Restaurant Operations: Courier Services Safety Playbook



Restaurant delivery has exploded — from dine-in to doorstep in under 30 minutes. But while the model has scaled, the safety systems haven't. Drivers navigate tight kitchens, slippery exits, congested streets, and unstable loads — often without training, PPE, or even clear routes. Whether it's a full-time driver, a part-time student, or an app-based contractor, **delivery work in restaurant environments is one of the most overlooked safety zones in food service.**

This *Courier Services Safety Playbook: Restaurant Operations* is built for:

- **Franchise owners**, who need safety consistency across locations
- **Restaurant managers**, who juggle operations, staffing, and rush hours
- **Delivery supervisors**, who oversee a rotating crew of bikers, drivers, or walkers
- **Safety leads or HR**, who manage training, injury claims, or risk mitigation

It includes **nine expert-built modules** and **three longform Safety Talks** that address the real-world challenges your couriers face. Every page is designed to be **practical, conversational, and immediately usable**.

What Makes Restaurant Delivery Safety Different?

Unlike depot-based couriers or logistics warehouses, restaurant-based delivery involves:

- **Dynamic, high-turnover workforces** — often seasonal, part-time, or casual
- **Hot food and liquids** that can scald or spill during handoffs
- **Kitchen-floor exposure** to slips, burns, and cuts
- **Rapid delivery pressures**, especially during meal rushes and peak weekends
- **Decentralized handoffs**, with many couriers using personal vehicles or bikes

Yet most safety systems in restaurants focus on the kitchen — not on the food leaving the building.

That's where this playbook comes in.

What You'll Learn & Implement

Each of the 9 modules walks you through:

- The **strategic importance** of delivery safety for business, reputation, and retention
- How to **map out hazards** from the kitchen line to the customer's front step
- Smart, scalable **controls** that reduce incidents without slowing down service
- **Training tactics** for high-turnover and mixed-role teams
- Incident learning systems, metrics dashboards, and emerging risks like fatigue and app distractions

The **Safety Talks** are crafted for shift leads or managers to read aloud during pre-shift huddles — each one tells a real-world story, explains a key risk, and outlines clear steps your crew can take that day to prevent it.

Why This Matters

Delivery injuries don't just hurt people — they erode morale, spike insurance costs, damage brand reputation, and create operational chaos. A single hot soup spill or crash can trigger legal claims, bad reviews, and driver turnover.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

With the right systems, even small restaurant teams can create big safety wins. From slip-resistant mats and better lids, to route plans and five-minute talks, you can build a safety culture that travels with your food.

How to Use This Playbook

You don't need to read this front-to-back. Each module is standalone and designed for quick reference.

We recommend:

- **Starting with Module 1** for context, then jumping to the areas where your risks are highest
- Using the **Safety Talks** during weekly huddles or onboarding
- Assigning each module to a member of your ops or management team to implement gradually
- Incorporating key tactics into your SOPs, shift checklists, and training materials

By the time you finish, you'll have a fully customized delivery safety program ready to deploy — whether you run a single kitchen or a multi-location brand.

Let's turn food delivery into a safe, seamless, and scalable part of your restaurant business.
Ready? Let's start with Module 1: Strategic Context.

Module One

- **Module Two**
- **Module Three**
- **Module Four**
- **Module Five**
- **Module Six**
- **Module Seven**
- **Module Eight**
- **Module Nine**

- **Module One**

Module 1: Introduction & Strategic Context for Restaurant Delivery Safety

Whether it’s late-night sushi, brunch for ten, or a dozen pizzas dropped off at a school, restaurant courier services run fast, flexible, and high-risk. Unlike depot-based delivery models, restaurant operations deal with unpredictable volume, limited prep space, hot food handling, and a mix of part-time drivers or bikers often hired for speed over safety.

But here’s the truth: **burns, collisions, and strain injuries aren’t part of the job — they’re symptoms of a system that hasn’t been engineered for safety.**

This module will help restaurant operators, delivery supervisors, and franchise managers understand:

1. Why safety must be part of the delivery brand experience
2. The hidden costs of delivery-related incidents
3. How to align safety goals with kitchen operations and customer service
4. Key hazard trends in restaurant-based courier work
5. What a modern, proactive safety strategy looks like in food delivery

1.1 The Business Case for Delivery Safety in Food Service

Most restaurants view delivery as a profit center. But without safety controls, that delivery arm can quietly become a liability.

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Let’s look at the data:

- A 2023 food courier audit found that **1 in 8 delivery workers reported a near miss or injury monthly**
- Common issues included **slips on wet kitchen floors**, **burns from improperly packed containers**, **traffic collisions**, and **fatigue**
- For every reported incident, there are 3–5 unreported close calls that reflect design or behavior gaps

The costs stack up fast:

- **Injured worker off shift?** That's lost revenue and training time.
- **Collision in a branded vehicle?** That's reputational damage.
- **Burn from soup spill?** That's a potential legal claim, especially if PPE or training wasn't documented.
- **Food delay due to incident?** That's a lost customer and a bad review.

But flip that coin: when restaurant delivery teams are trained, equipped, and supported with the right safety systems, the results are clear — **fewer disruptions, happier teams, more consistent service, and lower insurance claims**.

1.2 Aligning Safety with Restaurant Operations

Unlike courier companies with dedicated logistics teams, restaurants typically layer delivery onto existing workflows. That means:

- Drivers often move through the **same back-of-house zones** as cooks and dishwashers
- Orders are packed and staged **in narrow lanes or counters**, increasing traffic
- Hot foods, soups, and drinks are handled **quickly**, often without spill-preventing tools
- Couriers are expected to **move fast**, while still representing the brand professionally

To align safety goals, restaurants must integrate delivery into kitchen and service SOPs — not bolt it on as an afterthought.

This means:

- Involving delivery drivers in daily huddles or service meetings
- Making route planning, food staging, and PPE part of the kitchen rhythm
- Reinforcing safety expectations as a **service standard**, not a compliance burden

1.3 Hidden Hazards Unique to Restaurant Delivery

Here are five delivery-specific risks we see most often in restaurant courier work:

1. Thermal Burns from Hot Foods

- Containers packed too full or sealed improperly leak scalding liquids
- Drivers rush to grab bags without insulated gloves or spill kits
- Hot trays passed directly through prep zones can lead to sudden contact burns

2. Slip and Trip Hazards in Transition Zones

- Wet tile near dish stations or back doors creates hidden hazards
- Dim lighting or rush-hour clutter (mats, hoses, boxes) increase tripping risk
- Couriers often move quickly without knowing the floor layout

3. Unstable Loads and Unsecured Packaging

- Bags not anchored properly in bikes or cars shift, spilling food and increasing crash risk
- Too many items in one bag without balance checks
- Drinks or soups without stabilizers are a top cause of burns and customer complaints

4. Traffic Exposure During Delivery

- Drivers park in unsafe spots to save time
- Cyclists maneuver through rush-hour traffic without route guidance
- Fatigue and pressure from high-volume nights (Fridays, holidays) increase risky decisions

5. Inadequate Communication and Training

- Part-time or app-based drivers may never receive site-specific safety orientation
- Food handling rules may not include courier-specific safety protocols
- Couriers unaware of emergency contacts, incident reporting, or return-to-work policies

1.4 Restaurant Safety as a Brand Experience

Let’s flip our perspective. Every time a customer sees your delivery driver, they’re seeing **your brand.**

If that courier is rushing, sweating, limping, or burned — they’ll associate your food with chaos or carelessness.

But when they see a driver:

- Calm, professional, wearing branded hi-vis gear
- Handing off meals with secure packaging and gloves
- Smiling and able to answer questions clearly

They see **trust**. They see reliability. They come back.

Investing in delivery safety means:

- **Lower injuries**
- **Fewer delays**
- **More repeat business**
- **Higher online ratings**
- **Lower staff turnover**

In short: safety is the service.

