

MAKING

# FOOD HEALTHY & SAFE FOR CHILDREN



How to Meet the National Health and Safety  
Performance Standards—Guidelines for  
Out-of-Home Child Care Programs

**MAKING FOOD  
HEALTHY AND SAFE  
FOR CHILDREN**

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# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Use this book as a guide for meeting the nutrition standards in *National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*. The original version, *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards—Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* was developed by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics through a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. This book presents information about all of the nutrition-related standards in chapters divided by topic. Look at individual chapters for specific information such as using foods that are safe to eat (Chapter 3) or planning to meet the children’s food needs (Chapter 4).

## STANDARD NUMBERS

The small numbers at the end of some sentences (e.g., <sup>NU47</sup>) refer to the standard that is being discussed in the text. The standard is printed to the side of the page for easy reference.

## CHECKLISTS

Several chapters contain checklists that include key points from the chapter. There is a checklist for food safety and one for menu planning.

## APPENDIX

Look in the appendix for a list of community resources that can help you, a list of books and materials you can use, information about standards that only centers need to meet, and materials for parents.



## BOXES AND FIGURES

The boxes and figures contain important information and practical tips to help you meet the standards (for example, “Sample Cleaning Schedule” and “Meal and Snack Schedule”). Many of these tips are on a page by themselves. You can photocopy them and hand them out or hang them on a bulletin board, wall, or door. This book is not copyrighted—you may reproduce any part of it.



# INTRODUCTION



One of the most basic ways to show that we care about children is to feed them nourishing and safe foods. Feeding children is important for a number of reasons:

- \* Food gives children the energy and nutrients they need to be active, to think, and to grow.
- \* Food helps to keep children healthy. Good nutrition helps a child's cuts and scrapes heal. Good nutrition helps a child's body fight off colds and diarrhea.
- \* Feeding children can give them a sense of closeness with another person.
- \* Food makes children feel more comfortable and secure and takes away feelings of hunger.
- \* Feeding children helps them learn about their world. When children eat, they use all their five senses (taste, smell, sight, hearing, and touch).
- \* Children develop fine motor skills (such as picking up pieces of food between their thumb and fingers and correctly using utensils) when they eat, serve themselves, and handle food.
- \* Children develop self-esteem when they learn to feed themselves.
- \* When children eat with others, they develop language and social skills.

You have chosen to care for other people's children, and feeding these children is part of your work. Feeding children foods that are nourishing and clean keeps children healthy and safe.

## PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

This book was written to help you (1) provide children with healthy and safe food, and (2) meet the nutrition standards in *National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*.<sup>1</sup> The standards are *goals*—

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<sup>1</sup> These standards were originally published in 1992 as *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards—Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*. They were developed by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics with support from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



something to work toward. Even if you cannot meet every standard, keep the goals in mind. Every step that you take toward meeting the goals will make a difference. Follow the guidance

and suggestions in this book to help keep you and the children you care for safe and healthy.

Most of the goals are the same for family child care homes and child care centers. Centers need to meet some extra standards because they care for more children. The appendix of this book has a special section for centers.

This book can help you:

- ☆ Create a healthy and safe place for children
- ☆ Find ways to make your job easier
- ☆ Locate useful materials
- ☆ Find resources in your community

***This book will help you meet national goals, but you also need to follow state and local rules.*** To find out what the rules are, contact your state or local child care licensing or regulatory agency. If you are not regulated

by any agency, contact a local child care referral agency. You can look for a telephone number in the:

- ☆ Yellow Pages under “child care referral service”
- ☆ Blue Pages under “child care” (if available)
- ☆ Special section called “Community Service Numbers” in front of the telephone book White Pages

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF CARE PROVIDERS

1. Provide a variety of food that helps children grow and develop.
2. Provide food that is safe to eat.
3. Provide food that respects each child’s culture.
4. Pay attention to each child’s eating behavior—alert the child’s parent if the child is not eating enough of the right kinds of food.
5. Prevent injuries when preparing, handling, and eating food.
6. Bottlefeed infants whenever they are hungry.
7. Offer food every 2 to 3 hours to prevent children from feeling hungry.
8. Offer snacks only at scheduled times.
9. Give children enough time to eat (30 minutes is usually enough).
10. Provide enough help so that children feel at ease when they eat.
11. Have a friendly, comfortable place for eating—make food time fun time.
12. Help children feel good about nutritious foods.
13. Help children develop a habit of eating the right kind and amount of food.
14. Take care of yourself—eat well so that you stay healthy, feel good, and have energy to take care of children.
15. Serve as a role model.



