

Stepping up checks to ensure hygiene is OK


Thousands of hygiene checks have been carried out in the first month of the revamped Singapore's OK (SOK) campaign, revived recently to

raise cleanliness levels and consumer confidence and also because of the threat of the Influenza A (H1N1) flu virus. Veteran environmental health


officer Guy Gabriel Stahlmann shows **Victoria Vaughan** what is covered in hygiene vetting during his rounds at the Commonwealth Crescent Market



Apart from being clean, toilets must have fixtures, lighting and flush mechanisms that work, and there must be enough toilet paper and soap. Mr Stahlmann also checks the cleaning roster to make sure it is being kept to. He finds that the hand dryer in the men's toilet needs fixing. ST PHOTOS: DESMOND FOO

My Pledge 

1. Do temperature-check.
Hentikan suhu badan
2. Do not work when feeling unwell. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
Jangan bekerja apabila anda merasa tidak sihat. Jumpaah doktor dengan segera.
3. Practise good personal hygiene and toilet etiquette.
Amalkan amalan kebersihan diri dan toilet yang baik ketika menggunakan tandas.
4. Ensure hygiene food preparation.
Pastikan kebersihan makanan semasa penyediaan makanan.
5. Provide serving spoons where necessary.
Sediakan sudu hidangan apabila diperlukan.
6. Practice good housekeeping.
Amalkan amalan kebersihan rumah yang baik.
7. Ensure proper storage and disposal of waste.
Pastikan penyimpanan dan pembuangan sampah sesuai dengan cara yang betul.
8. Have a pest control programme.
Laksanakan program kawalan serangga untuk yang berkaitan.
9. Have a cleaning/maintenance programme.
Laksanakan program pemeliharaan/pembaikan.
10. Carry out thorough cleaning at least 4 times a year.
Jalankan pembersihan yang teliti sekurang-kurangnya 4 kali setahun.

Signed by: 

The SOK endorsement is an added layer of hygiene vetting on top of the requirements for a stall licence. To get SOK status, hawkers must pledge not to come to work when sick, practise good personal hygiene, ensure hygienic food preparation and carry out a thorough cleaning four times a year. About a quarter of hawker centres – 30 out of 109 – have gained SOK status, along with 1,595 food shops and 8,431 public toilets. They display SOK stickers and decals. The campaign is being extended to dormitories, construction sites and preschools. PHOTO: NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



Every stall must be inspected and pass muster to achieve SOK status. National Environment Agency staff speak to hawkers and cleaning contractors at mass meetings, sometimes held up to five times for each centre to ensure everyone knows how to attain SOK status. At 181 Yong Tau Fu stall, Mr Stahlmann checks the food containers, the floor, bowls and shelves to see if they are clean, and even bangs his hand on the workstations to scare out any pests. He asks stall owner Heng Swee Yong, 50, to dust his shelves but finds everything else in good order. He spends 10 minutes on average with each stallholder. It can take one or two days to go through all the stalls – there are 102 at the hawker centre – and return visits are often involved.



The eating area must be clean: Tables should be cleared within five minutes using the recommended two-cloth system – one to clean and one to dry. Mr Stahlmann checks for pests, litter and food spills, and that the tables and seats are not damaged. He calls the cleaning contractor when he notices that a bin is getting full. "If we can sort things out on the spot, then we do," he says.