

Food Service Safety

Food service employees are involved in specialized activities that put them at greater risk for specific workplace injuries. Below are some suggestions to help you avoid hazards found in food service areas:



General Kitchen Rules

- ✓ Be aware of the location of the nearest fire extinguisher; it may come in handy. Read the instructions on the fire extinguisher now, before you need to use it.
- ✓ Know the general layout of the kitchen and the location of the nearest exit in case you have to leave the area in a hurry.
- ✓ Assume that heat-producing appliances, such as stoves and steamers, are hot.
- ✓ Be sure that others are aware of what you are doing. This awareness could help prevent accidental or careless movements that could result in an injury.



Sharp Objects

- ✓ Keep knives sharp.
- ✓ If you are doing a lot of cutting, wear cut-resistant gloves.
- ✓ Do not place sharp objects in sinks filled with soapy water.
- ✓ Designate one clearly-marked trash can for broken glass and sharp can lids.
- ✓ Unplug machines before cleaning them.

Chemicals

- ✓ Find out what chemicals you use in your work.
- ✓ Dilute chemicals, such as disinfectants, according to the manufacturer's directions.
- ✓ Do not mix chemicals unless instructed to do so by the manufacturer.
- ✓ Close all containers, especially spray bottles, when not in use.
- ✓ All chemical containers must be properly labeled. Store chemicals according to the label instructions.
- ✓ Ask your supervisor for chemicals training, including how to use gloves, respirators or other protective gear, as indicated by the MSDS. Be familiar with the emergency plan in case of a chemical accident.

Check out our [Safety Tips page](#) for more safety information.

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Food Service Safety

Injuries can happen at any time. Because you use your tools and equipment daily, you can begin to take them for granted. Employee absence due to injury places stress on fellow food service employees and support staff. Please protect yourself to avoid workplace injuries.



Hot Surfaces

- ✓ Turn pot handles away from burners and make sure they do not stick out over the edge of the stove.
- ✓ Use potholders, gloves, or heat-resistant mitts when checking food on the stove, placing food in boiling water, or reaching into ovens and broilers.
- ✓ Never use wet material, like a damp towel, as a potholder.

Storeroom Rules

- ✓ Two employees should work together to lift and carry any object that is too difficult for just one employee.
- ✓ Push carts instead of pulling them, when possible.
- ✓ Weight can be a safety hazard. Heavier items should be stored on the lower shelves at chest height or lower. Be careful not to overload shelves.

Slips and Falls

- ✓ Slippery or uneven walking surfaces are the most common causes of slips and falls in schools.
- ✓ Clean food debris on floors immediately. If this is not possible, place a warning cone on the area until debris can be removed.
- ✓ Use warning signs to keep people away from wet floors.
- ✓ Keep walkways and work areas free of clutter.
- ✓ Wear shoes with non-skid soles.

Tools/Equipment Safety

- ✓ Manufacturers supply manuals with tools and equipment. Read the manuals before you use the equipment. Keep the manuals handy for future reference.
- ✓ Prepare both the equipment and yourself for work. Examine the tool/equipment for safety devices before you use it.

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