

Recommissioning Foodservice Equipment After Prolonged Closure

As we move out of lockdown, kitchens will need to reopen, possibly very quickly. This document is intended as a guide only, to assist in the start-up of equipment following a long shutdown. If in ANY doubt, consult a qualified foodservice equipment engineer. Before carrying out any work, remember to wear suitable clothing appropriate for the task, such as protective glasses, masks, gloves, safety shoes, etc.

BEFORE WE BEGIN... an important point to consider.

In order to avoid the risk of LEGIONELLA, any equipment using water should be flushed through 2-3 times per week during shutdown. If this has not been done, the equipment should be checked and tested by appropriate, qualified personnel. For more information visit hse.gov.uk/legionnaires.

Later in this document we give some advice about specific appliances and types of equipment. Meanwhile, here are some general points to consider.

- Clean and sanitise everything (equipment, surfaces, walls, floors, etc.) thoroughly before you start. (Caution: make sure the cleaners and sanitisers you use are suitable for the surfaces you are cleaning, e.g. stainless steel).
- If you're unsure about any appliance's operational status, get it serviced. Similarly, if anything doesn't feel right – for example, a button that won't push – then don't force it, call an engineer.
- As much as possible, check everything is in good order (for example, do a thorough visual check) before switching on.
- Treat equipment as if it was new – follow the user manual, run through the start-up procedure, do a dry run, then start it up and run the machine.
- Note that many manufacturers will have instructions and advice online – if the answer isn't there, give them a call.
- Gas equipment: check the appliance as well as the ventilation and interlock systems. If in any doubt at all, call in an engineer.
- Electric appliances: again, if they're not working, and you've checked the supply is switched on, then call an engineer.
- Water: for any appliance using water (beverage systems etc.) run water through the system to flush out any standing water. Thoroughly clean the system.
- Refrigeration: after cleaning, turn on and check that it reaches the correct temperature before loading.
- Warewashers: give them a run through on empty.
- Light equipment: where possible and safe to do so, dismantle and give the appliances a thorough cleaning.
- Grease management systems: recommission according to the manufacturer's instructions. With external grease traps, if they were not emptied at lockdown then get in a contractor to empty them. Fill up bio dosing systems.
- Waste management systems such as FWDs: recommission according to manufacturer's instructions.

- With all appliances, cupboards, etc., check for any presence of dust, insects, pests, etc. and act accordingly.
- Remove any results of the pest control measures.

Gas appliances

We recommend having the gas installation checked by a Gas Safe registered catering equipment engineer before start-up to ensure there are no gas leaks.

As appliances sit unused and at atmospheric pressure, joints and seals can settle and may weep gas. Individual appliances should be checked to ensure that they are working correctly.

Where a gas interlock is fitted check the operation by switching on the ventilation and then lighting an appliance before switching off the ventilation at which time the interlock should turn off the gas supply.

Please note that when gas supply has been switched off for an extended period it may take longer to light burners, especially units which have pilots. Any burners which operate without the use of a pilot should be test lit prior to using.

Any unit which has had components protected by means of a light coating of vegetable oil may give off a slight amount of smoke on initial switch on.

Electrical appliances

Before reconnecting electrical appliances check the supply cables to ensure there has been no damage from rodents.

Any RCDs (Residual Current Device) should be tested prior to any equipment being plugged in and used. If OK, they should then be reconnected to the supply either by plugging them back into the appropriate socket or by switching on the isolator. If there are any signs of damage to cables, these should be replaced by a competent person.

Note: Appliances that have RCD protection, could be subject to nuisance tripping of the RCD protection. This can be caused by slight moisture build during period of inactivity. If this tripping occurs, an engineer should be called to investigate before trying to use the appliance.

Ranges/ovens/gas open burners

Check any removable burners are repositioned correctly.

Check door seals have not perished or been damaged. If there are any signs of damage they should be replaced by a competent person.

Lubricate any door catches or hinges.

Open the gas valves.

Check the flame consistency (max, min) for each burner.

Ovens: before operating, check any presence of vermin and act accordingly.

Fryers

Check that the fryer pan is clean, and the drain valve is fully closed before refilling with oil. Should any mild steel pan show signs of surface rust this will be due to the pan not being correctly protected when the unit was decommissioned, and the pan should be thoroughly cleaned to remove this before use.

If oil was not drained from the tanks before stopping activities, refer to your manufacturer's instructions. **WARNING** for solid oil/grease (like palm oil), melt the oil down at low heat for draining, as heating up normally might provoke the oil to catch fire.

Before operating, check any presence of dust, insects, pests, etc. and act accordingly.

Ensure all filters are correctly in place.

Once filled to the correct level with oil, heat the oil to normal frying temperature (175/190°C) and carefully check this with a suitable thermometer to ensure that the thermostat is working correctly.

Electric fryers: set the power/temperature at minimum for at least one hour to prevent damage to electric heating elements, due to possible accumulated humidity.

Cooking surfaces: grill, griddle, simmer plate, ceramic hob, braising pan

Electrical heated equipment: set the power/temperature at the minimum for at least one hour to prevent damage to electric heating elements, due to possible accumulated humidity.

In case surfaces were not properly cleaned when stopping activities, first carry out a thorough cleaning, as per the manufacturer's guidelines.

Cooking surfaces do not need sanitisation with chemical agents as the working temperatures provide the same effect. Before cooking for the first time, heat up at max power for some minutes.

