

Hygiene Social Contract

Food safety is a primary focus for every food manufacturer, and while a lot of effort is put into creating and maintaining the processes and procedures designed to prevent risk of contamination to their food chain, many of these don't account for a key aspect that can affect food safety: human behavior. This is where creating a hygiene culture can help.

What is a Hygiene Culture?

A hygiene culture is a unified mindset across the organization that puts food safety at the forefront of everything done within the business, both physically and mentally. If an effective hygiene culture is in place, everything from the layout and design of a facility to how an employee thinks about their own personal hygiene, should all be considered through the lens of food safety.

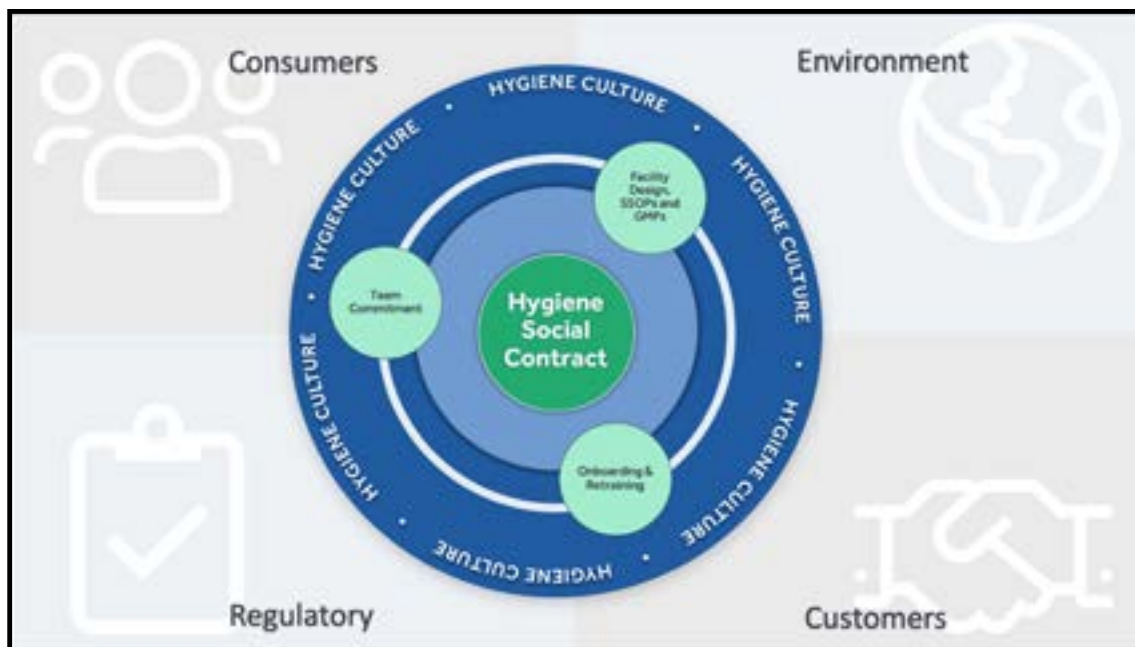
Why is a Hygiene Culture so Important?

In 2019, some of the top FDA food safety citations were for sanitation practices and monitoring as well as personnel hygiene practices. This is unsurprising, as while most companies put a lot of effort into creating and maintaining the processes and procedures designed to prevent risk of contamination to the food chain, they don't account for the human behavior aspect of hygiene SSOPs.

In fact, food production team members present the largest potential source of contamination within a food plant. This is because as staff proceed throughout facilities in order to complete their duties each day, they naturally encounter surfaces, equipment, products, clothing and their own bodies. Unfortunately, these natural encounters can cause someone to move from a clean zone to a dirty zone without a hygiene intervention step.

Also, production team members are often from diverse backgrounds, and multi-lingual staff can make regular hygiene training and compliance with standard sanitation operating procedures (SSOPs) or GMPs (good manufacturing practices) more challenging to communicate, resulting in increased cross-contamination risks from poor employee hygiene.

To overcome this, and any other challenges that may affect food safety, a hygiene culture needs to be established via a hygiene social contract. This contract is truly at the core of a hygiene culture that empowers organizations to create sustainable, healthy food that meets regulatory standards, exceeds customer expectations and that they are comfortable serving to their families and consumers.



What is a Hygiene Social Contract?

At the core of a hygiene culture is a hygiene social contract. Social contracts are nothing new and have been used for many years in business and classrooms - even the U.S. Constitution is a form of a social contract. Simply put, a hygiene social contract establishes a set of rules of behavior and expectations that all employees are held to with a sole focus around hygiene.

How is a Hygiene Social Contract Used?

Creating a hygiene culture is a complicated task that requires every level of the organization from the executive leadership and middle management, to production team leaders and production team members to be on the same page when it comes to food safety. A hygiene social contract helps establish this culture and ensures that it is agreed upon by all members of the company, regardless of their position.

Because a hygiene contract establishes the mindset of food safety at the organization, it should be a key part of the onboarding process for new team members. It is a useful tool to introduce new team members to the hygiene culture and establish how they should think about their own personal hygiene in order to uphold the organization's food safety standards.

