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SUBSTANTIVE POLICY STATEMENT
SPS-EH-2012-006

A substantive policy statement (SPS) is advisory only. In accordance with A.R.S. §11-1601, SPS's do not include internal procedural documents that only affect internal procedures of the Maricopa Environmental Services Department and do not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or confidential information.

1. SPS Subject:

The purpose of this SPS is to clarify the permit requirements related to finishes and materials used in food service establishments, residence accommodations, and public schools.

2. Statutory Overview:

Maricopa County Environmental Health Code (MCEHC)

3. SPS:

The regulations identified in this policy statement requires nonfood contact surfaces and restrooms to be constructed of materials that are smooth, easily cleanable, and durable. Definitions for smooth and easily cleanable do exist in the 2009 FDA Food Code, although the definitions include room for interpretation and application specific needs. This SPS will provide further clarity regarding acceptable materials for room finishes used in the aforementioned establishments while also providing some examples.

The requirements stated in this SPS apply to food storage, food preparation, warewashing, restroom, and shower areas unless otherwise noted the MCEHC.

A. Walls

- 1) Provide a smooth, nonabsorbent, easily cleanable wall surface. Textured skip trowel finish that generates pits and crevices is not acceptable. Raw wood or unfinished studded walls are not permitted. Walls shall be constructed with material that leaves a smooth finish such as stainless steel, approved fiberglass reinforced panels (FRP), ceramic tile, painted dry wall (orange peel), etc. All splash areas must be finished smooth with durable and waterproof materials such as FRP or stainless steel. Painted dry wall in splash and moisture related areas, wet zone areas, such as warewashing equipment and food preparation sink areas is not acceptable.
- 2) Painted wall surfaces in all food service and ware washing, storage and restroom areas should be smooth. Use a quality semi-gloss or high gloss

type paint. Dark colors are not recommended. Additional fixtures may be required to meet the ambient light intensity requirements if dark colors are installed.

- 3) Grout shall be smooth and finished flush with the surface of all tiles.
- 4) Wall finishes behind cook lines and under vent hoods shall be of stainless steel or tile. Wall surfaces from lower edge of kitchen exhaust hoods to the floor surface including the wall/ floor junctures shall be finished with coved metal, coved ceramic tile, or other similar durable, easily cleanable materials approved by the Department.
- 5) Construction masonry units (CMU), brick and other masonry units installed as a finish material, shall be free of pits, voids, cracks, depressions, and shall be smooth and easily cleanable. Light colored Astra-glaze® masonry units are recommended.
- 6) FRP should be light in color and easily cleanable (Pebble surface or Smooth surface). Grooved and/or painted FRP panels are not approved.
- 7) Finish faced medium density fiberboard panels (MDF) are acceptable in non-moisture related areas only. However, the material is not recommended and not approved in moisture related areas due to durability concerns.
- 8) Apply a clean, smooth, raised bead of silicone caulk on all gaps or seams between immovable equipment and walls. Seal all gaps, seams, and cracks. Seal spaces around pipes or conduit at all wall penetrations.

B. Floors

- 1) Floor finishes shall be commercial grade, durable, smooth, non-slip, nonabsorbent, grease-resistant, and easily cleanable. Smooth, bare concrete floors are approved and must have an appropriate concrete sealer applied (not just a water sealer). The use of poured monolithic floors may require specific approval for kitchen applications. Carpet is not allowed in any food prep, storage, service, refuse, restrooms or utensil washing areas. Carpeting material approved by this Department is permitted in customer areas and prepackaged retail areas.

- 2) Concrete floors shall be finished smooth, sealed, and have all expansion joints, saw cuts, and cracks properly filled. Provide at least 3 feet of vinyl composite tiles (VCT) or washable surface around perimeter of retail reach-in cooler units. Grout shall be smooth and finished flush with the surface of all tile.
- 3) Floor surfaces in the toilet areas and shower rooms shall be commercial grade, smooth, nonabsorbent, easily cleanable, and slope to a floor drain (cove base required).
- 4) Samples of room finish materials may need to be submitted for approval, prior to installation.

C. Ceilings

Provide smooth durable, non-absorbent, easily cleanable, and light-colored ceiling surfaces that can withstand frequent cleaning. Exposed joists, studs or other support structures will not be accepted. Acoustical fissured/perforated ceiling tiles are not permitted in restrooms, kitchens, mop sink area, or high moisture related areas. Vinyl faced tiles or a drywall hard lid are acceptable. Open structure in approved areas must be at least 10 foot high ceiling.

D. Coving

- 1) Provide a smooth, coved base (3/8 inch radius or greater) at the juncture of walls and floors. Cove bases are also required at the juncture of cabinets and floors. Examples of acceptable materials for cove base are 4-inch vinyl or rubber, ceramic or quarry tile, and stainless steel.
- 2) Ceramic tile used as coving shall not be installed on top of floor tiles at floor/wall junctures. The floor/wall juncture shall be a true flush cove base with at least a 3/8-inch radius or greater.
- 3) When applicable, "tool-in" colored siliconized grout caulk at floor/base junctures to create an acceptable cove base. A 1/4 inch cove base is acceptable in metal floored/pre-fab walk-in units.
- 4) Concrete curbs in a walk-in cooler/freezer shall be finished smooth, properly coved, beveled away from the wall at the top edge, and thoroughly sealed. Rubber/vinyl cove base is not permitted inside walk-in cooler/freezer units. Provide a metal cove base inside walk-in units. Monolithic flooring, tile, or metal cove base is required under hoods.

4. SPS Effective Date:

July 1, 2012

5. SPS New Document/Revision Statement:

SPS-EH-2012-006 has been updated on April 2, 2018 to remove reference to pet shops/pet groomers as they are no longer permitted by this Department.

6. Contact Us:

For questions or comments regarding this SPS or to obtain a copy of this document, please contact the Department Records Custodian at the address and/or phone number above.