On direct cooking surfaces, renovate the vegetable oil coating.

Bain-marie, pasta cooker and self-service elements

Open water supply valves and fill tanks before any switch on (failure to follow this instruction might damage the tank).

Electrical heated equipment: set the power/temperature at minimum for at least one hour to prevent damage to electric heating elements, due to possible accumulated humidity.

Salamanders

Electrically powered units: set the power/temperature at the minimum for at least one hour to prevent damage to electric heating elements, due to possible accumulated humidity.

Gas heated units: open the gas valve and check the flame consistency (at max and min).

Boiling pans

Thoroughly clean the pan.

If the pan was not properly prepared before shutdown, it will require a thorough cleaning/degreasing.

Check the drain tap functionality: re-grease if sticky.

Fill the vessel with water, then fierce boil and drain.

Check for any water leakage from underneath the pan. If there is leakage, call your service engineer.

Combi ovens

Ensure that water filters or other water treatment systems are connected and working. Appliances should be fully cleaned and sanitised then put on to either a cleaning cycle or on a steam cycle.

Where appliances have internal systems for cleaning and descaling, then these cycles should be run before first use.

Door seals should be checked for leaks or damage.

Any hoses/hand showers should be left running for a period of time to flush through the hose and connections.

If the oven was not properly prepared for shutdown, or if the door was left completely shut, first clean the cavity. If your unit uses a liquid cleaning chemical, the condition of the detergent and rinse aid pumps have to be checked by a specialist engineer.

Dishwashers

Wipe down the interior and exterior of the machine.

Take out wash arms and filters, rinse them and then refit in machine.

Top-up chemicals or reconnect lances. Fill water softener with salt if required.

Turn on water and electrical supplies.

Turn on the machine and allow to fill.

Ventilation canopies

Check all filters (grease filters and input air filters) are clean and in position. Clean them thoroughly if required.

Clean the canopy hood and reassemble baffle filters and grease cups.

Switch on and check that the fans are working correctly.

Water treatment

Any water treatment systems should be re-commissioned in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

Water softener with regeneration

Refill salt.

Switch on or reset regeneration cycle timer.

Turn the water supply on.

Water softening systems

Replace softening cartridges.

Turn the water supply on.

Refrigerators and freezers

Clean and dry the interior walls, base and door gaskets.

Re-close the door (which should have been left slightly ajar).

Check the power cable and plug are not damaged, connect your appliance to the wall socket and switch on.

Monitor and make sure it pulls down to temperature. If any problems occur call your local service engineer.

Cold Rooms

Re-clean coldroom interior and shelving (including door gaskets)

Re-t strip curtain(s)

Where fitted, ask a competent person to check and replace power failure battery

Ensure coldroom door(s) safety release is still working correctly

Turn on only when the above steps have been taken (refer to businesses facilities manager or supervisor for authorisation, where needed)

Check that the 'person trapped alarm' operates (where fitted)

Stay and monitor the coldroom operation to make sure it pulls down to temperature and no problems become evident

It is recommended that the coldroom installation is serviced by a competent refrigeration contractor.

Ice makers

Turn on the water supply and electrical supply.

Allow the unit to drain water for two minutes at least in order to have the internal circuit clean and ready to use the ice cubes.

Vegetable cutters, mixers, blenders, peelers and the like

Remove the protective food grade lubricant where applied and reassemble all parts.

Other operations requiring a specialist engineer:

- Check the tightness of the drive shaft seals.
- Check the condition and tension of the belts.
- Lubricate the inner parts, if needed.

Fully automatic espresso machines

Clean the hoppers thoroughly.

Recharge them using new packs of beans or chocolate. Don't use already opened packages.

Check the water treatment system. If you use a filter cartridge, it must be replaced if there has been no water circulation for the last four weeks. Contact your customer service for intervention.

Turn on the water supply and the electric supply.

Turn the power on and wait for the unit to heat up.

Make several coffees, checking for any leaks under the machine.

Check the operation of the steam and hot water outlets.

Traditional espresso machines

Thoroughly clean the grinders and hoppers.

Recharge them using a new pack of beans.

Check the water treatment system. If you use a filter cartridge, it must be replaced if there has been no water circulation for the last four weeks. Contact your customer service for intervention.

Turn the water supply on.

Close any steam taps.

Reconnect the machine to power and turn the power on.

Boilers, precision brewers, hot water dispensers

Connect the appliance to water supply.
Turn on the water supply.
Connect the appliance to the power.
Turn unit power on.

FOG (Fats Oil and Grease) and kitchen drainage

Clean your equipment: before restarting your grease management equipment, re-clean it (or have it fully cleaned if not done during closure) according to the manufacturer or installer's instructions.

Protect your drains: kitchen drains could have dried up, causing waste to stick to the pipes and form blockages. Flush your drains with water and check your sink gullies for blockages that could have formed.

Avoid overload: when food outlets reopen, the sudden increase in waste could cause blockages. Pipes could have dried up, causing waste to stick to them. You can help by using sink strainers and training staff to stop waste going down the drain.

Check your toilets: flush your customer and staff toilets several times prior to use to check they are still flowing.

Food waste management equipment (FWDs, dewaterers, digesters, etc.):

Follow the cleaning instructions in accordance with the operator manual.
Reinstate all electrical and water supplies.
Follow the operation guidelines and run the equipment for five minutes to ensure it is working correctly and to allow any trapped bacteria to flush through.