1.5 Building a Safety Strategy for Restaurant Couriers

This playbook will walk you through nine modules designed to tackle safety head-on in your restaurant courier operation. But here's a preview of where we're going:

Strategy Element	What It Looks Like in a Restaurant Context
Hazard Mapping	**Reviewing the path from kitchen to customer — spotting spill zones, hot surfaces, blind corners, and driver entry points**
Controls	**Adding anti-slip mats, secure food bags, gloves for thermal protection, driver rest breaks**
Training	**Including couriers in team training; delivering 5-minute toolbox talks during shift changes**
Leadership Engagement	**Manager walk-arounds with delivery checklists; praising safe behavior visibly**
Metrics	**Tracking incident reports, customer complaints about spills/delays, PPE usage, and on-time delivery safety performance**
Continuous Improvement	**Reviewing delivery-related incidents in weekly ops meetings; embedding lessons into process and packaging decisions**

1.6 Module 1 Summary

Restaurant delivery isn't just fast — it's risky. And when speed eclipses safety, injuries, lawsuits, delays, and bad reviews follow. But when delivery safety is built into your kitchen's DNA, your drivers feel supported, your brand looks sharp, and your operations become smoother.

In this module, we've established the "why" — why safety matters just as much for a bike courier as for a line cook. Up next, in **Module 2**, we'll show you how to map your delivery hazards, score risks, and introduce practical tools like bow-tie analysis and job-task breakdowns to set your program on solid ground.

Let's make safety part of the order.

- **Module Two**

Module 2: Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment in Restaurant Delivery

You can't fix what you don't see. In restaurant delivery, hazards hide in plain sight — between the fryer and the back door, on rainy sidewalks, inside overpacked soup containers, or across that left-hand turn at 5:30 p.m.

Unlike warehouse-based delivery, **restaurant couriers operate in cramped, chaotic, and often nonstandard environments** — each shift shaped by volume spikes, staff turnover, and unpredictable customer locations.

In this module, you'll learn how to:

1. Break down delivery workflows into task-level hazards
2. Use practical risk assessment tools like job-task analysis and bow-tie diagrams
3. Identify both traditional and emerging risks
4. Prioritize action based on real-world severity and likelihood
5. Create a hazard map that links directly to training and controls

2.1 Job-Task Breakdown: Mapping the Delivery Journey

The first step in hazard identification is to walk the process from start to finish. For restaurant couriers, the core delivery workflow typically looks like this:

Step	Task	Example Hazards
1	Entering the kitchen	Wet floors, sharp objects, thermal exposure
2	Retrieving orders	Hot food containers, stacking errors, time pressure
3	Exiting the back door or pickup zone	Dim lighting, clutter, uneven surfaces, rush-hour collisions
4	Stowing food for transport	Unstable bags, spills, poor insulation
5	Navigating to the customer	Traffic risks, fatigue, mobile distractions
6	Customer handoff	Aggressive pets, icy stairs, contact injuries
7	Returning to the restaurant	Shortcuts, rush returns, mid-shift fatigue

Each task contains both **physical hazards** (like burns or slips) and **systemic hazards** (like poor communication or training gaps).

2.2 Common Delivery Hazards in the Restaurant Environment

Let's take a closer look at the top five hazard categories we see across restaurant courier operations:

1. Slips, Trips, and Falls

- Greasy kitchen floors, especially during lunch or dinner rush
- Uneven back exits or loading areas
- Curb cuts, potholes, and unshoveled sidewalks at delivery sites
- Carrying large loads that block line of sight

2. Thermal and Spill Injuries

- Hot soups, coffee, or meals without insulated sleeves

- Overfilled containers or poorly sealed lids
- Rushed handoffs that cause containers to tip or burst
- Lack of PPE (gloves, spill-resistant gear)

3. Collision and Roadway Risks

- Bike couriers navigating traffic with no designated bike lane
- Drivers double-parking or rushing through intersections
- Distracted driving due to app updates or GPS changes
- Fatigue during evening shifts or double shifts

4. Repetitive Strain and Ergonomic Injuries

- Carrying overloaded delivery bags on one shoulder
- Mounting/dismounting e-bikes or scooters repetitively
- Bending and reaching in tight storage areas in small vehicles

5. Environmental & Customer Site Hazards

- Ice or snow at residential steps
- Hostile pets or confrontational customers
- Dim or poorly lit doorways and stairs
- COVID/post-COVID contact concerns (especially with masks or distancing)

2.3 Job-Task Analysis (JTA): A Practical Framework

A Job-Task Analysis is your go-to tool for breaking down courier duties into manageable hazard units.

Example: JTA for Food Pickup from Kitchen

Task Step	Hazards	Existing Controls	Gaps
Enter kitchen	**Wet floor, clutter, sharp tools**	**“Wet Floor” signs, matting**	**Matting not secured, signs often missing**
Collect food bags	**Burns, spills**	**Basic training**	**No insulated gloves provided**
Check items	**Overloading, unstable stacking**	**Manual checklists**	**No standardized bag size or load limit**

Each JTA should:

- Focus on **one segment of the delivery workflow**
- List every discrete task and related hazard
- Include both current controls and observed gaps
- Be reviewed with actual drivers — **they know the real story**

2.4 Bow-Tie Analysis: Connecting Causes to Consequences

For higher-risk steps, use a **bow-tie analysis** to visualize both the causes and effects of key hazards — then identify the barriers that protect against each.

Example: Burn Injury from Spilled Soup

- **Threats (Left side):** Overfilled container, loose lid, bag imbalance, no insulated sleeve
- **Top Event (Center):** Hot liquid spill during handoff
- **Consequences (Right side):** First-degree burn, customer injury, lawsuit, online complaint

Barriers (to the left): Pre-fill limit policy, lid-check protocol, sleeve use training

Barriers (to the right): Burn first-aid access, incident reporting SOP, follow-up protocol

The bow-tie format forces teams to:

- Recognize multiple contributing factors
- Strategize around **both prevention and response**
- Identify **control failures** and where better training or tools are needed

2.5 Risk Scoring: Prioritize What Hurts Most

Use a **simple risk matrix** to score each hazard based on **Likelihood** and **Severity**.

Likelihood	Severity	Risk Level
Likely (3)	**Major Injury (3)**	**High (9)**
Possible (2)	**Minor Injury (2)**	**Medium (4)**
Unlikely (1)	**First Aid Only (1)**	**Low (1)**

Example:

- **Hazard:** Burn from soup spill during rush hour
- **Likelihood:** 3 (happens weekly)
- **Severity:** 2 (minor burn, missed shift)
- **Risk Score:** 6 → *High Priority*

Hazards scoring **5 or above** should be targeted in the next module for **engineering, procedural, or PPE controls.**

2.6 Emerging Risks in Restaurant Delivery

Beyond traditional slips and burns, here are **three modern risks** you should proactively assess:

1. App Distraction

- Couriers trying to update status, check tips, or reroute while walking or driving
- No policy or training on safe use of mobile devices

2. Gig-Style Fatigue

- Multiple apps or employers in one day
- No centralized scheduling — no one monitoring total shift time

- Increase in night crashes or errors tied to cumulative fatigue

3. Customer Interaction Hazards

- Pressure to avoid bad ratings leads to unsafe shortcuts
- Verbal harassment or unsafe handoff zones
- No emergency protocols for drivers in distress

2.7 Linking Risk Assessments to Action

Hazard identification is only useful when it leads to **clear next steps.** Here's how each tool connects to action in upcoming modules:

Tool	Outcome
Job-Task Analysis	**Drives targeted training (Module 5) and SOPs (Module 3)**
Bow-Tie Diagrams	**Identifies weak links for control upgrades (Module 3)**
Risk Matrix	**Prioritizes top 3–5 hazards for immediate focus**
Hazard Maps	**Used in onboarding and toolbox talks (Module 9)**

2.8 Module 2 Summary

Delivery safety doesn't start with PPE — it starts with awareness. When you map the actual steps your couriers take, break down hazards, and score risks with real-world context, you can build safety systems that **solve root problems — not just treat symptoms.**

Next up: **Module 3 — Control Strategies for Restaurant Delivery Hazards.** We'll turn these hazard maps into action, applying engineering fixes, SOP updates, and smarter PPE use.

Let's move from "watch out" to "we've got it covered."

- **Module Three**

Module 3: Control Strategies for Restaurant Delivery Hazards

Hazards alone don't cause injuries — **gaps in controls do.** And in restaurant courier operations, controls must do more than check a compliance box — they need to work in high-paced, high-turnover environments where couriers grab bags mid-shift and dash into unpredictable streets.

