Food Handling Meeting Kit



Food handling in restaurants, catering firms, food service vendors, fast food chains, and grocery store kitchens involves a variety of cooking and preparation techniques. Chefs, cooks, and food service workers need to be aware of hazards in the kitchen to serve safety with their cuisine.

FOOD HANDLER HEALTH HAZARDS/DANGERS

- Food handlers may contaminate food, so employees must be careful to ensure that no illness is passed on by those working in the industry.
- You should not go to work if you are vomiting or have diarrhea. Don’t return to work until your symptoms have stopped for 48 hours. If you are unsure, you should contact your doctor for advice.
- Do not go to work if you sick with an illness that is likely to be transmitted through food.
- You must advise your supervisor if you are feeling unwell, including when suffering from a cold, flu, and sties and other eye infections.

FOOD HANDLERS – HANDWASHING

Thoroughly washing your hands reduces the chance of contaminating food with bacteria from yourself.

Wash your hands with soap and warm water, and don’t forget the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.

Wash your hands after:

- going to the toilet
- handling raw food
- blowing your nose
- handling garbage
- touching your ears, nose, mouth or other parts of the body
- smoking
- every break
- handling animals.

FOOD HANDLERS – PERSONAL HYGIENE TIPS PREVENT FOOD POISONING

Bacteria that cause food poisoning can be on everyone – even healthy people. You can spread bacteria from yourself to the food if you touch your nose, mouth, hair, or your clothes, and then food.

- wash and dry your hands thoroughly before handling food, and wash and dry them again frequently during work
- dry your hands with a clean towel, disposable paper towel or under an air dryer
- never smoke, chew gum, spit, change a baby's nappy or eat in a food handling or food storage area
- never cough or sneeze over food, or where food is being prepared or stored
- wear clean protective clothing, such as an apron
- keep your spare clothes and other personal items (including mobile phones) away from where food is stored and prepared
- tie back or cover long hair
- keep fingernails short so they are easy to clean, and don't wear nail polish because it can chip into the food
- avoid wearing jewellery, or only wear plain-banded rings and sleeper earrings
- completely cover all cuts and wounds with a wound strip or bandage (brightly coloured waterproof bandages are recommended)
- wear disposable gloves over the top of the wound strip if you have wounds on your hands
- change disposable gloves regularly.
- advise your supervisor if you feel unwell, and don't handle food

PREVENTATIVE CARE FOR FOOD HANDLING AND FOOD SERVICE

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs): Come from sitting or standing too long, or from repeated motion such as reaching or lifting. MSDs may be short-term or long-term and may reoccur. To protect yourself, don't lift heavy or awkward objects and don't lift above your shoulders. If you work sitting down, get up and move around; stretch and exercise your muscles.

Cuts and abrasions: Workers shouldn't use knives, appliances, and other tools without proper training. Use steel-mesh gloves when working with knives. Powered equipment such as food processors should be unplugged when loading, emptying, or changing blades.

Infections: The hot, damp atmosphere of a kitchen can breed bacteria. If you get a serious cut or other injury, stay home until it's healed. Cover cuts or injuries with a clean, waterproof dressing.

Heat: Workers in busy kitchens are at risk for burns and scalds. Wear long-sleeved gloves, aprons or other clothing when working near hot items or hot liquids. Kitchen workers are at risk for heat illness as well, so make sure to take enough breaks and drink cool water often.

Chemicals: Cleaning solutions and mixtures used to degrease, clean, and sanitize equipment can cause skin irritation, burns and respiratory problems. Read the

directions on all cleaning products before use and use protective equipment such as gloves, goggles, and a respirator if necessary.

Slips, trips and falls: Greasy, wet floors make it easy to slip and hurt yourself. Tripping hazards such as bins of ingredients are also common in food service areas. Make sure to wear proper work shoes with non-skid, insulated soles and reinforced toes. Keep floors and walkways clean and clutter-free. Communicate with co-workers to stay aware of traffic.

Electricity: Cooking, food processing and washing up require lots of power. Make sure to turn off or unplug machinery or appliances before cleaning and turn off and lock/tag out power at the breaker if possible. Report loose or frayed wires immediately and don’t use the equipment until it has been properly repaired.

FINAL WORD

Back injuries and repetitive strain injuries are problems we can all do without. Good planning and safe work practices can help prevent these injuries in the food service department and throughout the healthcare workplace.