

To The Point Kitchen Safety

CHUBB®



Restaurants face unique challenges when it comes to worker safety, particularly in the kitchen. Part-time staff and high turnover compound the issues. To successfully control these risks, follow these best practices for kitchen safety.

Food Prep

There are potential hazards associated with kitchen equipment (i.e. mixers, slicers, grinders, etc.). The use of this equipment can cause injuries such as cuts, lacerations, punctures, and amputations and includes:

- Non-powered cutting tools (i.e. knives, mallets, graters)
- Food slicers
- Meat grinders
- Mixers, blenders, and whippers
- Broken dishes, cups, and glasses

Knife Safety - Knives are the tools that get the biggest workout in a kitchen. Follow these blade safety tips to reduce the chance of injury:

- Never try to catch a falling knife.

- Cut AWAY from, not toward, your body.
- Use a stabilizing tool and not your fingers to steady the food.
- Use a cutting board. Never hold items in your hands while cutting or slicing.
- Use the correct knife for the job. For example:
 - Carving knives for large jobs
 - Boning knives to remove meat from the bone
 - Paring knives for slicing small jobs
- Wear appropriate gloves for the job:
 - Use cut resistant gloves for high production jobs. However, remember they are cut resistant, not cut proof - injuries can still occur.
 - Make sure gloves fit properly.
- Keep knives and blades sharp.
 - Dull blades slip
 - Sharp blades improve accuracy and performance
 - Sharp blades decrease strain and fatigue
- Tighten or replace loose handles - if it cannot be repaired, discard it.

Risk Engineering Services

Powered Kitchen Equipment - While this equipment can make kitchen tasks faster and easier, powered kitchen equipment presents unique hazards. Follow these tips to reduce the chance of injury:

- Make sure all guards and safety devices are in place on slicers and other machinery such as mixers, blenders, electrical tools, and maintenance equipment. Make sure the appropriate guards are in place and properly used during normal operation as well as procedures for cleaning and safe storage when not in use.
- Use food pushers to advance food in machines. Use of push sticks or other hand tools to help feed or remove food from grinders, slicers, or choppers will help to keep hands and fingers out of the danger zone.
- Never put your fingers near moving parts or blades.
- Do not try to cut anything too thin in a slicer. Use a knife.
- Before cleaning or maintaining powered kitchen equipment, unplug the equipment and maintain control of the plug. A best practice is to attempt to power up the equipment once you have unplugged it to release any stored energy.
- Report any faulty equipment to your supervisor.

Cooking

Burns and Scalds - After cuts and lacerations, these are some of the most common kitchen injuries due to the high number of heated surfaces, equipment, and food products in a commercial kitchen. Keeping employees safe requires vigilance and training in these noted items below:

- Proper training on the preparation and serving of hot food items, such as the use of protective equipment (i.e. hot pads, mitts, aprons).
- Turn off stoves when not in use.

- Assume all pots and metal handles are hot. Touch only when you are sure they are not hot or when wearing proper gloves/mitts. Keep pot handles away from hot burners and make sure handles of pots and pans do not stick out from counter or stove.
- Open hot water and hot liquid faucet slowly to avoid splashes.
- Open lids away from you to allow steam to escape. Do not open cookers and steamers while they are under pressure.
- Do not overfill pots, pans, or fryers. Do not leave metal spoons in pots while cooking. Do not lean over pots of boiling liquids.
- Food items for frying should be placed in the basket first, then lowered slowly into hot oil, rather than dropping food directly into the oil. Dry items thoroughly before using with hot oil.
- Allow grease to cool before transporting, filtering, or disposing. Two people are to be used for changing and disposing of grease, due to heavy lifting.
- Do not stand on a fryer to clean ventilation components or filters. Use a ladder or stepstool.

Dishwashing

Repetitive tasks associated with dish washing and handling can result in overexertion, back and shoulder strains, tendonitis, and lifting injuries. Follow these best practices to reduce the chance of injury:

- Use mechanical aids to reduce the need to lift (i.e. automatic plate and cup riser dispensers).
- Stand as close to the work surface as possible. Use anti-fatigue matting.
- When placing glasses into racks, fill the near rows first, then rotate the rack to bring the back rows to the front.
- Point your feet at your work to prevent twisting your back.
- Lower your rinse nozzle to rest at mid-body height to reduce your reach.

- Overloaded dish racks can be heavy. Rack heavier items, such as plates, closest to you.
- Choose cleaning tools with good grips when heavy duty cleaning is needed.
- Place one foot on a step or rail to reduce stress on back and legs. Alternate which foot is on the rail from time to time.

Cleaning

When using kitchen chemicals, such as bleach, personal protective equipment is needed. Keep your kitchen clean and in good order by using:

Gloves - Use chemical-resistant gloves when cleaning with or handling chemicals. Check chemical safety data sheets for specific type of gloves required.

- Use work gloves when handling garbage or working in storage areas
- Use cut-resistant gloves when cleaning equipment.

Safety glasses, goggles, and face shields -

- Safety glasses when general eye protection is required.
- Safety goggles and face shields when there is a great danger of chemical splashes.
- Procedures and training for identifying, responding, and reporting threats.

Resources

OSHA.gov
National Restaurant Association

Connect With Us

For more information about protecting your business, contact your local independent agent or broker.

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