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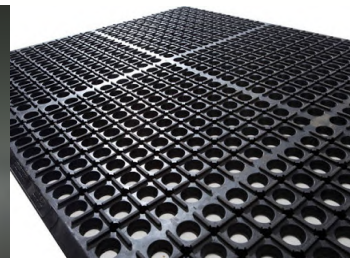
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**10 Easy-to-Implement Restaurant Kitchen Safety Tips**



**NOTICE**  
Kitchen employees only  
Slip hazard  
Safety shoes required  
beyond this point

Workplace injury and illness cost restaurant owners millions of dollars annually in compensation and productivity; kitchen safety should be a top priority for all restaurants. The main cause of injury and illness in the hospitality industry is an unsafe work environment. Whether it be a small coffee shop or a large fast food franchise, the commercial kitchen is a dangerous place to work; fortunately, maintaining a safe kitchen is pretty easy to do.

Here are 10 easy-to-implement kitchen safety tips you should adopt right away.

**1. Correct Attire**

Kitchen staff uniforms are designed to both designate rank and keep chefs clean and comfortable during service; they are often mandatory when working in a professional kitchen. Oftentimes, though, footwear choice is overlooked, and can be responsible for numerous injuries in the kitchen.

To keep kitchen staff safe, encourage them to wear closed-toed footwear at all times. Simply wearing close-toed footwear will

prevent lacerations from falling knives, scalds, burns from hot water and oil, and chemical burns from cleaning products. The material of the footwear should be heavy-duty and waterproof and the soles should be non-slip to prevent falls.

**2. Non-Slip Mats**

Another essential safety product to prevent falls in the kitchen is a non-slip mat. Floors become greasy and wet during service and fast-moving workers can potentially cause workers to slip. Slip-resistant mats and flooring provide necessary friction and traction for workers to continue a fast pace of service in the kitchen without worrying about incurring injuries.

**3. Ventilation**

A kitchen without adequate ventilation quickly becomes hot, smoky, and unbearable. This creates un-safe working conditions for kitchen employees who are required to spend long periods over cook tops, putting them at risk for heat-related illness.

#### 4. Fire Suppression System

Fires are a constant danger in the commercial kitchen; they start for a variety of reasons. The most common type of fire in the commercial kitchen is a grease fire. Unfortunately, common water sprinklers won't do a very good job of suppressing them. The best method for containing kitchen fires is a fire suppression system. The system connects both to the range hood and the gas line, and, when tripped, will cut off the fuel source for the fire. As a secondary measure, there are nozzles installed in the range hood's ventilation system which spray a fire suppressant.

#### 5. Fire Safety Training

A fire suppression system is essential for a safe work environment, yet what's equally (*if not more*) important is training staff in how to use the system, along with general fire safety tactics. Conducting a training day with the local fire authority is an effective way to ensure the safety of your kitchen staff. Staff should both know the location of fire extinguishers and blankets, as well as how to operate them. They should also know how to manually initiate the fire suppression system, administer first aid to burns, and perform CPR.

#### 6. Fire and Evacuation Drills

Fire safety should be at the forefront of all restaurant employees' minds and should be taken very seriously. In addition to training with fire safety products, regular fire safety drills should be a part of any occupational health and safety plan for your staff. Regular drills will familiarize staff with the correct procedures to reduce the spread of a fire, as well as the best route to take when evacuating the premises. Keeping your staff well-prepared will reduce the potential amount of damage to property and protect both staff and customers.

#### 7. Equipment Guards

Commercial grade kitchen equipment, such as Hobart mixers, grinders, and slicers, are essential components of any commercial kitchen. While these appliances make food preparation easier for kitchen staff, they do also pose a serious kitchen

safety risk if they are not operated properly. An effective way to prevent amputations and lacerations from poor equipment handling is to fit each appliance with an appropriate guard. The guard prevents fingers and hands from accidentally slipping into the working mechanisms, which is vital in a fast-paced kitchen.

#### 8. Signage

Oftentimes, slips and falls in the kitchen are due to undisclosed hazards, like damaged floors or recently cleaned spills. When there are several employees in the kitchen at any one time, like during busy service, it pays to have adequate signage drawing attention to potential hazards so as to prevent injury and keep the kitchen safe. Ensure cleaning staff use signs to indicate slippery floors; they should be conspicuously positioned and in high-contrast colors. In the case of damaged property, block off the affected area until repairs can be made. When spills occur, encourage staff to clean them up as soon as possible, use signage to indicate the hazard, and notify the rest of the staff to take care around the area.

