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SAFETY NEWSLETTER

07/01/2019

MANUAL HANDLING RISKS



Dishwashing

The risks associated are:

- repeated lifting and handling of full dish racks or heavy dish trays and cutlery buckets;
- repetitive twisting and bending at sinks or leaning over sinks;
- awkward reaching across sinks or work surfaces when manually cleaning dishes;
- grasping dishes by fingertips (pinch grips).

Consider providing:

- dishwashers;
- rollers or conveyors;
- trolleys to move large quantities of dishes;
- cleaning tools with good grips when heavy-duty cleaning is required;
- appropriate gloves and non-slip shoes where required – gloves should fit properly and, if required, have extra grip on palms and fingertips to reduce the gripping force needed to handle greasy dishes;
- foot rails or a step to shift body weight and reduce stress on employees' lower back and legs when standing for long periods.

Train staff to:

- push trays along counters towards the dishwasher rather than lifting;
- not overload dish racks and, if they have to lift them, to use more than one rack to spread the load;
- grip trays at the midpoint when carrying them rather than the front edge, keeping the tray as close to the body as possible, but bearing in mind any risks of contact with hot surfaces.

Cleaning

Risks associated with these tasks are:

- forceful exertions;
- awkward shoulder or back postures;
- cuts, bruises, pressure injuries and sore skin.

Consider providing:

- long-handled brushes where reaching is required;
- cleaning tools that have soft rubber-like handles to reduce gripping force;
- a platform of adequate size to minimize excessive reaching.

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Pot washing

Most pot washing will be done manually in large deep sinks, although some employers may have automatic pot-washing machines. The risks associated with these tasks are:

- lifting heavy pots;
- awkward bending and twisting when leaning over sinks for long periods;
- repetitive wrist and shoulder movements when scrubbing pots;
- repetitive reaching into pots;
- forceful arm exertions when scrubbing pots.

Consider providing:

- pot-washing dishwashers if appropriate;
- false bottoms in deep sinks to reduce awkward bending at the waist;
- water jet sprays.

When washing, train staff to:

- rest their free arm on the surface of the pot to reduce the gripping force needed to hold it securely;
- place their free hand on the side of a soup kettle to support the upper body and reduce stress on the lower back;
- keep items close to the body;
- move large diameter pots as close as possible to the front of the sink and rotate them during washing to avoid reaching across the pot.

When lifting and carrying, train staff to:

- assess the weight of a pot before lifting it;
- keep pots close to the body when lifting and bend the knees rather than the back;
- point toes in the direction they are reaching to avoid twisting.

Removing waste

Waste removal will involve lifting heavy rubbish bags, which carries the risk of forceful exertion.

To minimize the risk:

- provide smaller refuse bags;
- put up signs near bins to remind staff not to over-fill them.

Individual capability

You should consider an individual's physical capability to do a particular task, paying attention to:

- the age and size of an individual;
- the pace and intensity of the work – if the pace is too high, this can increase the risk of injury through fatigue and can be stressful for that individual;
- those who have existing health issues or a physical weakness;
- pregnant workers, who have increased risks of postural problems, limitations of ability, fatigue and heat stress

Training

Everyone who works for you needs to know how to work safely and without risks to health. You must provide clear instructions, information and adequate training for your employees on:

- the risks they may face;
- the measures in place to control the risks;
- how to follow any emergency procedures.

It is particularly important to consider the training needs and supervision of:

- new recruits and trainees;
- young people who are particularly vulnerable to accidents;
- people changing jobs or taking on new responsibilities

Training should take account of:

- the risks associated with manual handling and repetitive tasks involving twisting and stretching, and how injuries can occur;
- correct use of any lifting aids or other equipment;
- safe lifting and handling techniques;
- reporting procedures and early detection of symptoms.



Food preparation

The risks may include all or some of the following:

- repetitive motion of the hands, wrists and shoulders;
- forceful lifting or carrying of heavy bowls or pots;
- awkward bending and twisting of the back;
- awkward reaching.

Chopping and cutting

- Provide knives that are in good condition and kept sharp to reduce the force required by the user.
- Provide utensils and knives with ergonomic handles designed for comfort and those that allow for power grips;
- Provide chopping machines for vegetables to reduce manual chopping or buy in pre-prepared vegetables;
- Provide workbenches of different heights.

Mixers

- Make sure large mixers are placed at a height that allows access to the mixing bowl handles between knuckle and elbow height. This will reduce bending at the waist.
- If a mixer is on a raised platform, ensure that the platform is fixed firmly to the floor and can handle the weight of the mixer.
- Where appropriate, provide dollies with handles for transporting heavy bowls around the kitchen. If required, two workers should lift and lower the bowl together, each holding the handle on one side.

Ovens and steamers

- Ovens with side-hinged doors rather than bottom hinged doors allow easier access to items in the oven.
- Using oven racks between waist and elbow height to minimize awkward posture.

Soup kettles and heavy pots

- Large soup kettles with extended handles make it easier to tip the kettle when pouring soup into smaller containers.

Storage areas

Risks associated with storage are:

- forceful lifting of heavy items;
- repetitive and awkward reaching or bending to either higher or lower shelves.

You can reduce the risks in a number of ways. For example consider:

- having storage areas that are as close to the working area as possible to reduce carrying distances;
- supplying localized food storage,
- buying bulk goods in smaller, easier-to-handle containers;
- improving the height and situation of shelving or racks;
- labelling areas to make it easy to locate items;
- storing items appropriately depending on their weight, size and frequency of use, eg frequently used, heavier items within easy reach, and between knuckle and elbow height;
- keeping storage areas clear and free from obstructions;
- providing sufficient space in storage areas to allow the use of mechanical aids;
- using adjustable-height handling aids during shelf stacking and stocktaking.



Your Restaurant is our Passion

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WORKERS COMPENSATION SAFETY NEWSLETTER

This Complimentary Newsletter is sent to you by

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