

Maintenance Strategy – Kitchen Equipment and Refrigeration

This category covers a broad range of a buildings kitchen systems and equipment. The information contained in this document are general recommendations and guidelines designed to bring attention to the importance and benefits of preventive maintenance strategies supporting quality educational environments. It is important for facility managers and maintenance staff to be aware of the specific systems asset types and maintenance required to effectively maintain the systems functionality and reliability through preventive maintenance requirements. Qualified in-house maintenance combined with certified vendor staff may be necessary to manage systems safely and effectively. Consult manufacturer recommendations on building kitchen system equipment maintenance requirements.

Establishing a consistent preventive maintenance plan from cleaning to general maintenance for school kitchens and equipment is key to extending the life of important systems and preventing issues. Students across the public school spectrum receive their sustenance for the day from their school cafeteria. Every day students rely on a well maintained cafeteria kitchen to get them through the school day! A school cafeteria must run smoothly. To provide an optimal working kitchen, operators must know not only how to operate their workstations, but how to best maintain them.

Protect Your Investments with Routine Maintenance - Regular maintenance can keep your kitchen equipment and refrigeration systems working optimally. Preventive Maintenance on key systems from refrigerators to freezers, and life safety systems to general cleaning, is necessary to support a quality, safe and consistent program. Providing proactive maintenance on refrigerators and freezers and other kitchen/cafeteria units is important and reduces the potential for failure and unnecessary capital expenditures.

Preventative maintenance ensures your equipment is performing at peak efficiency, supports lower energy costs, results in better tasting foods, lengthens equipment lifespan, and gives you the peace of mind that your cafeteria won't fail.

It's important to keep students and staff in mind when planning preventive maintenance work in school kitchens. Academic breaks are the most ideal time to perform extensive maintenance, repairs or replacements. This allows maintenance staff to perform duties efficiently and won't get in the way of critical time frames for breakfast, lunches and other meal preparations.

School districts and staff should be aware of inspection and maintenance requirements of key operating systems such as:

- Refrigerators, freezers, hood systems, water softeners or ice machines
- Burners and electrical wiring
- Water heaters and proper temperature settings
- Gasket replacement
- Thermostat calibration and adjustments
- Lighting system repairs
- Descaling of water lines and boilers of equipment such as steamers, ovens, dish machines, etc.

Problems which might arise due to incorrect maintenance of commercial kitchen equipment include:

- Higher risk of electrocution/fire and catastrophic destruction to equipment
- Loss of food product
- Higher energy consumption causing more expensive utility bills

Other important preventive maintenance factors should include:

- Pest control/management
- Gas burner/gas line inspections
- Thermostat calibration
- Routine and prioritized cleaning and disinfection of walls, floors, ceilings and food preparation surfaces

A well planned maintenance plan will reduce catastrophic situations, reduce fires and provide for reliable working equipment. Kitchen grease will collect on cooking equipment wires and wire insulation will become a feasting atmosphere for rodents. Oftentimes a rodent may become electrocuted and begin a fire within a control box or worse, develop a grounded short which may electrocute the kitchen staff. Facility Managers should also be aware of local NM Environment Department rules and requirements affecting maintenance. Any issues should be followed up with through a formal work order process documenting repairs and/or capital improvements.

Knowing your equipment is maintained well increases its lifespan, decreases energy intake, prevents disastrous events, and provides peace of mind.

Bottom Line: Preventive Maintenance is Essential - Keeping every part of your school building functional and aesthetically pleasing is an important part of being a facility manager. Whatever type of systems are being maintained in your buildings, everything from general everyday use to cleaning and maintenance are important factors in keeping operations running smooth. Keeping up on the manufacturer recommended maintenance can save money in the long term, reduces the need for unnecessary capital expenses and supports systems safe operation, life cycles and reliability. A kitchens systems should be integrated into the districts preventive maintenance program.

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