The goal of this module is simple but powerful: **match each high-priority hazard from Module 2 with layered, effective controls using the Hierarchy of Controls.**

You'll learn how to:

1. Apply the full control hierarchy — starting with elimination, not just PPE
2. Tailor engineering and administrative controls to restaurant settings

3. Equip couriers with simple, durable protective gear that fits real use cases
4. Build SOPs and checklists that don’t slow down service
5. Layer controls for cumulative protection — especially in high-pressure delivery cycles

3.1 Understanding the Hierarchy of Controls

The Hierarchy of Controls is the gold standard in safety. It ranks interventions from most effective to least:

1. **Elimination** – Physically remove the hazard
2. **Substitution** – Replace it with a safer alternative
3. **Engineering Controls** – Isolate people from the hazard
4. **Administrative Controls** – Change the way people work
5. **PPE** – Protect the worker with gear

Key Principle: Start at the top. If you jump straight to PPE, you’ve likely missed a stronger solution.

3.2 Slips, Trips & Falls: Slowing the Slide

Top Hazards:

- Wet or greasy kitchen floors
- Icy sidewalks and stairs
- Dim back-door exits

Layered Control Strategy:

Control Level	**Example**
Elimination	**Reroute delivery path through a dry, well-lit side door**
Substitution	**Replace worn rubber mats with high-grip commercial-grade matting**
Engineering	**Install self-closing doors to minimize tracked-in water**
Administrative	**Implement a pre-shift “path check” during weather alerts**
PPE	**Issue ice cleats or non-slip footwear rated for commercial kitchens**

Pro Tip: Equip delivery bags with a fold-out non-slip mat so couriers can safely place hot items on icy or unstable surfaces at delivery sites.

3.3 Thermal & Spill Injuries: Heat-Proofing the Handoff

Top Hazards:

- Hot soup or beverages spilling through thin lids
- Couriers holding containers without insulation
- Rapid transfers during rush periods

Layered Control Strategy:

Control Level	Example
Elimination	**Remove items over 90°C from delivery menu**
Substitution	**Switch to leakproof, snap-lid containers**
Engineering	**Install a sealing station for high-temp items**
Administrative	**Add “double-check lid” step to bagging checklist**
PPE	**Provide insulated hand sleeves and delivery bag liners**

High-ROI Fix: Require couriers to use delivery bags with fixed compartments that prevent container tilt. One-time investment, long-term protection.

3.4 Roadway & Collision Hazards: Safer Routes, Safer Rides

Top Hazards:

- Distracted driving or biking while checking apps
- Lack of designated drop zones
- Courier fatigue during long shifts

Layered Control Strategy:

Control Level	Example
Elimination	**Auto-assign drop zones away from busy intersections**
Substitution	**Replace second-hand e-bikes with newer models featuring front/rear lighting**
Engineering	**Partner with tech vendor to provide bike phone mounts with voice navigation**
Administrative	**Limit delivery blocks to 6 hours max; enforce breaks after 3 hours**
PPE	**Provide hi-vis reflective vests with weatherproof panels and QR ID tags**

Reality Check: A $15 phone mount prevents a $50K collision lawsuit. Small equipment = big risk reduction.

3.5 Ergonomic & Strain Hazards: Carry Smart, Not Heavy

Top Hazards:

- One-shoulder carry methods
- Reaching deep into delivery vehicle trunks
- Climbing stairs with unbalanced loads

Layered Control Strategy:

Control Level	Example
Elimination	**Split large party orders into two separate bags**
Substitution	**Use two-strap courier backpacks instead of shoulder bags**
Engineering	**Provide waist-level bag storage in delivery staging area**
Administrative	**Add “safe lifting & carrying” module to onboarding**
PPE	**Introduce back-support belts or hip braces for high-volume shifts**

Bonus Tip: Use bag weight limits (e.g., 12 lbs max) in dispatch app settings to avoid courier overload.

3.6 Customer Site Hazards: Stairs, Pets, and Strangers

Top Hazards:

- Aggressive pets during handoff
- Icy outdoor stairs
- Unpredictable interactions with customers

Layered Control Strategy:

Control Level	Example
Elimination	**Shift to contactless delivery during certain hours**
Substitution	**Encourage gate or porch drop-offs in app notes**
Engineering	**Use delivery bags with magnetic closures for quick drop and go**
Administrative	**Create “escalation flow” for unsafe handoff conditions (text, call, cancel)**
PPE	**Provide anti-slip gloves and night-light keychains for safety in low light**

Quick Win: Add a prompt in the app: “Report unsafe handoff site.” Use data to flag repeat offenders and revise delivery policies.

3.7 App Distraction & Mental Fatigue: The Hidden Hazards

Top Hazards:

- Couriers checking orders while driving or walking
- No centralized tracking of shift length or rest breaks
- Mental burnout from multi-app hustling

Layered Control Strategy:

Control Level	Example
Elimination	**Disable app notifications while vehicle is moving**
Substitution	**Shift to voice-only route updates**
Engineering	**App triggers break reminders after X orders or time**
Administrative	**Partner with fleet vendors to track cumulative hours across apps**
PPE	**Not applicable — but mental health support counts as psychological PPE**

Culture Shift Tip: Normalize "planned pause" breaks. Share stories of improved performance and safety after rest.

3.8 Integrating Controls Into SOPs & Training

Great controls fall flat if they're not embedded into **daily operations.** Here's how to lock in what works:

- **Update SOPs** with step-by-step safe delivery protocols
- Build **pre-shift checklists** into bagging or staging areas (e.g., "Lid sealed? Bag zipped?")
- Use **in-app checkboxes** before confirming pick-up: "Are all items secure and hot-safe?"
- Run **monthly 'Control Checks'** where leads inspect gear, mats, signage, and courier feedback

3.9 Module 3 Summary

Controls are your operational seatbelt. They don't just block injuries — they reinforce your delivery culture, protect your brand, and reduce turnover by showing your team that their safety matters.

By applying the full hierarchy — from redesigning bags to refining handoffs — you create safety systems that move as fast as your restaurant does.

Next Up: Module 4 — Building a Delivery Safety Culture in Restaurants, where we'll dive into leadership behaviors, peer safety programs, and how to build a team that speaks "safety" as fluently as it speaks "speed."

- **Module Four**

Module 4: Building a Delivery Safety Culture in Restaurants

In restaurants, culture is king. It determines how your team treats customers, prepares meals — and, yes, whether they take safety seriously. You can have perfect checklists and gear, but if your crew sees safety as "extra," they'll

skip it when things get busy. That’s why culture isn’t a bonus — it’s your frontline defense.

This module walks you through how to build a **visible, positive, and peer-driven safety culture** for restaurant delivery operations. You’ll learn how to:

1. Model safety from leadership — managers, supervisors, and veteran couriers
2. Make safety part of daily routines, not a monthly meeting
3. Use peer influence and informal leadership to drive accountability
4. Reinforce safety through recognition, storytelling, and real-time feedback
5. Create shared safety ownership across roles, including front-of-house, kitchen, and delivery

4.1 Why Culture Matters More in Restaurants

In restaurants, everything moves fast — orders, staff turnover, seasonal rushes. With so much urgency and informality, written policies alone won’t protect your team. Culture fills the gaps.

A strong safety culture:

- Encourages proactive behavior, even when the manager isn’t watching
- Normalizes reporting hazards and near misses without fear
- Embeds safety into pride, professionalism, and teamwork

In a restaurant where safety culture is weak, you’ll hear:

“We don’t have time for that.”
“Just make the drop and come back.”
“That bag’s fine — don’t worry about the lid.”

In a strong safety culture, you’ll hear:

“Let’s double-check the bag — it’s hot.”
“That step’s icy — grab the salt bucket.”
“Take your break — you’ve been going hard.”

4.2 Modeling Safety Leadership

Culture starts with what leaders **do**, not what they say.

Managers & Shift Leads:

- Always wear required PPE (non-slip shoes, gloves when handling bags)
- Conduct pre-shift safety talks — 2 minutes is enough
- Step in during unsafe behavior (e.g., “Let’s reseal that soup lid”)
- Ask for feedback: “Any delivery routes feel sketchy today?”

Veteran Couriers:

- Pair new hires with experienced drivers for their first few shifts
- Encourage “one safety share” per shift — a quick story or tip
- Flag hazards early and often

Quick Win: Start every rush hour with a 30-second reminder:

“It’s raining — remember to use the side exit. Grab a mat if it’s getting slick.”

4.3 Making Safety Routine

The most effective safety programs don’t feel like “extra work” — they’re just **how we do things here.**

Build routines like:

- **Pre-shift bag checks:** Lid sealed? Order complete? Proper bag used?
- **Route reminders:** Where to park, avoid, or hand off
- **Shift debriefs:** One good save or one close call — what can we learn?

