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Guidelines for virtual kitchen services

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Contents

Page

Foreword ... **iv**
Introduction ... **v**
1 Scope ... **1**
2 Normative references ... **1**
3 Terms and definitions ... **1**
4 Principles ... **2**
4.1 Standardized approach ... 2
4.2 Safety ... 2
4.3 Compliance ... 2
4.4 Integration ... 2
4.5 High efficiency ... 2
4.6 Social responsibility ... 2
5 Service process ... **2**
5.1 General ... 2
5.2 Consumer places online orders ... 3
5.3 Virtual restaurant accepts orders ... 3
5.4 Courier picks up food ... 3
5.5 Consumer receives food ... 3
6 Service provision ... **3**
6.1 Information provision and verification ... 3
6.2 Supply chain and equipment management ... 4
6.3 Brand design and marketing ... 4
6.4 Transaction services ... 4
6.5 Supervision and assessment ... 4
6.6 Exit mechanism ... 5
6.7 Emergency management service ... 5
6.8 Compliance management ... 5
7 Information security and protection ... **5**
7.1 Information security ... 5
7.2 Information protection ... 6
8 Quality control and improvement ... **6**
8.1 Service evaluation ... 6
8.2 Continuous improvement ... 6
Annex A (informative) **Workshop contributors** ... **7**
Bibliography ... **9**

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

International Workshop Agreement IWA 40 was approved at a series of workshops hosted by the Standardization Administration of China (SAC), in association with China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Commercial Sub-Council (CCPIT-CSC), held virtually between April 2021 and January 2022.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user’s national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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Introduction

The catering industry has traditionally evolved to meet the demands and desires of consumers for food in ever faster-paced lifestyles and to support them in their growing aspirations for a better life. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic at the start of 2020 has caused partial and sometimes complete shut-down of restaurants and food and beverage (F&B) outlets in many parts of the world. The traditional catering industry has arguably been one of the most affected industries, as it has not been able to offer dine-in services for a long period. The pandemic has forced an increasing number of catering enterprises which previously focused on physical operations to evolve and participate in online catering services. During this period, there has been a considerable evolution in the business ideas and vocabulary used in the catering industry, with the appearance of concepts such as "contactless delivery", "employees sharing", "shared kitchen" and "virtual kitchen". The concept of a virtual kitchen is a more common business model of the comprehensive operations of virtual catering.

Unlike the characteristics of rapid scale and subversion under the traditional sharing economy, the virtual kitchen operator functions both as a catering service provider and a consultant. Because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the virtual kitchen business model has evolved into an excellent platform for traditional catering restaurants to recuperate business and further integrate into online operation more quickly and at lower cost.

The emergence of the virtual kitchen has also created new issues related to supervision which are different from those faced by the traditional catering industry. For example, in the context of intensive catering operations, how to formulate operational standards on aspects such as sharing, transparency, equipment and the facilities assembly line.

Developed in the context outlined above, this document aims to help resolve issues related supervision in virtual kitchen businesses. It is based on good practices used in the catering industry worldwide.

This document supports the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

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Guidelines for virtual kitchen services

1 Scope

This document provides guidelines on principles, processes and practices relevant to meeting the safety and quality standards required of virtual kitchen services.

This document applies to virtual kitchen operators and is also intended to serve as a reference for other stakeholders, such as virtual restaurants.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
virtual kitchen
commercial cooking space without a dine-in or retail option, providing a centralized, standardized and digitized catering service with hardware and software support facilities and/or site resources for multiple *virtual restaurants* (3.3) to share resources for catering operations

3.2
virtual kitchen operator
operator
enterprise that provides a *service field* (3.5), facility and an online information service for *virtual restaurants* (3.3), with value-added services such as supply chain and equipment management, compliance management and consulting

3.3
virtual restaurant
main body that carries out catering business activities through a *virtual kitchen* (3.1) and that includes individuals, enterprises and other organizations

3.4
supplier
organization or individual that provides raw materials, essential equipment, software services, logistics services and other related services for *virtual kitchen operators* (3.2) and *virtual restaurants* (3.3)

3.5
service field
infrastructure site provided by the *virtual kitchen operator* (3.2) that can be operated by virtual restaurants, including essential catering processing equipment, water, electricity and gas systems and other conditions necessary for the catering working environment

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