

Health & Safety

In order to maintain a safe working environment, it is important that each staff member follows safety procedures. Investing time in training your employees is one of the most effective ways to make your restaurant safe.

In this manual, we'll highlight the most common hazards in the restaurant industry and offer up some controls that will decrease the risk of having more injuries and illnesses.

Restaurant Hazards

1. Slips, trips, and falls due to slippery or obstructed walking surfaces
2. Cuts and abrasions to hands from kitchen utensil use
3. Burns from cooking equipment and hot plates
4. Loss of fingertips and entire fingers from meat slicers
5. Workplace violence from other employees or customers

Prevent Common Restaurant Injuries

With the proper restaurant safety rules in place, many of the most common on-the-job injuries can be avoided.

Lacerations and Punctures

With knives, slicers, and the occasional broken glass, restaurant employees are at risk for cuts constantly. To prevent these injuries, your staff members should transport knives carefully around your kitchen space and pay attention to their cutting task, so they don't injure themselves or others. You can also provide your employees with cut-resistant gloves for extra precaution. Broken glass should always be handled with a broom and protective gloves.

Burns

Your employees can easily get burned, even without a serious kitchen fire. Staff members should always wear oven mitts or use pot holders to handle heated cookware.

Sprains and Strains

Even if space is at a premium, it is important keep commonly used items in easy-to-reach places. Repeated bending and twisting is not good for joints, so try to keep many of your tools at arm's length or close to it. Additionally, you should educate your employees on safe lifting techniques to avoid back injury when moving equipment or bulk ingredients.

>Spills can also put your staff members and customers at risk for injury. Make sure that all spills are attended to as soon as possible and clearly mark wet floors in all areas of your establishment.

Eye Injury

During cooking or cleaning, staff members' eyes are vulnerable to splashes of grease, sanitizing chemicals, and ingredients. Employees should exercise caution when cleaning your workspace or front-of-house areas and wear protective safety glasses when ware washing or cleaning up broken glass.

Practice Restaurant Fire Safety

Making sure that kitchen staff members are alert and attentive to cooking dishes is the simplest way to prevent fires in your establishment. Here are some steps you can take toward preventing fires in your kitchen.

Install Fire Safety Equipment

- ✓ Have multiple fire extinguishers in your establishment, and do not put them only in your kitchen.
- ✓ Install emergency lights and exit signs throughout your space.
- ✓ Look into appliances with fire suppression systems. When activated, these units can switch off your fuel supply and dispense substances that help to put out flames. Some units release these chemicals automatically and others have manual switches.

Implement Fire Safety Procedures

- ✔ Keep flammable objects away from flames. Do not store dish towels near your cooking equipment, and be sure that your employees are not wearing baggy clothing that could catch fire.
- ✔ Know how to put out a grease fire. Do not use water to put out a grease fire. Instead, cover the flames with a metal lid and turn off the heat source. Use a fire extinguisher if the fire persists.
- ✔ Know how to use a fire extinguisher. Ensure that each of your employees knows how to properly use this equipment. Additionally, always replace your extinguisher when it is low on fuel.
- ✔ Have an evacuation plan. Keep this plan posted somewhere where everyone can see it.
- ✔ Know how to switch off your power sources. Teach your staff members how to turn off gas and/or electrical power in the case of an emergency.

Restaurant Safety Rules

Restaurant safety rules include:

1. No running in the restaurant at anytime
2. No horseplay in the restaurant at anytime
3. Use protective gloves or other PPE while handling knives and other cutting utensils
4. Never use any meat slicing equipment or other equipment unless you have been trained to use it safely
5. Use safe work procedures while cooking and handling hot plates to avoid burns
6. Treat all other employees as you would like to be treated at all times

Restaurant Ergonomics

A commonly overlooked safety issue with restaurants is ergonomics. The issues present themselves when a work station such as a dishwashing area or cooking area does not take into account proper body positioning and range of motion of the employee. Therefore, an inspection of each work station and some observation of individuals using these stations should be conducted in order to identify repetitive motions that could lead to injury. Sometimes, the purchase of new equipment or a complete re-design of the kitchen layout is required in order to eliminate the hazards.

Provide Your Employees with Safety Equipment

While training and preparation are important for restaurant safety, some tasks are best performed with protective equipment. Consider providing these items to your staff to keep them safe in your kitchen.



A busy kitchen presents many hazards, but you can keep your staff members safe If you take caution while cooking, cleaning, and using equipment. When accidents do happen, have a fully stocked first aid kit or call the appropriate emergency number. Practicing restaurant kitchen safety procedures protects your employees and keeps your establishment efficient and operational.