Use micro-habits:

- Every driver grabs a salt shaker and extra lids before snowy deliveries
- All couriers drop bags in the staging zone — not on the kitchen floor
- First driver to return wipes down the entry mat

Bonus Tip: Print these micro-habits on a “Delivery Code” poster in the back-of-house area.

4.4 Leveraging Peer Influence

People do what their peers do — especially in high-turnover teams where new hires outnumber veterans. Harness that influence.

Peer Culture Moves:

- Recognize “Safety Stars” weekly (e.g., “Ali flagged that icy stair — saved the spill”)
- Encourage friendly correction: “Hey, don’t forget your gloves — it’s soup today”
- Make safety part of the team identity: “We deliver fast *and* smart”

Use **buddy systems**: Assign new couriers a mentor for their first 10 shifts. Not just for delivery routes, but for safety protocols — how to carry, when to flag hazards, how to report a near miss.

4.5 Reinforcing the Culture

Even the best culture needs reinforcement to stick. Use these tools:

Recognition:

- Weekly shoutouts during pre-shift huddles
- Small rewards: meal credits, gift cards, or top courier tags

Storytelling:

- Share real incidents: “Remember when Jamal flagged that loose mat?”
- Use “near misses” as teachable moments: “That spill was close — let’s fix that step”

Feedback Loops:

- Use courier feedback to adjust controls: “We moved the bag shelf — it’s easier now”
- Conduct quick safety surveys every quarter: “What’s working? What’s not?”

Keep it simple, fast, and honest. Even a smile and a “Thanks for being safe today” carries cultural weight.

4.6 Creating Shared Ownership

Everyone in the restaurant — kitchen, front-of-house, delivery — should feel like they **own safety**.

Cross-role ideas:

- Kitchen staff mark “hot” bags or write spill-risk notes on tickets
- FOH helps spot icy walkways or repeat customer hazards
- Couriers help tidy staging areas and report wear-and-tear

Create Safety Captains: Let one team member each shift own the quick walkaround or bag-check. Rotate it to build collective muscle.

4.7 Module 4 Summary

A delivery safety culture isn’t about policies — it’s about people. When everyone models safety, makes it routine, supports each other, and takes ownership, your restaurant becomes a place where safety isn’t just encouraged — it’s expected.

With the right leadership behaviors, peer systems, and daily habits, safety becomes part of your restaurant’s rhythm — just like prepping, plating, and delivering.

Next Up: Module 5 — Targeted Training for Restaurant Delivery Teams.
We’ll explore how to train new hires quickly, retain key knowledge in high-turnover environments, and use blended tools that stick.

- **Module Five**

Module 5: Targeted Training for Restaurant Delivery Teams

In restaurant delivery, turnover is high, time is short, and every shift feels like a sprint. That means your training needs to be fast, focused, and **field-ready** — no long manuals, no theory dumps. You need a system that builds **safety muscle memory** while staying flexible enough to onboard new hires in hours, not weeks.

In this module, you’ll learn how to:

1. Build role-specific training pathways for delivery drivers, baggers, and shift leads
2. Use blended learning (video, demo, shadow, app) for faster knowledge transfer
3. Certify key safety tasks with quick competency checks

4. Reinforce learning through pre-shift huddles and peer refreshers
5. Track and adapt training with high-turnover metrics

5.1 The Case for Fast, Focused Training

Restaurant couriers face:

- **Physical hazards** (slippery steps, hot food, heavy bags)
- **Customer interaction risks** (aggression, unsafe drop zones)
- **Cognitive load** (managing apps, directions, deadlines)

Training must prepare them **before** their first independent shift — and then reinforce those lessons with just-in-time refreshers.

Your goal:
Build a training system that's:

- Fast to deploy
- Tailored to the role
- Repeatable at scale
- Verified through performance

5.2 Role-Based Training Paths

Split training into three key tracks:

Role	Core Skills	Safety Emphasis
Delivery Couriers	**Safe handoff, route navigation, hazard awareness**	**Thermal burns, slips, fatigue, aggression response**
Baggers/Expediters	**Secure packaging, accurate order assembly**	**Spill prevention, proper sealing, thermal handling**
Shift Leads/Supervisors	**Audits, coaching, escalation protocols**	**Culture leadership, incident reporting, root-cause triage**

Delivery Example:

- Day 1: 45-min onboarding + 3 demo deliveries with mentor
- Day 2–3: Shadow shifts with competency check
- Day 5: Independent deliveries with app-based refresher

5.3 Blended Training Methods

Mix methods to improve retention and reduce downtime:

1. **Video Microlearning**
    - 3–5 minute clips on: safe lifting, contactless handoffs, emergency contacts
    - Hosted in your LMS or delivery app
2. **In-Person Demos**
    - Supervisor shows bag sealing, insulated liner use, phone-mount setup

3. **Peer Shadowing**
    - Trainee rides with senior courier for first 2–3 shifts
4. **App-Based Quizzes**
    - Quick checks post-shift: “What should you do if soup leaks in the bag?”
5. **Safety Scenarios**
    - Roleplay unsafe drop zones, customer confrontation, or handoff on icy stairs

Tip: Use “scenarios not slides.” Real cases boost attention and memory.

5.4 Competency Sign-Offs

Create checklists of critical behaviors couriers must demonstrate before solo work.

Sample Courier Competency List:

- Proper bag lift and carry (using legs, no twisting)
- Phone mounted, app loaded before start
- Heat-check: double bag for hot liquid items
- Knows route escalation process (unsafe handoff, no answer, etc.)
- Can explain near-miss reporting process

Signed off by trainer or supervisor. Rechecked quarterly.

5.5 Pre-Shift Huddles & Refreshers

Even great training fades. Keep safety fresh with short, informal reinforcement:

- **2-Minute Huddles**
    - “Watch for ice today — steps out back are slick.”
    - “Lids on tight? Bags upright? No sauce volcanoes!”
- **Safety Snacks (weekly)**
    - Share quick incident stories: “Alex reported a near miss with loose steps. Great catch — salt’s been added.”
    - Ask one courier to teach a tip: “Show us how you seal soup bags tight.”
- **Push-Notification Quizzes**
    - Sent before high-risk days (e.g., snow): “What’s the first thing you check when exiting with hot food?”

5.6 Training in High Turnover Environments

In restaurants, **30–60% of couriers may churn in 90 days.** Your training must:

- Be scalable and templated (use checklists, not 1:1s only)
- Run weekly or even daily for new hires
- Be repeatable for rehires

Use **training dashboards** to:

- Track onboarding completion (who’s signed off?)
- Flag expired certs (e.g., gloves handling refresher)
- Measure performance vs. training gaps (e.g., spill incidents by courier)

5.7 Training Metrics & KPIs

Tie training to safety outcomes. Key indicators:

- % of couriers trained within 3 days of hire
- % passing competency checks on first try
- Spill incident rate per 100 deliveries
- Near-miss reporting rate
- Delivery bag error rate (wrong item, loose lid, missing PPE)

Bonus: Use training as a lever in performance incentives:

“All couriers who pass the refresher quiz this week go into a $50 raffle.”

5.8 Module 5 Summary

In restaurant delivery, the best training is quick, clear, and contextual. When new hires know exactly how to bag, lift, deliver, and de-escalate — before they’re thrown into the rush — you cut risk while keeping orders moving.

By building role-based tracks, blending learning formats, and using competency sign-offs, you build safety into the job itself.

Next Up: Module 6 — Incident Management & Learning Systems for Restaurants, where you’ll learn how to capture near misses, analyze root causes, and turn every incident into a safer next shift.

- **Module Six**

Module 6: Incident Management & Learning Systems for Restaurants

No matter how strong your training and culture are, incidents will happen. Hot soup will spill. A courier will slip on icy steps. A bag will rip at the worst possible moment. The question is: **what happens next?**

Top-performing restaurants don’t just react — they **learn** from every incident, near miss, and delivery glitch. They turn mistakes into momentum. This module gives you a system to do just that.

In Module 6, we’ll show you how to:

1. Make incident and near-miss reporting fast and stigma-free
2. Triage events based on severity and urgency
3. Perform root-cause analysis — even with minimal time and resources
4. Assign and track SMART corrective actions
5. Embed lessons into SOPs, training, and team conversations
6. Monitor trends and close the loop with Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA)

6.1 Reporting Incidents & Near Misses

Why Near Misses Matter

For every burn or slip that happens, there are **dozens** of close calls:

- A courier almost spills a latte on their leg

- A delivery bag barely keeps a soup upright
- A scooter skids on loose gravel but stays upright

Each is a warning. If you ignore them, the injury will come. If you act on them, you prevent it.