#### 9. Occupational Health and Safety Training

While occupational health and safety training is important for workers across all industries, there are hospitality-specific hazards you should address with staff to ensure kitchen safety. The most effective way to do this is by conducting a designated occupational health and safety training day. A safety training seminar will address such issues as correct heavy lifting techniques, proper food storage and handling, how to avoid repetitive stress injuries, and how to remove or avoid other potential hazards in the kitchen.

#### 10. Correct Cleaning Techniques

Poor kitchen hygiene is not only dangerous to the customers, but also to the kitchen staff handling the food. Food-borne illness is one of the top reasons cited for missed work days. To keep staff safe in the kitchen, train them in the use of the proper cleaning techniques with proper products. This way, you can ensure their work environment is sanitary, and reduce the risk of spreading food-borne illnesses to customers.

# Preventing Cuts and Amputations from Food Slicers and Meat Grinders

## Preventing Food Slicer and Meat Grinder Injuries

Amputations are among the most severe workplace injuries and often result in permanent disability. All food slicer and meat grinder work activities present hazards that may result in severe cuts or amputations. Employers must select and provide workers with appropriate hand protection, including cut-resistant gloves, when there is potential for workers' hands to come in contact with the blades. Safe work procedures also include fully retracting (zero) the blade when the slicer is not in use or when cleaning the blade. Employers should provide meat grinder operators with properly sized plungers to eliminate the need for their hands to enter the feed throat during operation.

## Preventing Worker Injuries When Using a Food Slicer

When food slicers are in use, or turned off but still energized, the top and bottom of the slicer are hazardous areas where workers' fingers and hands may contact the blade, causing serious cuts or amputations. Rotary blade food slicers must be used with guards that cover the unused portions of the slicer blade on both the top and bottom of the slicer. Employers should buy slicers already equipped with a feeding attachment on the food holder sliding mechanism or purchase this attachment separately and install it before use.

Worker training topics should include to:

- Never put a hand behind the food chute guard.
- Never place food into the slicer by hand-feeding or hand pressure.
- Use a pushing/guarding device with chute-fed slicers.
- Use plungers to feed food into chute-fed slicers or use the feeding attachment located on the food holder.
- Turn off the food slicer when changing foods.
- Keep hands out of the danger zone on the back of the blade where the sliced food exits.
- Turn off and unplug slicers when not in use or when left unattended for any amount of time.

## Preventing Worker Injuries When Using a Meat Grinder

Employers must ensure that meat grinders are retrofitted with a primary safeguard (e.g., properly designed tapered throat or fixed guard) if a worker's hand may come into contact with the point-of-operation (i.e., the auger cutter area).

Worker training topics should include to:

- Only use a proper plunger when feeding meat into grinders.
- Operate grinders only when feeding trays and throats have been installed.
- Use the meat grinder only for its intended purpose.
- Turn off and unplug grinders when not in use or when left unattended for any period of time.

## Preventing Injuries When Maintaining/ Cleaning a Food Slicer or Meat Grinder

Maintaining or cleaning a food slicer or meat grinder requires workers to remove protective guards. Employers must ensure that the food slicer or meat grinder will not unexpectedly start up and that workers' hands are protected from severe cuts or amputations when guards are removed for maintenance or cleaning.

The following safe maintenance/cleaning practices and procedures are explained in the manufacturer's operating manual:

- Adding distance between the hand and sharp edges by using a cleaning device with a handle.
- Wiping the blade from the center outward to avoid contact with the blade edge.
- Never wiping toward the blade when cleaning the slicer table.

## Training Employers Should Provide

Employers should ensure that all operators receive on-the-job training under the direct supervision of experienced operators until they can work safely on their own. Training is necessary for new operators and maintenance or setup workers, when any new or altered safeguards are put in service, or when workers are assigned to a new machine or operation.

- How and under what circumstances to remove safeguards
- How to prevent unexpected start-up during cleaning or maintenance using appropriate LO/ TO procedures
- Hand protector usage and limitations
- What to do (e.g., contact the supervisor) if a safeguard is damaged, missing, or unable to provide adequate protection.



**Your Restaurant is our Passion**

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