

Focus on hygiene process

THE National Environment Agency wants to get tougher to ensure cleaner and more hygienic foodcourts ("Stiffer penalties for food hygiene lapses"; Tuesday), although past campaigns which adopted such measures have not had sustained success.

A more effective way to achieve better hygiene is to focus on the process by which cleaners work in foodcourts.

While cleaners make frequent rounds of a food centre, their cleaning efforts usually involve a couple of swipes of the part of a table that is dirty. Some sweep the scraps on to the floor.

Although an average food centre is small, the cleaners do not appear to

wash their cleaning cloth regularly at the sinks installed nearby. The cloth should be soaked in disinfectant so that the tables are at least clear of infection.

Food for thought

"What puzzled me was that the dessert stall carried an "A" grading, despite the unhygienic way in which food was handled."

MR RAYMOND LEE: "My wife and I dined at Changi Airport Terminal 3. At the dessert stall, the staff member wore a glove on one hand but handled the ice kachang with both hands when shaping the shaven ice in the

Often the cleaned table is so wet that one has to wait for it to dry.

As for the trays, the cleaners usually collect them from the customers and do

bowl. She also handled cash with her gloved hand before preparing the ice kachang. What puzzled me was that the dessert stall carried an "A" grading, despite the unhygienic way in which food was handled."

not bother to wash them clean before recirculating them.

A food centre may appear clean, but bad habits - like a vendor's thumb stuck in a bowl of noodles as he serves it to a customer - betray a less than hygienic attitude.

It is also not uncommon to see a large tub of rice being splashed by water from a sink that is being used by a customer to wash his hands.

While many stalls seem to be blessed with "A" certification, the grading usually does not seem to cover the toilets.

Enforcement is the key to cleanliness but it may not always succeed with a fine.

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