Make Reporting Easy

Use **simple, fast tools**:

- A laminated “Near Miss Card” at the register
- QR code on the driver room wall → opens mobile form
- Pre-shift reminder: “Any close calls yesterday?”

Let staff submit anonymously if needed. And always **thank them** when they report.

Incentivize It:

Every valid near-miss report enters a monthly safety raffle. More entries = more chances.

6.2 Triage & Classification

Not every event needs a full-blown investigation — but every event must be **classified**.

Severity	Example	Response
Critical	**Delivery scooter crash, 2nd-degree burn, lost-time injury**	**Investigate within 4 hours**
Moderate	**Minor slip, bag failure, missed drop due to customer aggression**	**Review within 24 hours**
Low	**Near miss, no injury (e.g., spilled drink, tripped but caught self)**	**Logged + reviewed in weekly huddle**

Use an **Incident Log** spreadsheet or app that tracks:

- Date/time
- What happened
- Who was involved
- Location
- Severity level
- Initial actions taken

Trend It Monthly:
If 7 out of 10 incidents are about hot liquids, you know where to start.

6.3 Root-Cause Analysis (RCA)

Not just “what went wrong,” but **why.**

For Simple Events — Use the 5 Whys:

Example:

1. Why did the courier get burned? → Bag tipped and soup spilled
2. Why did the bag tip? → It was placed on the passenger seat
3. Why there? → Driver said it's easier to reach
4. Why not the floorboard? → They didn't know it was safer
5. Why didn't they know? → It's not in the training

Result: Training update + new reminder signage in courier room.

For Serious Events – Use a Structured Tool:

- **Fishbone Diagram** for hot spills, scooter crashes, delivery errors
- Categories: People / Equipment / Environment / Process / Materials

Bring in a small **cross-functional team**: courier, supervisor, kitchen lead.

Golden Rule: Focus on *systems*, not blame.

6.4 SMART Corrective Actions

For every root cause, assign a **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound** fix.

Examples:

- **Engineering**: Add rubber mats to back exit → due Friday
- **Procedural**: New soup-sealing checklist → test Monday, rollout Friday
- **Training**: Add bag placement to courier onboarding → due next new hire
- **Administrative**: Post delivery risk signs by dispatch door
- **PPE**: Order new thermal gloves → confirm delivery Tuesday

Track with a **Corrective Action Tracker**:

- Action | Owner | Due Date | Status | Notes

Review weekly. Escalate overdue items at manager meetings.

6.5 Embedding Lessons Learned

Learning is only real when it changes how people work.

Communicate the Fix

- **Safety Flash**: A one-page summary posted in the break room
- **Shift Huddle**: Talk about the cause + fix the day after implementation
- **Digital Reminder**: A push notification or Slack message with the new process

Update the System

- Change the **SOP** or checklist: don't just say it – write it down
- Add a **training module** or quiz
- Include the incident in your **next refresher huddle**

Keep a **"Lessons Learned" Binder** (digital or physical): a goldmine for new hires and trend review.

6.6 PDCA Cycle: Driving Continuous Improvement

The **Plan–Do–Check–Act** cycle keeps your safety program alive.

- **Plan**: Choose a top hazard (e.g., soup burns)
- **Do**: Implement controls (e.g., double-bagging, glove policy)
- **Check**: Track incident rate, get courier feedback
- **Act**: Adjust based on results (e.g., switch to different bag type)

Repeat **every month**. Assign an owner for each PDCA cycle.

Visualize It:
Use a whiteboard or digital dashboard with:

- Near-miss rates
- Top 3 root causes
- % corrective actions completed
- Top PDCA priorities

6.7 Module 6 Summary

In restaurant delivery, incidents are inevitable – but repeated incidents are not. By encouraging reporting, analyzing the root causes, acting fast, and closing the loop, you create a system that learns with every spill, slip, or scare.

Build a culture where close calls are gold, not garbage. When your team sees that reports lead to real change, they'll speak up – and your system will get safer by the shift.

Next Up: Module 7 – Metrics, Monitoring & Continuous Improvement for Restaurant Delivery.
We'll look at the KPIs that matter, how to visualize trends, and how to keep improving even when you're busy slinging orders.

- **Module Seven**

Module 7: Metrics, Monitoring & Continuous Improvement for Restaurants

In restaurant delivery, what gets measured gets improved – and what goes untracked often gets repeated. That's why building a metrics-driven safety culture is essential to sustaining progress, catching issues early, and keeping your delivery ops aligned with both operational and OHS goals.

This module shows you how to:

1. Define the most relevant **leading** and **lagging indicators**
2. Use simple tools to **track and visualize performance**
3. Set **realistic safety targets** for your team
4. Create and sustain a **PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Act)** improvement loop
5. Mature your safety system one data point – and one huddle – at a time

7.1 Why Metrics Matter

Imagine trying to improve your kitchen speed without ticket times — or manage food waste without knowing what gets tossed. Safety is no different. Without data:

- You can't see what's working
- You can't make the case for resources
- And worst of all, you can't **prevent** — only react

When safety becomes measurable, it becomes manageable.

7.2 Lagging vs. Leading Indicators

Lagging Indicators (what already happened):

These tell you how safety performed in the past.

Indicator	**Example**
Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR)	**2 per 100,000 deliveries**
Lost Time Injury Frequency	**1 courier off shift in past 30 days**
Burn Incidents	**5 in Q2 (3 from soup, 2 from spills)**
Spill Claims	**$1,200 in claims for damaged orders**

Lagging = important, but reactive. We need more than just history.

Leading Indicators (predict and prevent):

These show the **inputs** that create safer outcomes.

Indicator	**Example**
% Couriers Trained Within 3 Days	**92% this month**
Near-Miss Reports Per Week	**Goal = 3 per location**
Corrective Action Completion (14 days)	**85% closure rate**
Pre-Shift Huddle Completion Rate	**80% of AM shifts**
Delivery Bag Spot Checks Passed	**9 of 10 in last audit**

Balance both types to get the full picture.

7.3 Setting Meaningful Targets

Don't aim for "perfect" at first — aim for **better than baseline**.

Example Goals:

- Cut soup spill injuries by 50% in 90 days
- Increase near-miss reports to 1 per courier per month

- Reach 95% onboarding completion within 3 days of hire
- Maintain 100% delivery bag spot checks for thermal seals

SMART Format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound):

“By October 1, reduce courier burn incidents from hot items by 40% by switching to dual-lid cups and retraining all staff.”

7.4 Tracking Tools

No fancy software needed to start. Use what you have:

Spreadsheets

- Incident log (columns: date, type, location, cost, corrective action)
- Near-miss tracker
- Training status sheet

Whiteboards or Wall Charts

- Weekly metrics posted in the breakroom
- Stickers for huddles completed or goals hit

Mobile Apps / LMS

- Track completions, quiz scores, corrective actions, and checklists

Dashboards (if available)
Use your POS or OHS system to visualize trends over time

Weekly Visual Check-In:

“Red-Yellow-Green” coding for key metrics:

- Green: On target
- Yellow: Needs attention
- Red: Immediate action needed

7.5 Feedback Loops that Work

Measurement only matters if you **act on it.** Here’s how:

1. **Plan**
   Identify one or two key safety priorities from your data

E.g., surge in soup-related burns in July heat

1. **Do**
   Implement a fix

E.g., introduce new double-seal containers + 2-minute thermal transfer refresher

1. **Check**
   Review metrics

Burns decreased? Containers working?

1. **Act**
   Adjust based on feedback

Training worked? Make it standard. Didn’t work? Test new container brand.

Repeat monthly.

7.6 Maturing Your Safety System

Your safety program evolves in stages:

Stage	Description	Example
Reactive	**You respond after injuries**	**Only track serious incidents**
Basic	**You log all events and train regularly**	**Have near-miss log and onboarding**
Proactive	**You act based on data before incidents**	**Trend reports trigger process updates**
Integrated	**Safety is embedded into all ops decisions**	**Delivery routing considers safety, not just speed**
Learning	**Your system adapts and improves monthly**	**PDCA cycles close the loop continuously**

Track your own maturity every quarter using a short self-assessment:

- Are near misses being reported?
- Are corrective actions closed?
- Are training gaps tied to incident trends?

