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Food

Safety

for

Events:

An

Effective

Approach

Open social media sharing

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Introduction

Fire Safety, [Crowd Safety](#), and Food Safety might still be among the lesser-known aspects of health and safety, but they are very much priorities that we focus on, especially when it comes to large-scale events.

At [Soundstorm](#) 2024, one of the world's largest music festivals with over 150,000 daily patrons and approximately 15,000 crew members, food safety isn't just a priority – it's a responsibility.

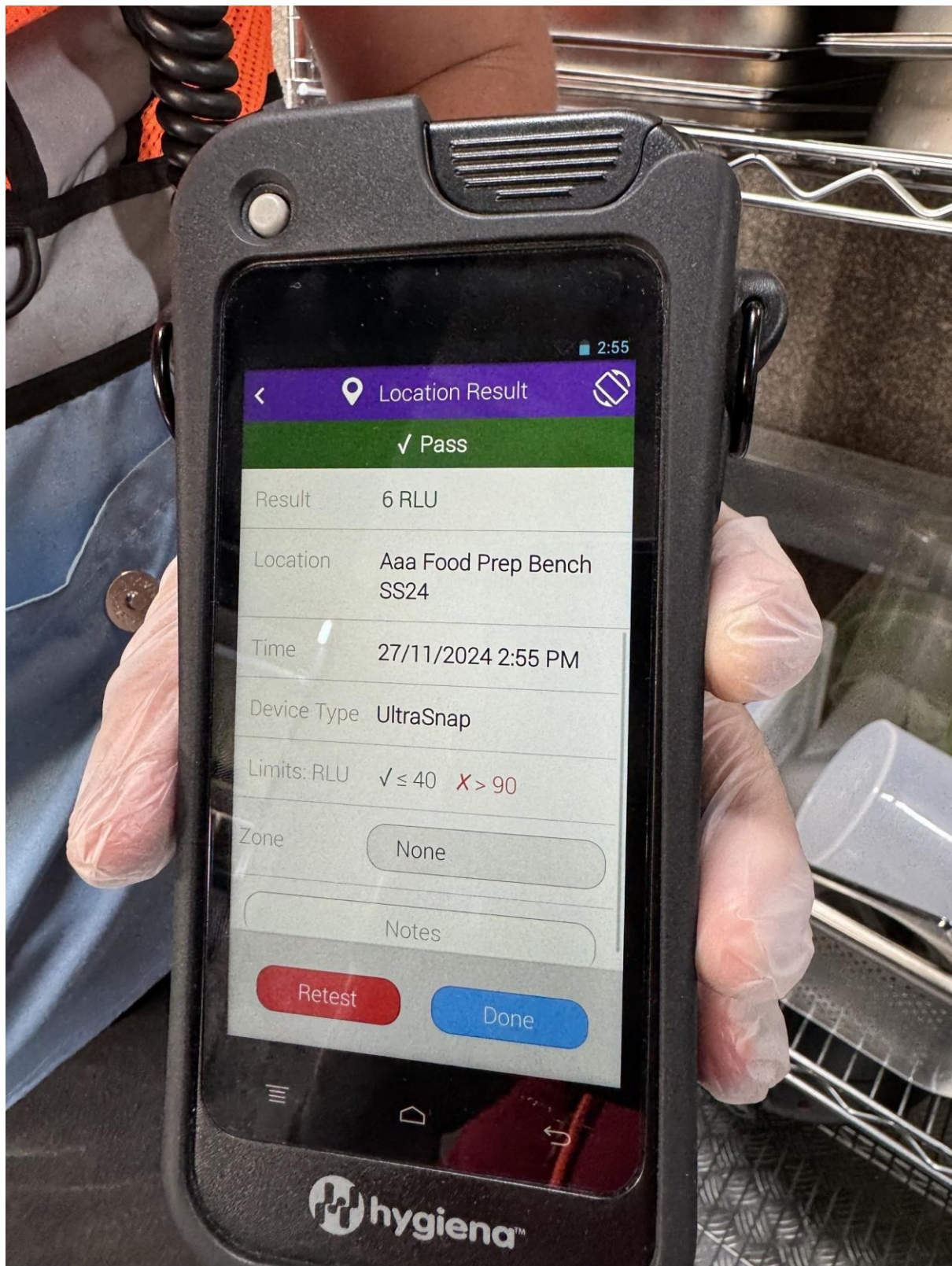
It's a responsibility we take seriously.

We recently wrote about [the importance of crew food](#) and feeding the crews working on your events well. Providing good food, safe food, is key.

Behind the scenes, our our Safety Team works tirelessly to ensure every meal served to staff, performers, and attendees is prepared in a clean and safe environment.

One of the key components of this effort is our dedicated team of Food Safety professionals, who go beyond basic compliance to create a culture of excellence among kitchens and food vendors.

Here's how we do it.



The Role of Food Safety Professionals

Our Food Safety team conducts regular audits of all kitchens and food vendor setups during the festival. These audits involve comprehensive inspections looking at everything from food storage temperatures to cleaning protocols.

However, our role is not merely to show gaps – we believe in empowering vendors to maintain high standards by providing [hands-on education](#).

Sharing knowledge and experience with others in our industry is a key part of the [Safe Events Global vision](#).

We know [our approach](#) isn't necessarily typical, but we do believe it's the correct approach.

We are big believers in [involving Health & Safety professionals early](#) on in the event planning process. From a Food Safety perspective, being involved early allows us to set out standards and processes and gives us time to engage with vendors to help them ensure safety and quality.

By demonstrating effective cleaning techniques, explaining why specific procedures are critical, and reinforcing best practices, our professionals ensure every food vendor and kitchen staff member is equipped to succeed.

