Food Service Safety



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WHAT’S AT STAKE?

People in food services jobs such as cooking, busing tables, and serving food are exposed to dangers that they may take for granted – and some of these hazards are lethal.

WHAT’S THE DANGER?

Here are some of the dangers food service workers may experience.

- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)
- Cuts and abrasions
- Infections
- Heat
- Chemicals
- Slips, trips, and falls
- Electricity

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Careful attention, vigilance and take nothing for granted. Here are the hi–lites of preventative care.

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 Food Service Safety 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

Food service work is sometimes hard, but it doesn’t have to be dangerous. With care and attention, you can stay safe and injury-free at work – and in your own kitchen.