Is Your Phone Sanitary?

SOUTH ELGIN, Ill. (McCloud Services) — Recent reports from the United Kingdom indicated that one out of six phones tested contained fecal contamination. There are several foodborne illnesses associated fecal material transfer onto food, including E. coli. The insanitary condition of our phones becomes of particular concern when working in food facilities and hospitals. Although we may wash our hands and/or use gloves, touching a contaminated phone post washing could compromise our hand hygiene and spread disease.

Complicating the issue of keeping your phone clean can be the phone manufacturer's guidelines for cleaning the screen. In general, the hard plastic components can be cleaned with alcohol, the preferred cleaning ingredient for sanitizing, but manufacturers may warn against the use of alcohol or sanitizing wipes on the screen portion of the phone. Many manufacturers call for the cleaning of screens with a lint free cloth. This will do little to control microbes.

What you can do:

- Check the manufacturer's recommendations and follow those to prevent damage to the phone and screen. Use sanitizing wipes on the screen at your own risk if the manufacturer warns against it.
- Some food facilities will prohibit cell phone use in their facilities. Comply with those requirements. If cell phones are permitted, consider washing hands after handling phones. Especially if the phone has not been recently sanitized.
- Contractors should consider wiping down equipment they bring into a food facility prior to use in a food plant such as flashlights, spatulas, PDA's and other service and inspection items . Keep in mind that equipment can get contaminated during service due to the handling of rodent traps and surfaces touched like drains during pest management inspections.

It is important to remember that your hands are not the only thing that should be decontaminated in a sensitive environment. Consider the link between the equipment you use and the potential for compromising food safety.

For more information on these tips and to learn more about the precautions to take regarding overall food safety, please contact McCloud Services.

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