



FMJ has a recognised role to play in supporting technical expertise in the FM market.

As part of this, we offer FASTFacts – a series of specialist summaries that give no-nonsense information on topics of importance with signposting to further sources for the expert reader. Lee Vines, sales director with PKL, provides some FASTFacts on getting the most from temporary and permanent modular kitchen buildings.

KITCHEN

WHAT ARE MODULAR KITCHEN BUILDING?

Modular kitchen buildings are kitchens in a portable building, used to provide temporary or permanent kitchen facilities in a wide range of situations. They are pre-fabricated off-site to a specification that meets each project's requirements and delivered to site by lorry. Larger installations consist of several modular buildings delivered separately and joined together on site, often using removable walls to create a large open space (e.g. for a dining area).

WHY ARE THEY USED?

Uses vary considerably. These include temporary facilities for special events (e.g. major sports events and festivals) and when existing kitchens are being refurbished or have been damaged, and upgrading/expanding existing catering facilities (temporary or permanent). 'Rapid response' portable kitchens are also used in support of military and disaster relief operations.

WHAT FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

The modular nature of these facilities means they can be specified to meet the requirements of any project, so when considering their use it is important to be clear about the requirements. These might include cooking and refrigeration equipment, preparation and wash-up areas, staff facilities, servery and dining area.

Modular kitchens also meet all statutory health and safety requirements and incorporate the same services as traditional kitchens such as extraction systems.

HOW BIG ARE THEY?

Again, the modularity means that virtually anything is possible. For example, a 10 square metre kitchen pod may be sufficient to serve 120 sittings per day at a primary school, whereas the two 930 square metre temporary kitchens (encompassing modular

facilities) at the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010 were each capable of feeding 5,000 people per day. Modular kitchens can also be assembled in a range of shapes to suit the layout of the site and incorporate special requirements (e.g. in prisons where line of sight is a key requirement).

HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?

Modular kitchens may be used for periods ranging from just a few days to over 30 years, and many are procured as permanent structures where budgetary restrictions and disruption mitigate against traditional construction of additional space and facilities.

They can also be linked to existing buildings and clad to match the appearance of those existing buildings. Or, if preferred, they can be made to look very different to existing buildings.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Installation involves craning the modules into position, joining them if there is more than one module, and connecting services. Typically this takes a few days, often during a weekend, depending on the complexity of the facilities. There may also be some pre-delivery site work required if suitable surfaces are not available. In some circumstances, walkways are also constructed to link to other buildings.

In disaster situations, such as damage to a kitchen by fire, a temporary replacement kitchen will usually be delivered within two to three days of the order.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS?

Siting of the building is of paramount performance and considerations include a suitable space that can be accessed by low loaders and will also be easily accessible to delivery vehicles without causing disruption. Care must also be taken not to block

existing access routes, fire escape routes and fire assembly points – or it may be possible to make alternative arrangements for these routes/areas.

Where it is being linked to existing buildings access should be considered, possibly providing additional corridor links. Some sites may also have other special considerations, such as planning requirements, proximity to external walls in prisons etc.

ARE THEY EXPENSIVE?

Modular kitchens are usually a lower cost than traditional construction and can be purchased outright or procured on a contract hire basis. With a contract hire arrangement, all financial risk relating to the kitchen and the equipment is transferred to the supplier, which takes responsibility for ongoing maintenance and equipment replacement.

Historically, additional funding has been available for some areas of the public sector but due to the current budgetary restrictions the future availability of such funding is unclear at the moment. Suppliers of modular kitchens should be able to advise on what is available.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Modular kitchens continue to evolve as they take advantage of new materials and technologies and adapt to changing legislative and best practice requirements. Their inherent flexibility means they are able to change very quickly in line with external influences.

Contacts & Sources

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