7.7 Making Safety Visible

Nothing builds momentum like **showing progress**. Celebrate wins:

- **Team pizza** when a location hits 30 days without an injury
- **Shoutouts** for most near-miss reports
- **Scoreboards** for lowest incident rates per shift

Use storytelling:

“Two months ago we had 3 burns per week. Since the new lids and bag training, we’ve had just 1 total. That’s your effort, making real change.”

7.8 Module 7 Summary

Safety isn’t just a gut feeling — it’s a graph. By measuring both the past and the future, you’ll steer your restaurant’s delivery operations toward smarter, safer outcomes.

Build your metrics one at a time. Use simple tools. Celebrate improvements. And keep refining.

Next Up: Module 8 — Anticipating Emerging Risks in Restaurant Delivery, where we'll tackle delivery tech distractions, climate risks, and the human toll of rushed orders.

- **Module Eight**

Module 8: Anticipating Emerging Risks in Restaurant Delivery

Restaurant delivery has always been fast-paced — but in recent years, it's become even more unpredictable. From new mobility tools and app distractions to extreme heatwaves and mental fatigue, your safety challenges are evolving fast.

In this module, we'll explore how to **spot and prepare for tomorrow's hazards — today**.

You'll learn how to:

1. Identify key emerging risks affecting food couriers
2. Analyze technology-related hazards, like app fatigue and mobile distractions
3. Mitigate climate extremes — heatwaves, icy conditions, and storm surges
4. Address psychosocial factors, like burnout, stress, and gig-work instability
5. Update your system to stay adaptive and forward-looking

8.1 What Are Emerging Risks?

Emerging risks are **hazards that are increasing in frequency, changing in nature, or just now being recognized.** For restaurant couriers, they're often shaped by:

- New tech (dispatch apps, GPS devices, payment systems)
- Evolving expectations (faster delivery times, tighter windows)
- Environmental changes (extreme heat, air quality, ice storms)
- Sociocultural shifts (worker precarity, isolation, burnout)

You may not see them in incident logs **yet** — but they're coming.

8.2 Tech-Driven Hazards

App Fatigue & Mobile Distractions

Most couriers now manage **multiple apps at once**: food orders, mapping, customer comms, payment portals.

Risks:

- Glancing at a phone mid-delivery or while crossing a street
- Navigating app bugs or dual-device confusion while riding or driving
- Eye strain and decision fatigue over long shifts

Controls:

- **Dispatch app training** during onboarding

- **“Eyes-Up” zones**: No phone use while moving (e.g., signage at exits)
- **Push-to-voice tools** for hands-free operation
- Encourage pre-route checks to reduce in-transit fiddling
- Educate on **cognitive overload**: 5 apps = 5x mental drain

8.3 Battery-Related Risks

E-bikes, e-scooters, and mobile battery banks are increasingly common — but bring **fire, explosion, and thermal runaway** risks.

Emerging issues:

- Couriers charging batteries indoors or with incompatible cords
- Heat-damaged or punctured lithium-ion cells
- Charging while sleeping or during breaks

Controls:

- Inspect batteries regularly: Look for swelling, leakage, or heat
- Post signage: “No charging inside unless approved battery & charger”
- Require UL-listed chargers only
- Use flame-resistant battery storage cabinets where practical
- Add battery safety to new-hire orientation

8.4 Climate Extremes & Environmental Exposure

Heat Stress

With hotter summers, couriers face dehydration, cramps, confusion, and even heat stroke — especially on bikes or scooters.

Controls:

- Mandatory water breaks: Every 60–90 minutes in 30°C+ weather
- Hydration station in dispatch or partner restaurants
- Educate on early signs of heat stress
- Supply breathable uniforms, ice packs, and shaded waiting areas

Cold & Ice

In winter, icy steps and frozen roads lead to **slips, collisions, and exposure injuries**.

Controls:

- Provide grippy slip-resistant footwear
- Route planning: Avoid untreated zones
- Encourage use of handrails, salt steps outside dispatch

Air Quality & Wildfire Smoke

Controls:

- Monitor AQI daily → Adjust shift length or pause dispatch if over 7 (Canada scale) or 150 (US AQI)
- Issue N95s for poor air quality days

- Provide indoor waiting options

8.5 Psychosocial Risks

Fast-paced delivery shifts can **isolate, stress, and demotivate** your team.

Emerging challenges:

- Gig workers juggling 3–5 apps per day
- No consistent team, little peer connection
- Pressure to accept “every order” regardless of conditions

Solutions:

- Build team culture: Regular huddles, events, shoutouts
- Offer mental health check-ins or peer mentor programs
- Rotate high-stress routes to prevent burnout
- Survey regularly to spot signs of exhaustion, disengagement

Remember: Stress is a safety risk. It affects decision-making, physical coordination, and reaction time.

8.6 Adapting Your Safety System

Your system must evolve as risks evolve. Here’s how to stay ready:

1. Quarterly Horizon Scan

- Task your safety lead or committee to research:
  - Weather trend reports
  - App updates and tech changes
  - Local traffic or law shifts (e.g., new e-bike rules)

2. Update SOPs

- If you start allowing e-scooters, write the safety rules now — not after a crash.

3. Pilot & Adjust

- Try a new container type, uniform, or safety process with one location
- Gather courier feedback before full rollout

4. Build Flex Capacity

- Allow “bad weather backup” roles (e.g., in-store help if it’s unsafe to deliver)
- Pre-plan what happens when AQI or temp thresholds are crossed

8.7 Module 8 Summary

Your safety system can’t be static in a world that’s rapidly changing. From tech distractions to battery fires, climate extremes to courier burnout — emerging risks are here, and growing.

But with early warning, flexible policies, and a culture that listens and adapts, you’ll be ready for what’s next. Safety isn’t just reactive — it’s

predictive.

Next Up: Module 9 — Three Conversational Safety Talks for Restaurant Delivery Teams, including real-world, supervisor-led scripts on spill injuries, winter slips, and mobile phone distractions on shift.

- **Module Nine**

Module 9 — Three Conversational Safety Talks for Restaurant Delivery Teams

Safety Talk #1: "Spill Injuries — When Hot Food Hurts"

"Alright team, circle up. Today we're talking about something that doesn't sound dangerous at first — but trust me, it can land people in the ER and your shift in chaos.

I'm talking about **hot food and beverage spills.**

Now I know what you're thinking — 'It's just soup.' Or maybe, 'I've carried coffee every day for five years and never had an issue.' And hey, I get it. Most of the time, we get the order in the bag, onto the bike, into the car, and to the customer without any problem.

But all it takes is one missed lid snap. One pothole. One bag that tips in the passenger seat. And suddenly you've got 180-degree clam chowder pouring down your leg — or worse, soaking through your jeans while you're on a scooter. And that's not theoretical. That happened to Kev last November. Third-degree burns on the inside of his thigh. Two surgeries. Six weeks off.

Let's break this down and talk about **why** it happens, **what we can do** about it, and the **simple habits** that prevent it."

"Why Hot Spill Injuries Happen"

"There are usually three culprits: bad packaging, bad handling, and bad positioning."

1. Packaging Failures

"Sometimes the restaurant's in a rush. You get handed a to-go bag with soup in a container that's just not up for the ride. The lid doesn't snap tight. Or it's one of those thin plastic ones where the steam builds up pressure and — boom — it pops right off in the bag. You get splashback, or worse, direct skin contact when you lift the order out."

Real Talk: If you feel heat through the bottom of a bag, assume something inside is unstable. Don't just hope it holds.

2. Handling Mistakes

"I've seen it a hundred times — courier's in a rush, grabs the bag sideways or one-handed from the top handle. That tips the contents. Or they rest it on their thigh while getting into the car or adjusting their e-bike throttle. That's when

a weak lid gives way and you get a lap full of hot pho.”

3. Bad Bag Positioning

“A lot of us have gotten creative with delivery bags and baskets. Some strap the thermal bag to the top rack, some wedge it behind the seat, and some just drop it on the passenger floorboard. But unless that thing is **flat and secured**, you’re gambling with gravity.”

“What the Injuries Actually Look Like”

“These aren’t just little burns. We’re talking:

- Blistered skin that sticks to clothing
- Deep tissue burns on thighs, groin, and abdomen
- Scalds on forearms or hands when containers tip during handoff
- Long-term nerve damage in some cases

And here’s the kicker: because it’s food, sometimes the burns get infected. Soup and bacteria love the same temperature zones.

