Wash Hand Basin Requirements at Food Sampling Stands

At Food Drink & Hospitality Week we were asked an important question: when is a wash hand basin (WHB) required on a stand where food sampling is taking place? This doc sets out a fuller answer.

Where the standards come from

The UK's major event venues have come together as the Association of Event Venues (AEV) and agreed a set of minimum standards for events held at their venues. These are published in a document called the eGuide, which is revised every August.

The eGuide includes a Catering Section covering both catering and food sampling at events. It sets out clear requirements for when a WHB is needed, based on the risk category of the food operation.

The three risk categories

Para 57 of the eGuide details the washing facilities required for each category of food operation (see also the Venue Specific Rules at the end of the Catering Section):

Low Risk A) Serving pre-packed, ambient foods e.g. crisps, drinks, chocolate, snack bars, single-serving cakes, or; B) Serving products portioned and placed in individual containers off-site and not handled on site.	**No Hand Washing Facilities Required on the Stand** Exhibitors should have: • Sanitising hand-wipes or anti-bacterial hand gel • Anti-bacterial cleaner and/or sanitiser
Medium Risk A) Serving pre-prepared and pre-packaged (sealed) foods requiring heating up e.g. pre-packaged sauces, soups, tinned ingredients etc. or; B) Serving "Ready to Eat" foods requiring handling/portioning on the stand including ice cream, cheese, ham and other cooked meats.	**Washing Facilities** • Hand-wash basin with an adequate supply of hot water, liquid soap, hand-drying facilities. (This should be set up before any food preparation begins.) • Disposable or sufficient quantities of utensils, if they are to be washed off site each day. • A dedicated wash-up sink if utensils are to be washed on site. • Anti-bacterial cleaner and/or sanitiser.
High Risk A) Cooking with raw ingredients or altering the food's properties with temperature e.g. rice, fish, eggs, meat (including burgers and sausages), poultry, plant-based foods, pulses and grains.	**Washing Facilities** • Hand-wash basin with an adequate supply of hot and cold water, liquid soap, hand-drying facilities. (This should be set up before any food preparation begins.) • Separate sink for equipment washing. • Separate sink for food washing/preparation.

B) Preparing/Serving high risk raw foods such as shellfish, Sushi and similar.	• Anti-bacterial cleaner and/or sanitiser.

Communal facilities

Some event organisers, for example at Food Drink & Hospitality Week, provide communal wash-up sinks within the halls to remove the need for washing-up sinks on individual stands.

Hand gels and gloves

On the use of hand gels, sanitisers and gloves, we follow current Food Standards Agency guidance:

Hand gels and sanitisers must never replace handwashing; they serve only as an additional precaution. They should only be applied to already clean, dry hands, ideally complying with BS EN 1500, to help kill remaining germs. They are not effective against norovirus or on dirty or greasy hands.

Gloves also must never replace proper handwashing. They should be changed frequently, particularly between handling raw and ready-to-eat food, to avoid cross-contamination. Hands must always be washed before putting gloves on and after taking them off.

Where this applies

The Catering eGuide standards apply to every event we work at in Excel, Olympia, the SEC and the other AEV venues, so it is worth becoming familiar with them. They do not apply at Wimbledon.

I hope this is helpful. Please just ask if you have any questions.