

The new Queensland Food Act – will your hotel’s food & beverage areas comply?

In September 2004, the Cabinet was given the authority to prepare a draft bill with the new Food Act being introduced into Parliament during 2005. The new Food Act replaces the existing Act and it important that all QHA members are aware of these changes. A disturbing number of hotels lack the necessary cleaning, sanitising and maintenance systems to meet the requirements outlined in the Act and could be heavily fined by Environmental health officers (EHO’s), according to Mark Davies from Jaymak – a specialist in this field.

Mr. Davies and his team of ‘mould & bacteria treatment specialists’ have inspected food & beverage areas in hundreds of hotels throughout South-East Queensland and believe that over 50 % of them have serious problems with mould & other contaminates especially around their beer systems under the bars and in the coolroom fan/cooling units. Under the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), a bi-national standard for food safety, one of the requirement states that “the food premises must be maintained to a standard of cleanliness where there is **NO** accumulation of food waste, dirt, grease or other visible matter such as mould”. This is one of many requirements that EHO’s will be looking at when they consider the cleanliness of your hotel’s food & beverage areas, stated Mr. Davies.

“Many people are not aware of the dangers of airborne and surface contaminants in food and beverage storage areas. Mould & bacteria will affect the quality of food and beer in these areas if not correctly treated. It also increases the problems of bar flies, cockroaches and other pests. Hotel owners and Licensees also have a ‘Duty of Care’ responsibility under the current Occupational Health & Safety Act to protect their employees from injury, risk to health and exposure to atmospheric and surface contamination,” said Mr. Davies.

Certain fungi can induce allergies and other health problems in sensitive individuals. Affected individuals manifest symptoms such as fever, shortness of breath, cough, muscle aches, rashes and other general asthma and allergy symptoms. A consequence of these ailments, according to the EPA, is a significant decrease in worker efficiency, concentration and productivity.

“Jaymak was setup to provide preventative maintenance programs for coolrooms and refrigerated food & beverage areas to help hotel owners with these types of health & safety issues. The more informed you are of the changing standards and requirements, the easier it is to implement the necessary safety procedures and cleaning systems into the everyday running of your establishment,” said Mr. Davies.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the requirements under the new Food Act and how they can have the appropriate cleaning & maintenance systems implemented into their establishments should contact Jaymak on (07) 5575 9882 for a FREE consultation.