And if it happens on a customer’s porch? Lawsuit city.

Now we’re not trying to scare anyone — we just want to stay **aware**. Because we’ve got tools to avoid this.”

“How We Prevent Spill Injuries”

Step 1: Check the Container

“Before you even leave the restaurant:

- **Pick up the bag gently.** Listen for slosh.
- **Look at the lid.** Does it look sealed?
- **Do the tap test.** Gently tap the lid — does it wiggle? That’s a bad sign.

If anything feels sketchy — **say something.** Ask the counter staff to double-cup it or re-lid. You’re not being a pain. You’re protecting your skin and your shift.”

Step 2: Use the Right Delivery Bag

“We issue thermal bags for a reason. But how you use them matters.

- **Lay the bag flat.** Containers should be upright. If you stack them sideways, you’re just shaking a soda can.
- **Use dividers.** If you’ve got soup and fries, keep them apart. One bad slosh shouldn’t wreck the whole order.
- **Zippers closed.** Even a half-zip can cause a pressure point or let the bag tilt.”

Bonus Tip: If your bag’s lining is torn or warped from past spills — **request a replacement.** A warped bottom means your food’s at a tilt before you even hit the road.

Step 3: Secure the Bag During Transit

“Bikers, scooters, cars — we all face the same basic challenge: moving safely while your cargo sloshes.

- **Bike/Scooter Riders:** Use a rack or frame that allows your bag to sit flat. Bungee cords aren’t enough — get a stable bracket.
- **Car Drivers:** Floorboard is better than the seat. If it must go on a seat, use the seatbelt to secure the bag and keep it upright.

And here’s the hard part: **drive or ride like there’s soup on your lap.** No hard turns. No slamming brakes. No sharp bumps without bracing.”

“In Case of a Spill — What To Do”

“Accidents still happen. So let’s talk damage control.

If it’s in the car/bike:

1. **Pull over.** Don’t try to keep riding with hot liquid on you.
2. **Assess your skin.** If you’re burned, call your supervisor and **seek first aid or urgent care**.
3. **Document it.** Take a photo of the container, the bag, your burns (if comfortable), and note the time.

If it happens on the customer’s porch:

- Be polite but **don’t apologize for injuries** — stick to the facts.
- Let the company handle the customer call.
- Note the order and let dispatch know.

Don’t hide it. Reporting helps us flag which containers or vendors are repeat offenders.”

“Policy Reminders”

“Just to refresh, here’s our spill protocol:

- **Every thermal bag must be used for hot liquids.** No exceptions.
- **No carrying hot food by hand or loose in the car.**
- **All spills involving injury get reported to dispatch immediately.**
- **All new hires must complete the Hot Food Transport module before their first delivery.**”

“Why This Matters — Beyond the Burn”

“It’s not just about skin or lawsuits. A spill messes with your whole day:

- You lose tips
- You miss deliveries
- You waste gas or bike range
- You feel shaken up

But when we follow these simple steps — check the lid, use the right bag, drive smart — we avoid all that. No burns. No cleanups. No angry customers. Just smooth deliveries and peace of mind.”

“Closing Message”

“Here’s the bottom line: we carry hot items every day. And 99% of the time, it goes fine. But that 1%? That’s the one that can sideline you.

So let’s slow down. Let’s check our gear. Let’s speak up at pickup.

And let’s treat hot food like what it really is — a burn hazard in disguise.

Thanks, everyone. Keep it safe, and watch your fingers — and your thighs.”

Safety Talk #2: “Winter Slips: Staying Upright in Snow, Slush & Ice”

“Alright team, before we head out for tonight’s shift, I want to talk about something that affects every one of us — especially in the colder months: **slip-and-fall injuries.**

This time of year, we’re dealing with all kinds of nasty ground conditions: icy sidewalks, slushy steps, frozen driveways, even black ice in parking lots. One wrong step, and boom — you’re down, food’s spilled, maybe your wrist is broken or your back’s thrown out.

I’m not exaggerating. Just last February, Sam took a step off a customer’s front porch, didn’t realize the bottom step was covered in sheer ice, and down he went — ankle snapped, dislocated shoulder, six weeks off. For what? A wet bag of poutine.

So today, I want us to walk through:

- What makes winter slips so dangerous
- Where and when they happen most
- How to gear up and move right to avoid them
- What to do if you — or someone else — goes down

Let’s talk about how to **deliver safely on slippery ground.**”

“Why Slips Matter So Much in Our Job”

“Look, we’re in and out of vehicles, walking up steps, crossing driveways — dozens of times a night. We’re holding bags, reading addresses, watching for cars — and sometimes we forget to look down.

The problem is: **Winter doesn’t care if you’re distracted.**

And while slips might seem minor, here’s what I’ve seen over the years:

- Broken wrists from trying to catch a fall
- Spinal fractures from slipping backward
- Torn ligaments in knees from bad landings
- Head injuries from porch falls
- Food spills that result in customer complaints and no tips

Even a sore tailbone can take you out of work for days — and every missed shift is missed income. Let’s not wait until someone’s laid up to get serious about winter footing.”

“Top Slip Zones You’ll Encounter”

1. Customer Steps & Porches

“The big one. People don’t always salt their stairs. Wooden steps get extra slick. Rugs get frozen stiff. Some porches are sloped slightly and trap black ice.”

2. Driveways & Walkways

“Often just thin layers of ice under a dusting of snow. It looks flat, but your feet can disappear out from under you in a second.”

3. Restaurant Back Doors / Alley Pickup Zones

“Grease on the ground plus melting snow? That’s like a skating rink. Be extra cautious when picking up from alleyway access points.”

4. Vehicle Entry & Exit

“Getting out of your car onto an icy curb? That’s a classic place to twist an ankle. Always look before you step out.”

5. Inside Entryways

“Some customers mop floors or lay wet mats that actually increase the slip hazard. Just because you’re inside doesn’t mean you’re safe.”

“Step-by-Step: How to Avoid Winter Slips”

Step 1: Gear Up with Slip-Resistant Footwear

“This is your first line of defense. You wouldn’t go riding without a helmet — don’t deliver in winter without proper footwear.

Look for:

- Deep tread pattern (like tire tread)
- Oil and water slip-resistant soles (ASTM F2913 rated)
- Insulated but flexible — so you can feel the ground

Not acceptable:

- Smooth-soled sneakers
- Worn-down running shoes
- Fashion boots with flat soles

If you can slide your shoe on dry linoleum, it’ll skate on ice too.”

Pro Tip: If you ride a bike or scooter, make sure the boot can fit in your pedal cage or isn’t too clunky for foot controls. There are hybrid courier boots designed for this.”

Step 2: Walk Like a Penguin (Seriously)

“We laugh, but it works.

Here’s how to ‘penguin walk’:

- Keep your center of gravity over your front foot
- Take small, flat-footed steps
- Keep your arms out slightly (no hands in pockets!)
- Shuffle if needed on particularly icy ground
- Slow down — delivery isn't a sprint

It's okay to look silly. Better that than fall hard."

Step 3: Use Your Hands Strategically

"I know we carry a lot, but hands can help or hurt.

DO:

- Use handrails if available
- Carry bags in one hand only when possible so one hand is free to balance or break a fall
- Use a shoulder bag or backpack when appropriate

DON'T:

- Overload yourself with double-bagged drinks and two food bags at once
- Keep hands in pockets — you can't balance that way

Free hands = safer landing, if it comes to that."

Step 4: Spot Trouble Before You Step

"Your eyes are your best defense. Here's how to scan:

- **Look for shine:** Glossy = icy.
- **Check edges of stairs:** That's where ice hides.
- **Avoid black patches:** That's black ice — looks like wet concrete but isn't.
- **Use a flashlight or headlamp at night:** Your phone light isn't always enough.

And never assume a shoveled path is safe. It may be shoveled — but not salted."

"Use the Salt Bag"

"If your dispatch or pickup point offers mini salt bags — **use them.** Scatter a little on the customer's stairs or your own path to the car if it's slick.

Some places even offer **grip pads** you can drop temporarily to make a safe path to the door. Talk to your team lead if you want those added."

"Post-Incident Protocol — If You Fall"

"Even with everything right, slips happen. Here's what to do immediately:

1. **Don't rush up.** Check your body — ankle, wrist, tailbone, head.
2. **Call dispatch or your team lead.** Report the fall.
3. **Document the scene.** Take a photo of the ice or hazard, note the address, time, and what was spilled.
4. **Decide next steps.** If injured, seek medical care. Don't 'tough it out' and risk worse damage.

