

**Loss Control Services: SAFETY TOPIC OF THE MONTH**

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**M.0807: Kitchen Safety – Personal Awareness****Facilitator Outline**

**Purpose:** Monterey County Schools Workers' Compensation JPA Loss Control Services provides these monthly topics to promote safety awareness, injury prevention and regulatory compliance for member districts. This topic is suitable for use with JPA Video Lending Library VHS Tape # 211 – “Job Safety For Food Service Workers”.

**Instructions:** Make copies of the handouts and quiz for those attending. As the facilitator for this training – please keep track of attendance in accordance with your district recordkeeping requirements. One hour should be allocated to allow for review/discussion of the handouts and the quiz – Add fifteen minutes if the video is used. You may use the quiz as a pre or post discussion topic; using it as a pre-quiz and then discussing the answers after review of the materials is a good way to assure an interactive session in a minimal amount of time.

**Answers to Handout #2: PRE -QUIZ - Kitchen Safety – Personal Awareness**

1. Which of these kitchen activities could cause a back injury?  
a) improper lifting b) pushing heavy objects c) awkward reaching d) improper climbing **e) all of these**
2. Which of these terms refer to proper use of a knife?  
a) carry in pocket b) can opener c) horseplay **d) keep it sharp** e) be distracted f) all of these
3. Personal awareness is the key to prevention of injuries. **True**
4. Good housekeeping and proper use of equipment reduces the risk of a trip, slip or fall. **True**
5. It is a good practice to organize the work area to avoid contact with or between hot objects. **True**
6. “MSDS” refers to “Multi-School Distribution System” for food services. **False** (Material Safety Data Sheet)
7. Which of the following terms apply to shoes worn for kitchen work?  
a) fashionable b) slip resistant c) good condition d) porous e) conductive **f) b and c**
8. Being tired at work is safe because it slows you down and you are more attentive to details. **False**
9. Which of the following terms apply to a properly maintained storage area?  
a) heavy items stored high b) adequate lighting c) blocked passageway d) heavy items stored lower  
e) fire sprinkler clearance f) defective shelving **g) b, d and e** h) a, c and f
10. It is best to lift gradually using the legs and not the back. **True**
11. The “bonus” question adds extra feedback and interactive discussion from the group.

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## **Kitchen Safety Handout #1**

### A. Introduction/Overview

Kitchens can be good places to work, but all workers should be aware that there are hazards. Kitchen work involves hazardous tools and is often conducted in close quarters under time pressure. That's a recipe for accidents unless all workers know how to do their jobs safely. This training session will introduce you to Kitchens hazards, so that you and your co-workers can do your jobs safely and efficiently. **Personal Awareness** – being alert and aware of your surroundings and planning ahead on and off the job will control your exposure to safety hazards and is the key to prevention of injuries!

### **Identifying Kitchen Work Hazards**

What causes the most common types of injuries in Kitchens? There are four main types of hazards:

**1 > Injuries from objects**

**2 > Trips and falls**

**3 > Burns and scalds**

**4 > Overexertion injuries**

### **1 > Injuries from Objects**

Typical injuries from objects include cuts from knives, injuries from Kitchen machinery, and also injuries from running into things. Let's look at what we can do to prevent these common injuries.

**1-1: Knife Safety:** Accidents with knives account for many Kitchen injuries. Here are do's and don'ts that will help you to avoid cuts and amputations from knives.

#### **Do:**

- Use the right knife for the job.
- Always use a proper chopping board or block.
- Make sure the knife is sharp.
- Carry only one knife at a time, tip pointed down at your side.
- Store knives securely in proper racks in a visible place.
- Hold the knife with your stronger hand.
- Cut away from your body when cutting, trimming, or boning.
- When putting a knife down, put it where it will not fall or get in the way, with the sharp edge away from you.
- After using a knife, clean it immediately or place it in a dishwasher.
- Use protective clothing such as mesh gloves.

#### **Do not:**

- Put a knife in a sink full of sudsy water—you won't see it and can cut yourself badly.
- Use a knife as a can opener.
- Try to catch a falling knife. Let it fall and then pick it up.
- Engage in horseplay with a knife in your hand.
- Carry knives while carrying other objects.
- Carry a knife in your pocket.
- Leave knives where they could be accidentally covered.
- Talk to your co-workers while you are using a knife — you could become distracted.