## TIPS FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Keep these things in mind as you use this book:

Show respect for each child's culture.

Remember that each child develops differently—in both body and mind.

Talk with and involve the parent.<sup>2</sup> Support the relationship between parent and child.

Plan activities that nurture the child's development.

Keep written policies, procedures, and health records.

Identify requirements and who has to make sure they are met.

Use health records to:

- ⊗ keep track of the child's nutrition and health,
- ⊗ manage minor or chronic disease (through special diets),
- ⊗ keep track of food allergies,
- ⊗ know who to contact if you need a medical decision about a child, and
- ⊗ inform the parent about the child's health (including eating patterns) and nutritional status or follow-up to a specific problem.

Keep records private.

Know and follow your policies and procedures about caring for sick children.

Make sure that all care providers know how to:

- ⊗ prevent illness in themselves and in the children,
- ⊗ prevent injury to themselves and to the children, and
- ⊗ meet the children's special nutrition needs.

Provide food that:

- ⊗ is clean and safe,
- ⊗ helps to meet the children's daily nutritional needs,
- ⊗ introduces the children to each other's cultures, and
- ⊗ gives the children a chance to learn.

***As much as you can, provide care for all children—those with disabilities and those without disabilities—together.***

<sup>2</sup> We use the term *parent* for convenience to describe the adult or adults responsible for the care of the child. This person could be a grandparent, custodian, or legal guardian.



Some of the information in this book is based on the requirements for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). If you participate in that program, you have a separate set of rules that you need to follow. Contact your sponsor or state agency if you need help following those rules.



## KEEPING EVERYTHING CLEAN



One of the most important things you can do for children is to provide them with clean, safe food. Cleanliness is very important in a child care setting. Keeping everything clean makes it



Your state and local health department can help you learn proper food protection, preparation, and sanitation practices. **NU68** You will find your local health department in the city or county section of your telephone book.

hard for bacteria to grow. Keep hands, equipment, dishes, containers, and food clean and free of germs to help protect yourself and the children from illness.

**NU68** The facility shall conform to the applicable standards for centers and small and large family child care homes of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration model food sanitation standards and all applicable state and local food service rules and regulations for centers and small and large family child care homes regarding safe food protection and sanitation/disinfection practices.

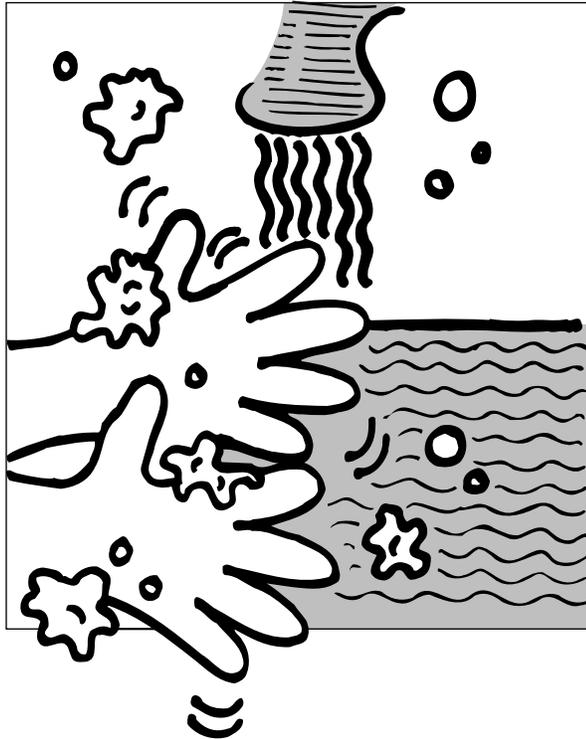
**EDITORS' NOTE:** Refer to revised standards, U.S. Public Health Service, FDA, *Food Code*, 1995.

