

RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

Kitchen Safety - General

Food quality and fast service are often the main focus in a commercial kitchen. Kitchen employees must follow safety practices to avoid injuries. If best practices are not followed, the various exposures such as slips/falls, burns, cuts, and strains and sprains, can result in serious injury.

Below are some reminders to maintaining a safe kitchen environment:

- ☐ Good housekeeping can reduce slip and trip hazards. Maintain a clean work area around you.
- ☐ Stored materials, carts, and equipment should not obstruct pathways and exits.
- ☐ Clean liquids that are spilled on the floor promptly. Use a dry mop clean wet surface areas.
- ☐ Non-slip floor mats can provide extra protection so that spills don't become slips.

Fire Prevention

- ☐ Employees should monitor cooking food carefully. Hot grease and oil should never be left unattended.
- ☐ Cool oil and grease before transporting them.
- ☐ Grease traps and grill surfaces should be cleaned frequently and flammable items must be kept away from flames and heat sources.
- ☐ Fire suppression systems including hoods, fans, ducts, and filters, should be inspected and cleaned semi-annually by a properly trained and qualified person.
- ☐ Practice emergency procedures including fire extinguisher protocols and proper use.



Ergonomics

- ☐ Comfortable, supportive shoes are essential for kitchen workers due to long periods of standing; foot rests and anti-fatigue mats can also help.
- ☐ Moving and stretching frequently as well as rotating tasks can help workers avoid static postures and fatigue.
- ☐ To reduce overreaching, employees should keep their frequently used items within arm's reach.
- ☐ Store most frequently used and heavy items on shelves between mid-thigh and shoulder height.
- ☐ Avoid lifting and carrying large, heavy and awkward items. Use a cart to transport these items.
- ☐ Slow down – completing the task safely is more important than rushing through it and suffering an injury.

Proper Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment

- ☐ To avoid catching sleeves on pot handles and immersing in hot liquid, wear tops with close-fitting sleeves.
- ☐ To avoid slips ensure shoes have slip-resistant soles.
- ☐ Don aprons to provide an added layer of protection from splashes of hot water or grease.
- ☐ Hand mitts and pot holders should be used when handling hot items
- ☐ Cleaners, degreasers and other chemicals used for cleaning can burn or irritate eyes and skin. Read the labels and know the hazards associated with their use. Wear proper gloves and eye protection as required by your supervisor



Knives

- ☐ Store knives in a storage box, sheaths or magnetic wall unit (with knife points up)
- ☐ Clean knives immediately after use and store. Do not place knives in a sink with other dirty dishes or utensils.
- ☐ Do not try to catch a falling knife.
- ☐ Never hand another employee a knife. Please it on a clean surface and have the other employee pick it up.
- ☐ Protect hands with cut resistant gloves when cutting and using sharp knives.
- ☐ Do not interrupt or talk to someone while they are using a knife.

Kitchen Equipment

- ☐ Only operate equipment that you have been trained and authorized to use.
- ☐ Do not use equipment with missing guards.
- ☐ Protective equipment such as aprons, gloves, and clothing must be kept away from moving parts.
- ☐ Turn off and unplug equipment prior to cleaning and servicing. If equipment cannot be unplugged, follow your organization's lockout/tagout procedures.
- ☐ Do not remove blockages or items caught in the equipment by hand while it is operating or plugged in. Unplug the unit first before clearing blockage in the machine.

This Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.