If a teammate falls, help them follow the same steps. And back them up with photos and details."

"Company Policy on Winter Slips"

"To keep everyone safe and consistent, here's our current cold-weather slip policy:

- **Slip-resistant footwear is required from November through March.** We do audits — if you're in sneakers, that's a stop-work order.
- **All porch or driveway falls must be reported within 1 hour.**
- **Dispatch can pause deliveries to a location if multiple slips are reported — don't hesitate to speak up.**
- **Salt packs and shoe grips are available on request. Ask your lead if you need one.**

We're not here to write you up — we're here to make sure you don't go down."

"Safety Culture Moment: Don't Be a Hero, Be Smart"

"I know some of us have that mindset: 'I've done this route a hundred times,' or 'I'm in a rush, I'll just jog up these stairs.'

But every veteran courier I know has a story — usually involving an icy fall and a delivery they never made.

It's not about being tough. It's about being **smart, prepared, and consistent.** Every safe delivery is a win — for you, your health, and your paycheck."

"Wrap-Up: Let's Stay on Our Feet This Winter"

"Okay team, here's the recap:

- Gear up with proper boots
- Scan before you step
- Walk like a penguin — small, flat steps
- Keep one hand free
- Report slips immediately
- Ask for salt packs or traction aids

If we do those six things every shift, we'll see fewer injuries, fewer missed days, and a lot more smooth, confident deliveries.

Thanks for listening — and let's stay upright out there."

Thanks — there are no existing drafts of **Safety Talk #3: Mobile Distractions on Shift**, so I'll draft it now in the same 2,000-word conversational, supervisor-read style as the previous two.

Safety Talk #3: "Heads Up: Fighting Mobile Distractions on Delivery Shifts"

"Alright folks, before we head out for tonight's dinner rush, let's have a quick huddle. Today I want to talk about something that's become one of the biggest hidden hazards in our line of work: **mobile distractions.**

You've got your phone buzzing with customer updates. The app's dinging with new

orders. Maybe your playlist just hit the wrong vibe and you're skipping tracks while biking through traffic. Or you're trying to squeeze in a quick reply to a text while jogging up to the customer's door.

We all do it. But here's the hard truth: **phones are one of the biggest contributors to delivery injuries today.** Whether you're walking, driving, riding, or handling hot food — **distraction puts your body, your tips, and your teammates at risk.**

So today, we're going to break it down:

- How mobile distraction affects us on the job
- The three most common danger zones
- Real-world incidents from our teams
- Simple habits and tools to cut down risk
- How to build focus into every shift

Let's get real about screen time — because safety starts when we look up."

"Why Mobile Distraction Is So Dangerous in Our Work"

"Our entire workflow is phone-based now. Orders come in through one app. Navigation through another. Sometimes you're juggling multiple platforms if you're running dual shifts with other delivery apps.

But every glance away from your surroundings is **a lost second of reaction time.**

- One second looking at a screen while walking = missing an icy step.
- One second on your phone while riding = missing a car door swinging open.
- One second while driving = the difference between braking and rear-ending a van.

Here's what we've seen on our team in just the last year:

- A delivery rider ran into a pedestrian while skipping songs at a red light — concussion for both.
- A van courier rear-ended a car while updating the delivery ETA — $3,200 in damages.
- A foot courier slipped on restaurant steps while checking the customer's note.

All preventable. All caused by the same thing: that little screen in your hand."

"The Three Mobile Danger Zones"

Let's name the top zones where mobile distraction bites us:

1. While Moving

Walking, riding, driving, skating — **any motion + phone = danger.**

Distraction while moving accounts for 80% of mobile-related incidents. Doesn't matter if it's "just checking" directions or "quickly reading the tip amount" — it pulls your eyes, ears, and awareness away.

2. During Hand-Offs

Customer notes pop up at the last second. Or maybe you're snapping a picture of the delivery on the doorstep. It's easy to get distracted during the final hand-off step.

But you might:

- Miss an aggressive dog
- Trip on porch steps
- Spill hot soup on your hands

Focus needs to stay on your footing and surroundings.

3. While in the Vehicle (Parked or Moving)

Even "parked" doesn't mean "safe." Looking down at the app while stopped at a light means you could miss cross traffic, pedestrians, or an opportunity to move safely.

"Real Incidents That Started With a Glance"

Let me tell you about Marco. Solid rider — super fast, great customer ratings. But one night, he was rushing to beat the 30-minute mark and took his eyes off the road for literally two seconds to check if the next order would stack.

During that time, a car stopped short ahead of him. Marco clipped the bumper, flew off the bike, and fractured his collarbone. Six weeks out of work. That single glance cost him two paychecks.

Or Kayla — delivering by foot. She was replying to a customer about gate instructions, didn't see the loose tile on the front steps. Down she went — bruised ribs, spilled meal, lost tip.

In every case, the crew member **thought they had enough time.** But distraction isn't about time — it's about timing. That one moment is all it takes."

"The Science Behind Why It's So Hard to 'Multitask'"

We all think we're good at multitasking. But brain research says otherwise.

Here's the reality:

- Your brain **can't do two conscious tasks at once.**
- It switches between tasks rapidly — like flipping between apps.
- Every switch costs mental energy and awareness.

So when you're walking while reading a message? You're actually not doing either well. This is called **inattentional blindness** — you literally don't see hazards that are right in front of you.

You think you're alert. You're not.

"Small Habits That Make a Big Difference"

So what can we do about it?

We're not going to ban phones — we need them. But we can build safe habits.

1. Set Your Tech Before You Move

- Load your map before you leave the restaurant
- Read all customer notes before stepping out
- Adjust volume, music, or delivery queue before driving off

This 60-second pre-check saves a world of distraction later.

2. Designate Safe-Check Zones

- Only use your phone when stopped and **off the sidewalk or road**
- If you're on a bike, pull over to a safe space before checking the screen
- If driving, wait until you're fully parked in a safe zone

No exceptions. If you need to tap, park.

3. Turn On Voice Notifications

- Use audio prompts for navigation
- Turn on voice replies or auto-messages to customers
- Minimize screen time by listening instead of looking

4. Keep One Hand Free

Whether walking or riding, having one hand free gives you:

- Balance
- Reaction capability
- Better handling if something goes wrong

Juggling phone + bags + drink tray? Recipe for disaster.

"Our Company Policy on Mobile Use"

Let's be clear:

- **No mobile phone use while moving. Period.**
- If you're caught texting or tapping while walking, biking, or driving, you'll be written up.
- Three violations in a quarter = suspension of delivery privileges.
- If you need to check your phone, **stop safely first.**

This isn't about rules for the sake of rules — it's about keeping you upright, safe, and employed.

"Let's Redesign the App Experience — Together"

We're working with operations to **make the tools work better for you.** That includes:

- Fewer mid-route prompts
- Auto-expanded customer notes before pickup
- Simple 'I'm here' taps for door photos

If something in the app pulls your focus too much, tell us. We can work on it. Your feedback drives safer design.

“Peer Accountability: Call It Out”

If you see a teammate tapping while walking, or glancing down while crossing the road — **say something.**

We’re not here to shame each other — we’re here to keep each other safe.

I’d rather someone call me out for “Heads up!” than call an ambulance after I trip.

“Wrap-Up: Let’s Keep Our Heads Up”

Okay, here’s the takeaway:

- Phones are tools — but they’re also hazards
- One glance away can lead to injury, lost pay, or worse
- Most incidents happen while walking, biking, or handing off
- Set your tech before you move, and stop if you need to check it
- Look out for each other — and look up

Thanks for staying focused. If anyone wants a mount for their bike or a hands-free earpiece for voice nav, come see me after this. We’ve got gear to help you stay connected — **without disconnecting from your surroundings.**

Let’s deliver smart. Let’s deliver safe. Let’s keep our heads up.”

Additional Resources

Safety for Restaurant Delivery Drivers Meeting Kit

Courier and Delivery Driver Safety

Driver Safety Topic

Driver Safety Video Loop

Adjusting to Bad Driving Conditions — Heat Meeting Kit

Adjusting to Bad Driving Conditions — Snow Meeting Kit

WHY THIS GUIDE?

Human tone: Written like a chat over coffee, not a courtroom sermon.

Legal clarity: Key legislative references are embedded for quick scanning.

Actionable insights: Stories, examples, and clear next steps.