**NU36** Children and staff shall wash their hands as specified in Handwashing.

**HP30** Children and staff shall wash and scrub their hands for at least 10 seconds with soap and warm running water.

### WASHING HANDS—YOURS AND THE CHILDREN'S **NU36**

One of the easiest and best ways to prevent the spread of germs is for you and all child care providers to wash your hands often (e.g., before preparing or eating food, after using the toilet or changing a diaper). When you wash your hands, scrub them with soap and warm running water for at least 10 seconds. **HP30** Children may need to use liquid soap if bar soap is too hard for them to handle. Be sure to wash between fingers and under fingernails. Use a nail brush if necessary. Always use disposable towels to dry hands. Cloth towels can spread germs.





**HP29** Staff and children shall wash their hands at least at the following times, and whenever hands are contaminated with body fluids:

- a) Before food preparation, handling, or serving
- b) After toileting or changing diapers
- c) After assisting a child with toilet use
- d) Before handling food
- e) Before any food service activity (including setting the table)
- f) Before and after eating meals or snacks
- g) After handling pets or other animals

**HP36** Handwashing after exposure to blood or blood-containing body fluids and tissue discharges as specified in Handwashing shall be observed.

**HP128** The use of tobacco (in any form), alcohol, and illegal drugs shall be prohibited on the facility premises during the hours of operation.

**HP31** The facility shall ensure that staff and children are instructed in, and monitored on, the use of running water, soap, and single-use or disposable towels in handwashing as specified in this chapter.

**NU98** Small and large family child care homes shall provide a three-compartment dishwashing area or a dishwasher. At least a two-compartment sink shall be installed to be used in conjunction with a dishwasher to wash, rinse, and disinfect dishes. The dishwashing machine must be chemically or heat-disinfected. If a dishwasher or a three-compartment dishwashing area is not used, paper cups and plates and plastic utensils shall be used and shall be disposed of after every use.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU AND THE CHILDREN WASH YOUR HANDS? <sup>HP29</sup>

### ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS . . .

- ♡ After diapering a child or running your hand inside a diaper to see if it needs changing
- ♡ After using the toilet or helping a child to use the toilet
- ♡ After sneezing or using a tissue or helping a child to do so
- ♡ After coughing into your hand
- ♡ After playing with, feeding, or caring for pets or other animals
- ♡ After eating, drinking, or smoking
- ♡ After handling raw food
- ♡ Before preparing, handling, or serving food, including bottles of infant formula or breast milk
- ♡ Before setting the table or sitting down to eat
- ♡ Any time hands come into contact with body fluids (especially if they contain blood) <sup>HP36</sup>
- ♡ ANY TIME you are not sure your hands are clean <sup>HP29</sup>

**Do not smoke or allow others to smoke during the hours that children are in care. <sup>HP128</sup>**

Teach children how to wash their hands, and remind them to do it often. <sup>HP31</sup> Set a good example for the children. Remember—when in doubt, wash your hands! Be sure that the children in your care do, too.

## WASHING AND DRYING DISHES

To clean and sanitize dishes and utensils, wash them in either:

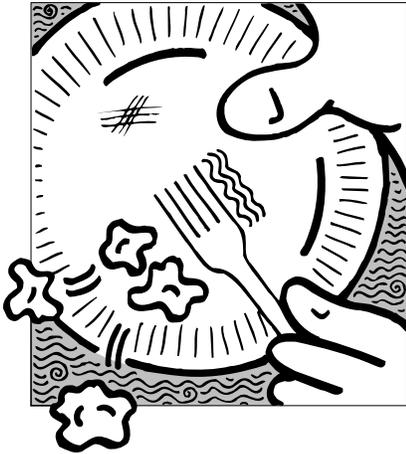
- a) A dishwasher that sanitizes using heat or chemicals **OR**
- b) A three-compartment sink where dishes can be washed, rinsed, and then sanitized. If you do not have a sink with three compartments, use a large dish pan as the second and/or third compartment. <sup>NU98</sup>





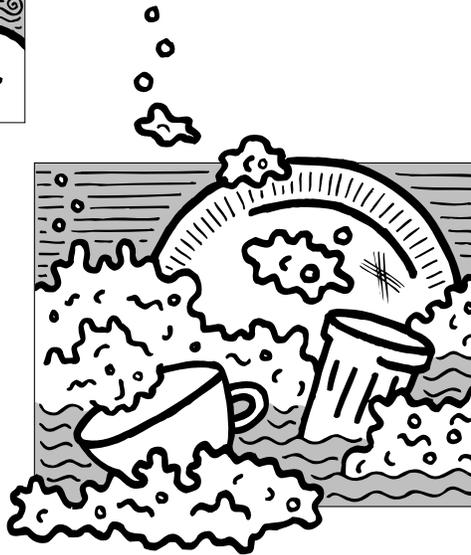
***Check with your local health department. Sometimes local health codes specify what equipment family child care home providers must have.***

When using a three-compartment sink, do this to wash, rinse, and sanitize dishes: **NU99**



Scrape food from plates, utensils, pots and pans, and equipment used to prepare food.