Why Cleaning Standards Matter

In a bustling festival environment like Soundstorm 2024, cleanliness is critical.

With tens of thousands of meals prepared daily, the risks of cross-contamination, bacterial growth, and food-borne illnesses increase dramatically if cleaning protocols are not meticulously followed.

Proper cleaning isn't just about appearance – it's about removing harmful pathogens that could compromise food safety. From cutting boards to countertops, every surface must meet stringent hygiene standards.

Here are some reasons the Safe Events Global Food Safety team is helping caterers focus on correct cleaning techniques

Food Safety and Hygiene

Preventing Food-borne Illness: With large-scale events, serving food to so many people increases the risk of contamination. Proper cleaning eliminates bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens.

Compliance with Regulations: Health Departments often have stringent rules for Food Safety. Cleanliness ensures compliance and avoids fines or shutdowns.

Cross-Contamination: In busy kitchens, cross-contamination can occur between raw and cooked foods. Regular cleaning of surfaces and utensils helps to prevent this.

Efficiency in Operations

Minimised Disruptions: A clean, organised kitchen allows staff to work faster and more efficiently, which is crucial when preparing food for thousands of guests.

Improved Workflow: Clean workspaces reduce the risk of accidents, such as slips or spills, and help staff locate utensils and ingredients easily.

Positive Guest Experience

Reputation Management: A clean kitchen reflects the event's overall quality. Food prepared in hygienic conditions boosts guest satisfaction and trust.

Prevention of Complaints: Visible cleanliness (or lack thereof) can directly impact attendee feedback.

Pest Control

Deterring Infestations: Leftover food scraps, dirty dishes, or spills attract pests like rodents and insects. Cleaning helps ensure these are not an issue.

Long-Term Prevention: Keeping the kitchen clean helps prevent pests from becoming a recurring problem.

Staff Morale and Safety

Better Working Conditions: Employees feel more motivated and less stressed in a clean environment, which improves performance.

Health of Workers: Dirty kitchens can lead to staff illnesses, absences, or even injuries due to clutter or unsafe conditions.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

Efficient Resource Use: Cleaning systems ensure minimal food waste and proper disposal, aligning with sustainability goals.

Avoiding Wastage: A clean kitchen prevents spoilage and ensures better stock management.

Keeping a hygienic environment in which to prepare and serve food may seem like common sense, but there's a lot to it.



Practical Tips

Use proper cleaning schedules to manage tasks during busy periods.

Train staff on cleaning best practices to ensure consistency.

Invest in high-quality cleaning tools and non-toxic disinfectants to maintain safety and efficiency.

To verify the effectiveness of cleaning procedures, our Food Safety team employs ATP swab testing kits.

What is ATP Swabbing?

ATP swabbing assesses the presence of residual organic matter that may linger on a surface, device, or piece of equipment after cleaning.

Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is an enzyme found in all organic materials – both living and once-living – including blood, saliva, and bacteria.

The process involves swabbing the surface to be evaluated and placing the swab into a handheld device known as a luminometer. Results are typically available within seconds.

Additionally, all ATP systems are equipped with software that enables users to track trends and analyse data.

It's important to note that ATP testing is often mistakenly regarded as a method for detecting microorganisms – however, only microbiological testing can serve that purpose.

Nevertheless, since any organic residue can serve as a food source for bacteria, understanding a surface's overall cleanliness is crucial for effective cleaning.

ATP monitoring has emerged as a promising and dependable way to assess cleanliness.

Using ATP testing assists our Food Safety Team in tracking the caterer's cleaning processes, swiftly identifying problem areas, and comparing outcomes across various units or multiple facilities.



Using ATP Swabbing to Improve Hygiene on Site

The ATP swabbing process at [Soundstorm](#) 2024 goes beyond simple inspection.

It serves as a teaching tool for cleaners, many of whom may not fully understand the correct cleaning procedures or the importance of thorough sanitisation in food preparation areas.

By using ATP swabs, we can visually and immediately show staff the effectiveness of their cleaning. If an area fails the swab test, we guide them step by step on how to improve their technique – whether it is using the right cleaning agents, adjusting their approach, or addressing overlooked areas.

This in-person, [first-hand training](#) ensures that cleaners gain a practical understanding of proper cleaning methods. By demonstrating the process in real-time, they see the direct impact of their efforts, which fosters accountability and improves overall hygiene outcomes.

This proactive use of ATP swabbing is a key element of our approach to maintaining a safe, clean, and food-safe environment at Soundstorm 2024.

Keeping Food Safe, Training People, and Perfecting Processes

At Safe Events Global, our mission at Soundstorm and on all our shows goes beyond compliance.

We are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of food safety while empowering people and improving processes.

The two core pillars on which we build what we do, [people + process](#), are at the heart of everything we do.

To achieve this, we focus on in-person training for individuals involved in the food handling process. By teaching not just the “how” but the “why” behind effective cleaning and hygiene practices, we help build a culture of responsibility and excellence.

This extends to implementing robust systems that support both creativity and discipline, enabling our team to adapt and innovate while maintaining strict safety standards.

Creativity plays a pivotal role in our approach.

We encourage our teams to think beyond rigid checklists and develop solutions tailored to the unique challenges of an event like Soundstorm.

Our ‘don’t be a dick’ mantra serves as a reminder that teamwork, respect, and accountability are non-negotiable.

By fostering a positive and collaborative environment, we ensure everyone – from cleaners to food vendors – shares the responsibility of delivering safe, high-quality food experiences to guests, crew and artists alike.

Through this balance of rigorous training, thoughtful process design, and a people-first approach, Safe Events Global continues to set the standard for food safety at events like Soundstorm