The hygiene social contract should also be used reinforce the hygiene culture across all levels of the organization. It should serve as a decision-making guide for everyone when considering facility layouts, operational flows, and designing SSOPs. Essentially, a culture of accountability should be established so that whenever a decision is made, the decision-maker asks themselves: "does this follow our organization's hygiene social contract?"

The attached hygiene social contract is an example that can be modified for your facility's needs. A Spanish version of this contract is also included; however, the contract should be translated into all major languages spoken at your facility so that each employee truly understands and can agree to the hygiene culture.



1. Download the PDF



2. Change out the logo



3. Add your company name



4. Sign and reinforce

Hygiene Social Contract

In order to create a positive hygiene environment that supports our food safety core values, we as leaders, and employees of _____ hereby agree to uphold the following rules of behavior in all interactions with ourselves, our fellow team members, and the company:

Think and act like an owner:

- Keep the bigger picture of hygiene in mind at all times
- Do the right thing even when no one is watching
- Collaborate with all organizational levels and departments to create an effective hygiene culture

See something, say something:

- If you see hygiene issues, don't just look away, inform leadership for corrective action
- If handwashing supplies are empty or running low, let leadership know

Uphold personal hygiene standards:

- Ensure your hair is washed every 2-3 days
- Keep your fingernails short and easily cleaned
- Don't wear nail polish, because it can chip off and go into food
- Make certain your clothing is clean and free of soil
- Avoid wearing jewelry

Always follow company PPE procedures:

- Always wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for the job
- Don PPE in the proper order per your SSOPs and GMPs

Always maintain PPE as an extension of your hygiene culture:

- Uniforms, aprons, frocks & outer garments should be clean at the beginning of each shift and changed regularly
- Do not wear damaged or deteriorating outer garments
 - Inform leadership if outer garments are not clean, damaged or deteriorating

Always follow hand and footwear hygiene processes:

- Always wash and dry hands thoroughly after donning PPE
 - Wash hands the same way and for the proper length every time
- If wearing gloves, sanitize gloves after donning
- Ensure that footwear can be easily sanitized before entering the production facility

Avoid food safety risks:

- Always inform manager when feeling sick
 - Do not go to work sick, and follow the company's illness policy
- Do not wear PPE outside
- Be mindful of what you touch as it could be a contamination point for pathogens or allergens

Signature

Printed Name

Position at Company

Signature

Printed Name

Position at Company

Contrato Social de Higiene

Con el fin de crear un entorno de higiene positivo que apoye nuestros valores fundamentales de seguridad alimentaria, nosotros como líderes, y los empleados de _____ aceptamos mantener las siguientes reglas de comportamiento en todas las interacciones con nosotros mismos, nuestros compañeros de equipo y la empresa:

Piensa y actúa como un propietario:

- Tenga en cuenta el panorama general de la higiene en todo momento.
- Haga lo correcto incluso cuando nadie lo esté mirando..
- Colaborar con todos los niveles y departamentos de la organización para crear una cultura de higiene eficaz.

Mira algo, di algo:

- Si ve problemas de higiene, no los ignore, infórmele a sus supervisores para que sea corregido.
- Si el jabón para manos está vacío o se está agotando, avísele a sus supervisores.

Mantener las normas de higiene personal:

- Asegúrese de lavar su cabello cada 2-3 días.
- Mantenga las uñas cortas y así será más fácil tenerlas limpias.
- No use esmalte de uñas, porque este se puede caer dentro de la comida.
- Asegúrese de que su ropa esté limpia y libre de tierra.
- Evite usar joyas.

Siga siempre los procesos y procedimientos de higiene de la empresa:

- Use siempre el equipo de protección personal (PPE) adecuado.
- Use el equipo de protección personal (PPE) en el orden que los Procedimientos Operativos Estandarizados de Saneamiento (SSOP) y las Buenas Prácticas de Fabricación (GMP) lo requieren.

Asegúrese de que su equipo de protección esté imaculado:

- Los uniformes, delantales, vestidos y prendas exteriores deben estar limpios al comienzo de cada turno y deben cambiarse regularmente.
- No use prendas exteriores dañadas o deterioradas.
 - Informar a su supervisor si las prendas exteriores no están limpias o están dañadas o deterioradas.

Siga siempre los procesos de higiene de manos y calzado:

- Lávese y séquese siempre bien las manos después de ponerse su equipo de protección personal (PPE).
 - Lávese las manos de la misma manera cada vez y tenga en cuenta el tiempo reglamentario.
- Si usa guantes, desinféctelos después de ponérselos.
- Asegúrese de que el calzado se pueda desinfectar fácilmente antes de entrar en la planta de producción

Evite los riesgos de inocuidad de los alimentos:

- Siempre informe a su supervisor cuando se sienta enfermo.
 - No vaya a trabajar enfermo y siga la política de enfermedades de la empresa.
- No use la ropa de trabajo afuera de las instalaciones.
- Ten en cuenta lo que tocas. Ya que podría ser un punto de contaminación de patógenos que causan enfermedades o sustancias que pueden causar alergias.

Firma

Nombre impreso

Posición en La Empresa

Firma

Nombre impreso

Posición en La Empresa