Wash the dishes thoroughly in hot soapy water. Use clean dishcloths to wash dishes. Wash dishcloths each day. Don't use sponges—they often spread germs.



Rinse the dishes in hot water.



Sanitize the dishes in one of these ways:

- a) Soak the dishes (completely covered) in 170°F water for at least 30 seconds. (You will need a utensil thermometer to check the water temperature.)

**OR**

### SOME IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

*Sanitize*—to wash with hot soapy water

*Disinfect*—to destroy harmful bacteria (germs) using heat or chemicals

**NU99** If a dishwasher is not used, reusable food service equipment and eating utensils shall be scraped of food when necessary, thoroughly washed in hot water containing a detergent solution, rinsed, and then disinfected by one of the following methods:

- a) Complete immersion in hot water and maintenance at a temperature of 170°F for not less than 30 seconds. The items shall be air-dried.
- b) Immersion for at least 1 minute in a lukewarm (not less than 75°F) chemical disinfecting solution equivalent to a chlorine bath containing a minimum of 50 to 100 ppm of available chlorine at all times. (Three-fourths to 1½ tablespoons of fresh liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water will usually provide the proper mixture.) The disinfected items shall be air-dried.

Other methods may be used if approved by the governing health agency.



**NU99** If a dishwasher is not used, reusable food service equipment and eating utensils shall be scraped of food when necessary, thoroughly washed in hot water containing a detergent solution, rinsed, and then disinfected by one of the following methods:

- a) Complete immersion in hot water and maintenance at a temperature of 170°F for not less than 30 seconds. The items shall be air-dried.
- b) Immersion for at least 1 minute in a lukewarm (not less than 75°F) chemical disinfecting solution equivalent to a chlorine bath containing a minimum of 50 to 100 ppm of available chlorine at all times. (Three-fourths to 1½ tablespoons of fresh liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water will usually provide the proper mixture.) The disinfected items shall be air-dried.

Other methods may be used if approved by the governing health agency.

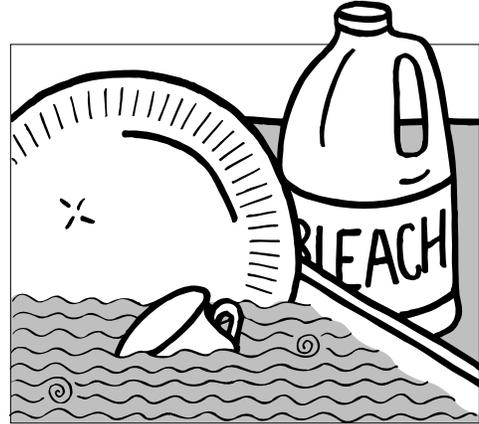
**NU56** All sinks shall be supplied with hot and cold running water under pressure.

**FA169** Facilities shall have water heating facilities that are properly connected to the water supply system. These facilities shall be capable of heating water to at least 120°F and shall deliver an adequate amount of hot water at every required fixture. Where a dishwasher is utilized, means shall be provided to heat water supplied to such equipment to at least 140°F.

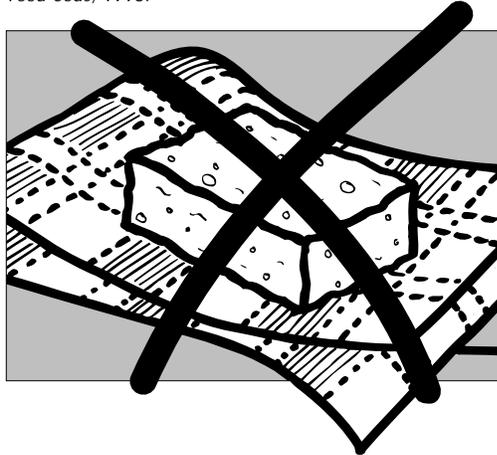
**FA171** Food preparation, handwashing, and bathing facilities shall be provided with hot and cold or temperate running water. Where such water will be in direct contact with children, the temperatures shall not exceed 120°F. Scald prevention devices such as special faucets or thermostatically controlled valves shall be permanently installed to provide this temperate water. These temperature limitations do not apply to water supplying dishwashers or laundry equipment where there is no direct exposure to children.

