

§416.5 Employee Hygiene

Employees can be disease carriers and bring contaminants from the outside such as dirt, debris, and other foreign materials that can both indirectly and directly contaminate food. Food borne illness outbreaks have been linked to poor personal hygiene of workers involved in food processing and handling. Therefore, personal hygienic practices for employees are essential to the production of safe and wholesome meat and poultry products. The performance standard allows establishments to develop alternative or innovative means to ensure that employee practices do not result in insanitary conditions or adulteration of product.

§416.5(a) Cleanliness. All persons working in contact with product, food-contact surfaces, and product-packaging materials must adhere to hygienic practices while on duty to prevent adulteration of product and the creation of insanitary conditions.

Examples of the failure to meet the requirements for this regulation are:

- An employee handling exposed product with her bare hands is wearing nail polish.
- An employee wipes his runny nose on the sleeve of his smock.
- Two employees handling exposed product are not taking measures to prevent their hair from falling into product.
- An employee adding pork trimmings into grinders is wearing a wristwatch.

§416.5(b) Clothing. Aprons, frocks, and other outer clothing worn by persons who handle product must be of material that is disposable or readily cleaned. Clean garments must be worn at the start of each working day and garments must be changed during the day as often as necessary to prevent adulteration of product and the creation of insanitary conditions.

Examples of the failure to meet the requirements for this regulation are:

- An employee from the sausage stuffing area wearing a soiled smock entered the ready-to-eat product cooler.
- Two employees in the boning department have frocks with product residue from the previous day's production on them at the start of operations.

§416.5(c) Disease control. Any person who has or appears to have an infectious disease, open lesion, including boils, sores, or infected wounds, or any other abnormal source of microbial contamination, must be excluded from any operations which could result in product adulteration and the creation of insanitary conditions until the condition is corrected.

Examples of the failure to meet the requirements for this regulation are:

- An employee who is handing exposed product has an uncovered sore on his bare forearm.
- An employee moving pallets of boxed product from the end of the production lines to the freezer appears to have a cold (exhibiting symptoms such as persistent coughing, sneezing, sniffing, etc.).