixtures and sinks

Food preparation and processing facilities must be equipped with a sufficient number of water fixtures.

You should consider the need for water fixtures when planning the facilities, since retrospective changes are both difficult and expensive to implement.

Several water fixtures

A meat handling area requires several water fixtures. Separate fixtures are required, for example, for washing hands and the surfaces of the area.

The establishment must have a dedicated point for washing dishes, equipment and utensils. The washing point must be easy to clean and built of rustproof materials.

Floor drains are important in areas that are washed with water or that contain equipment and utensils washed with water.

Sufficient water supply and cleanliness

All sinks and washing equipment must have a sufficient supply of both hot and cold water.

The sinks and cleaning equipment must be kept clean and disinfected when necessary.

One washing point for multiple purposes

Compromises may be required in older premises.

A washing point can be used for one purpose in the morning and for another later in the day. For example, a hand-washing point can be used to rinse tools after the work day. Please remember that the wash basin must be cleaned between functions if necessary.

If you need advice on the number and locations of water fixtures, you can ask the food inspector when you are planning the premises.

Number and placement of hand-washing points

A sufficient number of hand-washing points must be reserved for washing hands.

They must be placed sensibly with regard to operations. The hand-washing points must be located close to the food-processing areas.

What equipment is needed at hand-washing points?

- Running hot and cold water is required at an appropriate hand-washing point.
- Automatic or pedal-operated taps are required in hand-washing points located in areas where unprotected food is handled or employees wash their hands before entering the production area.
- Liquid soap is part of a well-equipped hand-washing point.
- Disposable towels are appropriate for a hand-washing point. In this case, a bin will also be required.
- A roller towel is also a good choice for a hand-washing point.
- A dirty cloth towel is not appropriate for a hand-washing point. Cloth towels can be used if everyone has their own towel that is replaced on a daily basis.
- The hand-washing point must also be clean. It must not be cluttered with unnecessary things.

Disinfection of tools

Employees of cutting plants and establishments that produce meat preparations and minced meat must have the opportunity to disinfect their tools with hot water. This requires a minimum water temperature of 82 °C. Such disinfection devices are commonly called knife sterilisers.

A different system with an equivalent effect is equally suitable for this purpose, for example, disinfection with alcohol.

Meat quality assurance before cutting

The cutting plant must include a well-lit area for checking the quality of the meat before cutting. The inspection area must be equipped with a hand-washing point and knife disinfection equipment, since it may be necessary to clean the meat before cutting.

Cold storage facilities for foodstuffs

Different foods require different storage temperatures. Therefore, you will need a number of storage spaces, and their temperature must be monitored with measuring equipment or thermometers.

Foods that require cold storage should not be left at higher temperatures, even for a short time. Only take the required amount of such food out of cold storage for preparation.

The cold chain may not be broken at any time. Also keep the cold chain in mind during delivery, acceptance of deliveries and transfer to cold storage facilities.

Examples of food storage temperature limits

- Poultry or rabbit carcasses and meat: 4 °C or below
- Other carcasses and meat: 7 °C or below
- Meat preparations: 4 °C or below
- Organs and blood: 3 °C or below
- Minced meat: 2 °C or below
- Frozen or deep-frozen meat or processed meat: -18 °C or below
- Frozen poultry meat: -12 °C or below.

Short-term deviations from these temperatures are allowed.

Cooled areas

Establishments that handle meat usually also ensure the correct temperature by cooling the meat-handling area. For example, the maximum temperature in cutting plants is normally 12 °C. If air in the cutting plant is warmer than this, the establishment must demonstrate that the temperature of meat cut at the plant constantly remains below the above-mentioned limits.

What do you need to know if you freeze or deep-freeze meat or processed meat?

1. Start freezing or deep-freezing as soon as possible after the preceding work stage.
2. Store and transport frozen and deep-frozen meat at temperatures of -18 °C or below.
3. Exception: frozen (but not deep-frozen) poultry meat for sale can be stored and transported at -12 °C or below.

What do you need to know when thawing meat or processed meat?

1. Thaw frozen and deep-frozen meat and processed meat at temperatures that do not pose a health risk. It is safest to thaw the products in a refrigerated area.
2. You should drain the thawing fluids into a sewer. They must not create a risk of contamination to other food products.
3. Minced meat and meat preparations may not be frozen again after being thawed.

Fill the cold store or refrigeration appliance correctly!

Do not overfill the cold store or refrigeration appliance. When you fill the cold store or appliance correctly, the air will circulate as intended and keep the food at the right temperature.