**NU98** Small and large family child care homes shall provide a three-compartment dishwashing area or a dishwasher. At least a two-compartment sink shall be installed to be used in conjunction with a dishwasher to wash, rinse, and disinfect dishes. The dishwashing machine must be chemically or heat-disinfected. If a dishwasher or a three-compartment dishwashing area is not used, paper cups and plates and plastic utensils shall be used and shall be disposed of after every use.

- b) Soak the dishes for at least 10 seconds in a disinfecting solution of chlorine bleach and warm water (at least 75°F). Use ¾ to 1½ tablespoons of liquid chlorine bleach mixed with 1 gallon of water. **NU99**



**Editors' note:** Time for soaking based on U.S. Public Health Service, FDA, *Food Code*, 1995.



Air-dry the dishes. **NU99**  
Dishtowels and sponges can spread germs.

### WATER TEMPERATURE

Sinks should have soap available and hot and cold running water under pressure. This is necessary to clean equipment and wash hands properly. **NU56** In sinks where you will wash dishes, the water should be at least 120°F. Water in the dishwasher should be at least 140°F. **FA169**

Sinks where children wash their hands should not have water that is hotter than 120°F. Very hot water can burn children. Use a utensil thermometer to check the temperature of the water. Install special faucets or temperature control valves to keep children from being burned. **FA171**

**If you do not have a dishwasher or need some time to arrange for a three-compartment washing area, use disposable paper plates and cups, and sturdy plastic utensils, to help prevent the spread of germs. **NU98** (Do not use foam cups and plates or light-**



weight plastic utensils because young children could bite off pieces and choke.) Throw away these items and other single-service items such as paper bibs and napkins after each use. **NU65** Use these disposable items until you can arrange for a three-compartment washing area.

All cooking equipment should be washed with hot soapy water, rinsed, sanitized, and air-dried.

### CLEANING EQUIPMENT

Keep all kitchen equipment clean and in good working order. **NU52** Keep all surfaces clean in the food preparation area. This includes tables and countertops, floors, and shelves. Surfaces that food will be placed on should be made of smooth material that has no holes or cracks. **NU51** Clean all food service and eating areas with clean dishcloths and hot soapy water before and after each meal. Wash plastic tablecloths and placemats with clean dishcloths and hot soapy water. To disinfect these surfaces, use a solution of  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup liquid chlorine bleach mixed with 1 gallon of tap water. Leave the surface glistening and allow it to air-dry.

After every use, clean mixers and other cooking equipment with hot soapy water, rinse well, and let air-dry. Remember to unplug all electrical appliances before washing. Store all food equipment in a clean covered area or cover the equipment. **NU95**

Keep refrigerators and freezers clean. **NU88** Scrub cutting boards with hot soapy water before using them for a different food. Use only cutting boards made of nonporous material (e.g., plastic; hard, close-grained wood). Don't use boards with cracks or crevices where germs can collect. **NU96** It is best to have two cutting boards—one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood, and another for cooked foods and raw fruits and vegetables.

**NU65** Single-service articles such as napkins, bibs, dishes, and utensils shall be discarded after each use.

**NU52** All kitchen equipment shall be clean and in good operable condition and shall be properly maintained.

**NU51** All food-contact-area surfaces (including tables and countertops) and floors and shelving in the food preparation areas shall be in good repair and shall be made of smooth, nonporous materials that may be easily sanitized and kept clean.

**NU95** Areas and equipment used for the storage, preparation, and service of food shall be kept clean. All of the food preparation, food service, and dining areas shall be cleaned and sanitized between uses and before and after each meal. Food preparation equipment shall be cleaned and sanitized after each use and stored in a clean and sanitary manner.

**NU88** Refrigerators and freezers shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

**NU96** Cutting boards shall be made of nonporous material and shall be scrubbed with hot water and detergent and sanitized between use for different foods. Boards with crevices and cuts shall not be used.



