

Restaurant Safety

Safety Meeting Packet

Protect Your Workforce



Many restaurants take the necessary precautions to prevent health problems on their premises. Those precautions do not always include a review of employee safety. It is often hard to take time to review safety measures in the fast-paced restaurant environment, but taking the extra step is valuable if it prevents even one injury.

When thinking about potential hazards, employers should look to remove or isolate the hazard, improve work practices to prevent the hazard, and use protective clothing and equipment to limit injuries.

Kitchen Staff Safety

Most restaurant employee injuries occur in the kitchen. Kitchen employees usually work around open flames, hot surfaces, hot oil, and sharp objects. Even with safety in mind, it is hard to isolate employment hazards when food is being prepared and cooked. However, improving work practices and safety procedures can reduce work injuries dramatically.



Employers should monitor safety equipment provided to kitchen employees and ensure that employees are using the equipment. Gloves, potholders, or mitts should always be worn when an employee is working near hot surfaces. If an employee is using a knife, cut-resistant gloves are recommended to help protect workers and prevent cutting accidents.

Slicers, grinders, and food processors are particularly dangerous because of their running blades, so it is critical that employees are properly trained to operate them safely. Guards must be used to block access to blades, and equipment should be properly locked out or tagged out when performing maintenance or cleaning.

Child labor regulations forbid employees under the age of 18 from using food slicers or grinders. If there are restaurant workers under 18, make sure proper guidelines are followed. Employers should read and review OSHA's "Young Worker Safety in Restaurants" e-Tool and the Code of Federal Regulations (29 CFR, Part 570), to identify applicable requirements.

Wait Staff Safety

Working outside the kitchen does not come without its hazards. When carrying food or drinks to customers, wait staff should be careful to not carry too much. Constant bending, lifting, squatting, and balancing of food items can be harmful and may result in overuse injuries. Wait staff should be trained to request assistance, take extra trips, or to utilize wheeled-carts instead of trays to prevent injuries or spills if large orders need to be carried.



Wait staff should also be cautious of their movements and path of travel as walking around corners blindly can cause accidents and injuries. Employers should consider employee movements and brainstorm ways to modify tasks or processes to improve workplace safety and protect employees.

General Safety

Restaurants use a variety of equipment when preparing and serving food. It is important to properly train employees to follow the manufacturer's guidelines for operation, maintenance, and cleaning before they are permitted to use the equipment.

Employees should wear slip-resistant footwear to help prevent slip and fall injuries. The employer may also consider installing non-slip mats or flooring in potentially dangerous areas like the kitchen or drink station. These mats may also serve to reduce foot and back pain related to standing for extended periods of time.

Make sure that spills and messes are cleaned up immediately after they happen. Employers should provide the proper equipment to clean up spills including: gloves, mops, brooms, towels, cleaning solution, and wet floor signs. Cleaning up spills is essential to preventing unnecessary slip and fall injuries for employees and restaurant patrons.

Worker Training

It is important for all employees to understand the safety concerns that are associated with restaurants. When workers do not exercise caution, burns, falls, sprains, and other injuries can occur due to bad work practices. Use the suggestions below when developing an employee training program.

Preventing Burns

- Wear long sleeves and pants to reduce skin exposure to heat.
- Oven mitts or pot holders should be used whenever hands are near hot elements.
- Never put water or ice in hot oil. Remove ice from frozen food before placing in fryers.
- Open lids away from the body to reduce steam exposure.
- Be aware of where handles and utensils are located. Never leave them near open flames.



Limiting Slips and Falls

- Clean spills immediately after occurrence.
- Place wet floor signs if needed.
- Wear non-slip shoes.
- Leave walkways open for safe maneuvering. Limit clutter in walk-ins and floors.

Preventing Cuts

- Do not run with knives and always carry with the point down.
- If handing off knives, never pass to another by blade. Set down on counter if needed.
- Never cut toward the body.
- Wear cut-resistant gloves, if available.
- Clean knives after use, never leave in water for someone else.

Safe Lifting and Ergonomics

- Be cautious when bending down or lifting items.
- Bend at the knees when picking items off the ground.
- Ask for assistance with heavier items.
- Do not take too large of a load when carrying items. Take smaller trays and make multiple trips.
- Use dollies or carts to carry items a long distance.
- Reduce repetitive motions while on the job. Use machines or equipment, if possible.
- Avoid awkward postures and positions.
- Rotate tasks with another employee, if possible.
- Stand on floor mats to reduce back/leg pain.

For additional information regarding restaurant safety issues, please consult the following:

- OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910, Subpart E – Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, and Fire Prevention Plans
 - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910, Subpart I - Personal Protective Equipment
 - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910, Subpart K - Medical Services and First Aid
 - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910, Subpart L - Fire Protection
 - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.212: - Types of Machine Guarding
 - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.303 - General Electrical Safety
 - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.1200, Appendix D - Safety Data Sheets
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Restaurant Safety

Safety Meeting Attendance Acknowledgement

Company Name _____
 Department / Division _____
 Meeting Date & Time _____ AM PM
 Meeting Location _____
 Name & Title of Individual Conducting Meeting _____

Key Meeting Discussion Points / Important Reminders:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Internal Procedures Reviewed:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

By signing this document, you confirm your attendance at the meeting and acknowledge the issues addressed above!

Employees in Attendance		
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____

Employees Not Present: _____

Suggestions/Recommendations to Improve Workplace Safety and Health: _____

Actions Taken: _____

Manager/Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Disclaimer:

The information provided above was assembled using multiple resources. However, these materials do not contain ALL the information available regarding the required safety standards under local, provincial, state, or federal law for your industry.