Packaging and wrapping material storage areas

Also remember to plan the storage of food packaging and wrapping materials. Store such materials in a protected location separate from the food-processing areas.

Do not take more than one day's worth of packaging and wrapping materials into the food-processing areas at a time.

Staff dressing rooms

The staff must have a dressing room with space for storing off-duty clothes.

In exceptional circumstances, the supervisory authority may allow the dressing room to be located in a separate area or building.

Keep your own clothing separate from protective clothing and your shoes off the floor

Keep your own clothing separate from protective clothing in order to keep it clean. Also provide racks or another storage solution for work shoes. This keeps the dressing room floor easy to clean.

Toilet facilities

Employees must be provided with toilet facilities. With the permission of the supervisory authority, toilet facilities can be located in a separate area or building.

In some cases (such as in small establishments), a dry toilet kept in good condition can be accepted. Temporary use of a portable chemical toilet, a so-called bajamaja, can be permitted.

Any exceptions must always be discussed with the food inspector.

Requirements for staff toilets

The lavatory door may not open directly into food-processing premises. For this reason, staff toilets must either be located behind two doors or be placed at a greater distance from premises where food is processed.

In old buildings, this may not be possible. Acceptable solutions will be found for such buildings on a case-by-case basis. You should discuss the matter with the food inspector and ask for advice.

Hand-washing points of staff toilets

If unprotected food is handled at your establishment, hand-washing points must be equipped with automatic or pedal-operated water taps. Hand or arm-operated taps are not permitted.

Automatic or pedal-operated taps are required in the hand-washing points of staff toilets.

Food-poisoning bacteria and viruses spread easily through contact, for example through the handles of toilet doors and manually operated water taps.

Cleaning equipment storage and maintenance facilities

Good storage and maintenance facilities for cleaning equipment are equipped with

- Adequate ventilation, preventing the growth of mould.
- Racks and shelves for cleaning equipment and detergents.
- A water fixture and drainage sink for rinsing and washing cleaning equipment.
- A drying rack for damp cleaning equipment.
- A floor drain facilitating cleaning of the storage space.

The cleaning equipment and agents should be stored hygienically and separated from the food preparation area.

Cleaning equipment should not be stored in toilet facilities, since it may be contaminated with harmful bacteria and viruses. Dirty cleaning equipment will spread dirt when you clean.

Storing cleaning equipment further away

The supervising authority may also permit you to store and maintain cleaning equipment in

a separate area or building. If necessary, you should discuss this with the food inspector in advance.

Waste and by-product storage facilities

A waste bin must be placed close to the areas in which food is handled. Containers for collecting by-products should be provided for work stations that generate by-products. For example, by-products are created when deboning meat.

By-products and waste must be removed from the food handling areas sufficiently often, at least once per day. By-products and waste must be stored in a dedicated place sufficiently separated from the establishment's other operations and foodstuffs.

Waste and by-product storage areas must be planned and managed so that they can be kept clean at all times.

Waste and by-product bins located outside must be enclosed to prevent the waste and by-products from attracting pests.

If TSE risk material is separated from meat at your cutting plant

You must ensure that the TSE risk material will not contaminate the meat at your cutting plant. TSE risk material must always be collected, handled and stored separately from foodstuffs.

TSE diseases include "mad cow disease" (bovine BSE) and sheep and goat scrapie. TSE risk material constitutes by-products of the highest risk category and must be delivered for destruction. The risk material must be dyed before delivery for disposal. This prevents the spread of TSE diseases.

Smoking areas

Smoking is only permitted in a separate, dedicated area. Smoking should be arranged so that it will not pose a risk to food hygiene. Staff who go outside for a smoke should change or cover their work uniforms.

A dedicated space for the inspector of the establishment

If requested by the inspector, you must provide him or her with at least a desk and lockable cabinet.

Summary

When planning to set up a meat establishment:

- ▶ When you are looking for premises, consider their suitability for your business in advance.
- ▶ For example, are the premises large enough to enable the hygienic placement of different functions?
- ▶ Is there a sufficient number of separate storage facilities for different foodstuffs?
- ▶ Are there enough water fixtures, sinks and floor drains?
- ▶ Do the premises have dressing and clothes storage premises for staff?
- ▶ Are the toilet facilities and plumbing appropriate?
- ▶ What is the correct way to store cleaning equipment?
- ▶ Has smoking been arranged in an appropriate manner?
- ▶ Where will the inspector's space be located?