

# FSMA Facts

## Equipment, Tools, Buildings, and Sanitation: Subpart L

The proposed rule identifies possible routes of microbial contamination of produce and sets requirements to prevent or reduce the introduction of pathogens. Equipment, tools, and buildings are one identified route of contamination because they may contaminate covered produce with pathogens of public health concern, and adequate sanitation is an important way of minimizing the risk of such contamination.

### Background

The potential for contamination by undesirable microorganisms or other contaminants is increased if the equipment and tools that are intended to, or likely to, come in contact with the produce, as well as the building in which growing, harvesting, packing, or holding activities take place are not sanitary. Making sure that equipment, tools, and buildings are clean and that they are also of adequate design and construction to be adequately cleaned and properly maintained, can minimize contamination of the produce.

### Requirements

**Equipment and tools** subject to the requirements of this subpart of the proposed rule are those that are intended to, or likely to contact covered produce, and those instruments and controls used to measure, regulate, or record conditions to control or prevent the growth of undesirable microorganisms or other contamination. Examples include: knives, implements, mechanical harvesters, waxing machinery, cooling equipment (including hydrocoolers), grading belts, sizing equipment, palletizing equipment, and equipment used to store or convey harvested covered produce (such as containers, bins, food-packing material, dump tanks, or flumes).

### Some of the key requirements for equipment and tools are:

- You must use equipment and tools that are of adequate design, construction, and workmanship to enable them to be adequately cleaned and properly maintained
- Equipment and tools must be stored and maintained to protect covered produce from being contaminated with known or reasonably foreseeable hazards and to prevent the equipment and tools from attracting and harboring pests.
- You must inspect, maintain, and clean and sanitize, when necessary and appropriate, all food-contact surfaces of equipment and tools used in covered activities as frequently as reasonably necessary to protect against contamination of covered produce
- Instruments or controls used to measure, regulate, or record temperatures, hydrogen ion concentration (pH), sanitizer efficacy or other conditions, in order to control or prevent the growth of undesirable microorganisms or other contamination must be accurate and precise as necessary and appropriate in keeping with their purpose; adequately maintained; and adequate in number for their designated uses.

**Buildings** subject to the requirements of this subpart include: any fully- or partially-enclosed building used for covered activities, including minimal structures that have a roof but do not have any walls; and storage sheds, buildings, or other structures used to store food-contact surfaces (such as harvest containers and food-packing materials).

**Some of the key requirements that apply to buildings are:**

- Buildings must be suitable in size, construction, and design to facilitate maintenance and sanitary operations for covered activities to reduce the potential for contamination of covered produce or food-contact surfaces.
- Buildings must provide sufficient space for placement of equipment and storage of materials; permit proper precautions to be taken to reduce the potential for contamination of covered produce, food-contact surfaces, or packing materials; be constructed in such a manner that floor, walls, ceilings, fixtures, ducts and pipes can be adequately cleaned and kept in good repair, and that drip or condensate does not contaminate covered produce, food-contact surfaces, or packing materials; and provide adequate drainage in all areas where normal operations release or discharge water or other liquid waste on the ground or floor of the building.
- You must take reasonable measures to protect against contamination of covered produce from domesticated animals and pests.
- You must provide adequate, readily accessible toilet and hand washing facilities and properly dispose of sewage, trash, litter and waste.
- Your plumbing systems must be properly designed, installed and maintained.