### BE GOOD TO THE EARTH

Recycle whenever possible. Here are some things you can do:

- ✧ Find out what your community recycles—glass containers, plastic containers, aluminum cans, steel cans.
- ✧ Take canvas or string bags with you to the store to use instead of paper or plastic ones.
- ✧ Buy food in bulk—without excess packaging.



**NU101** Washable napkins (when allowed by the regulatory agency) and bibs shall be laundered after each use. Tablecloths, if approved for use, shall be kept clean.

**NU50** The food preparation area of the kitchen shall be separate from the eating, play, toilet, and bathroom areas and from areas where animals are kept, and shall not be used as a passageway while food is being prepared. Food preparation areas shall be separated from areas used by the children for activities unrelated to food by a door, gate, counter, or room divider except in small family child care homes when separation may limit child supervision.

**HP126** Live animals and fowl shall be prohibited from food preparation, food storage, and eating areas.

**HP125** Animal food supplies shall be kept out of reach of the children.

**NU54** There shall be a handwashing sink(s) separate from the sink(s) used for food preparation. Handwashing sinks shall not be used for food preparation.

**NU91** Garbage shall be placed in containers inaccessible to children and shall be removed from the kitchen daily. The containers shall be labeled and covered with tight-fitting lids between deposits.

If you use washable napkins and bibs, wash them after every use. Young children should have clean bibs. Bibs should not be shared. If you use tablecloths, keep them clean. <sup>NU101</sup> Some states have rules about whether washable items like tablecloths and placemats can be used and how often they should be washed. Check with your local health department sanitarian or extension agent.

(For more information, see Figure 2.1, “Sample Cleaning Schedule.”)

### KEEPING THE KITCHEN CLEAN

Keep the food preparation areas separate from the eating, playing, diaper changing, and toileting areas. Keep pets and their food out of the food preparation area. If this is not always possible, keep pets out of the kitchen while you are preparing food. Keep pets away from areas where children are eating. Do not use the food preparation area as a passageway while food is being prepared. <sup>NU50, HP126, HP125</sup>

If possible, have two sinks in the food preparation area—one for handwashing and the other for food preparation. <sup>NU54</sup> NEVER wash your hands when food is in the sink. Wash your hands before you begin preparing food. If you use the kitchen sink to wash your hands, then wash the sink thoroughly with hot, soapy water and rinse it before you start preparing food.

Clean fruits and vegetables and clean the sink before you work with meat and poultry. Never have raw meat or poultry out on the counter or sink near fruits and vegetables, breads, or cooked meats. Always wash hands, utensils, and counter or sink after handling raw meat or any food product.

Keep garbage in containers with disposable liners and tight-fitting lids. Store the containers where children cannot get into them. Remove garbage from the kitchen daily, or more often as needed. <sup>NU91</sup>



**FIGURE 2.1 SAMPLE CLEANING SCHEDULE**

SAMPLE CLEANING SCHEDULE						
TASK	HOW OFTEN?					COMMENTS
	after each use	before & after each use	daily	weekly	as necessary	
<b>RANGE</b> Clean grill and grease pans Clean burners Clean outside Wipe out oven Clean edges around hood Clean hood screening and grease trap	✓ ✓		✓	✓ ✓ ✓		
<b>REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER</b> Defrost freezer and clean shelves Wipe outside Dust top Clean inside shelves in order			✓	✓ ✓	✓	When more than 1/4 inch frost develops or temperature exceeds 0°F
<b>MIXER AND CAN OPENER</b> Clean mixer base and attachments Clean and wipe can opener blade	✓ ✓					
<b>WORK SURFACES</b> Clean and sanitize Organize for neatness		✓	✓			
<b>WALLS AND WINDOWS</b> Wipe if splattered or greasy Wipe window sills Wipe window screens					✓ ✓ ✓	
<b>SINKS</b> Keep clean Scrub	✓		✓			
<b>CARTS (IF APPLICABLE)</b> Wipe down Sanitize	✓		✓			
<b>GARBAGE</b> Take out Clean can			✓		✓	Or more often as needed
<b>TABLES AND CHAIRS</b> Clean and sanitize		✓				
<b>LINENS</b> Wash cloth napkins Wash tablecloths and placemats  Wash dishcloths Wash potholders	✓ ✓  if plastic		✓ ✓	✓		
<b>STORAGE AREAS</b> Wipe shelves, cabinets, and drawers					✓	

