

Loss

Control



FARMERS

Information Bulletin

Tableside Food Preparation

Some dining establishments provide an environment that includes tableside cooking or tableside food preparation. Any establishment that performs this type of cooking must be in compliance with local, state, and national codes or consensus standards.

Once permitted, there are still hazards associated with these types of operations. Cautions must be taken to ensure that dining guests enjoy the entertainment value of this method of food preparation without being injured.

Tableside cooking could involve portable cooking units or fixed units at desired dining locations. The portable units present additional exposures to guest injuries due to the need to move them in and out of the dining area.

Activities that can present injury risk to a guest include:

- *Flaming drinks or foods that can burn guests if spilled or dropped. Food servers need to have firm control of the drink or dish while delivering and watch out for trip hazards or other conditions that could cause them to spill or drop the item.*
- *Serving flaming drinks or foods can cause injury to the guests to whom they are served. Servers must ensure that the flames are extinguished prior to releasing control of the product to the guest. In addition, the server must warn the guest that the dish or product is still hot and could cause a burn to the customer. Do not release to the customer until it can be enjoyed safely.*
- *Hot food preparation dishes and utensils that could burn guests if touched. Preparers and servers need to be aware of who is in the vicinity of the hot food prep areas and be mindful that conditions may change. Young children often will want to*

move closer to observe the “show”.

- *The presence of an open flame for cooking or on flaming drinks or food dishes could come in contact with flammable or combustible materials. Keep all flammable materials away from the food preparation area except for those essential to the tableside food preparation. Be alert to newspapers, tablecloths, or patrons clothes that may be too close to the food preparation area. Do not hesitate to encourage them to move back or to move paper and other items to a safe location.*
- *Sharp objects used for food preparation. Knives used for tableside food preparation can cut patrons if dropped from the preparation area or if handled by the patron unexpectedly. All knives and cooking utensils need to be kept in storage devices, containers, or trays that can only be accessed by the food preparation employee.*
- *Caution needs to be exercised by food preparers when using knives and utensils. Do not throw knives or other utensils into the air. The food preparer may lose control of the utensil and this could result in injury to someone nearby.*
- *Movement of portable food preparation and cooking equipment. Move portable food cooking and preparation equipment back to the kitchen areas as soon as the food preparation and service is finished. Take care to watch for other patrons or hazards that could result in hitting guests with the portable cooking equipment.*

By taking appropriate precautions, your guests will be able to enjoy the entertainment value of this type of food preparation and service. Management is responsible to ensure that appropriate safety precautions and procedures are in place and being followed. Taking control of safety in these environments will reduce your potential of injuries to your guests.