**1-2: Kitchen Machine Safety:** Kitchen machines, although quite safe when used properly, cause many of the most serious and frequent accidents in Kitchens. One hasty shortcut can mean the loss of a finger or a hand. New employees are especially prone to accidents and should be trained carefully before using Kitchen machines. Here are specific tips for using common Kitchen machines:

**a. Cutters and Choppers**

1. Guards must always be in place. Never operate with blades exposed.
2. Every day, test the safety interlock switch that turns the power off when the cover is raised.
2. Use only plastic spatulas to feed or remove food from the cutter.
4. Never attempt to clean the machine unless the power switch is off and the **cord is removed** from the outlet. Machines have an uncanny way of turning on "accidentally" while being cleaned.

**b. Slicers**

1. Use the food conveyor attachment and keep your hands away from the blade at all times—especially when catching products being sliced. Do not hand-feed.
2. For cleaning, disconnect the power, set the slicing dial to zero, and then remove the guard. Use a spoon with a cloth wrapped around one end to clean the blade, working from the center to the outside. Ideally, wear metal mesh or Kevlar® gloves when cleaning the blade; if these aren't available, cover the blade edge with a thick cloth while you rotate it, to protect your bare hand.

**c. Grinders**

1. Never remove or modify the guards, or use your hands to feed the grinder.
2. Use only the specially designed metal or plastic feeder to prevent damaging the feed screw.
3. Before attempting to clean or adjust anything on the equipment, turn off the power switch and disconnect the power cord.

**d. Mixers**

1. Since most mixer blades cannot be completely guarded, avoid loose-fitting shirt sleeves, ties, or anything that could become caught in the agitator.
2. Never try to wipe the sides of the bowl, adjust the machine, or remove the bowl while the machine is operating.
3. When cleaning, turn off the power and **disconnect the cord** to prevent accidental operation.

**e. Band Saws**

1. Cutting frozen meat with a band saw can be extremely dangerous.
2. Guards should be adjusted to expose only as much blade as is absolutely necessary.
3. Never take your eyes off the blade when cutting, and remember that the blade may "coast" for a while after the power is shut off.
4. Disconnect the power when guards are removed for cleaning.

**1-3: Other Encounters with Objects**

Sharp objects and Kitchen machines aren't the only objects that can cause injuries. You may also be struck by co-workers moving heavy items, swinging doors, open cabinet or dishwasher doors, and so on. The way to avoid these is to keep your eyes open, think before you act, and be sure that no matter how busy the Kitchen is, you and your co-workers do not get frantic—that's a sure invitation to accidents. Remember – *Personal Awareness!*

## **2 > Slips, Trips, and Falls**

### **2-1: Hazards**

Slips, trips, and falls are very common Kitchen accidents. And it is easy to see why:

- Slippery floors and stairs
- Cluttered Kitchens and storage areas
- Loose or bumpy carpets and floor mats
- Defective ladders and footstools
- Poor visibility
- Rushing during busy times

Here are some do's and don'ts to help you avoid slips and falls:

#### **Do:**

- Keep floors and stairs clean, dry, and non-slippery.
- Keep floors and stairs clear of debris and obstructions.
- Make sure floors are free from trip hazards such as raised or broken sections.
- Mop floors with the recommended amount of cleaning product in the water, or cleaning fluid, to ensure grease and other slippery substances are removed.
- Use slip-resistant waxes to polish and treat floors.
- Make sure that carpeting, rugs, and mats are free of holes, loose threads, loose edges, and bumps that may cause tripping.
- Use adequate warning signs for wet floors and other hazards.
- Ensure there is adequate lighting everywhere.
- Make sure that ladders and footstools are in good repair and have non-skid feet.
- If you drop or spill something, clean it up. If you notice a hazard, immediately remove it or clean it up, if possible. If it's not possible to take care of the hazard yourself, report it immediately to your supervisor.
- Walk—don't run.
- Mark swinging doors with in and out signs, or define standard movement patterns to avoid collisions.

#### **Do not:**

- Leave carts, boxes, trash cans, or other objects on the floors and in the aisles.
- Use defective ladders or footstools.
- Use chairs, stools, or boxes as substitutes for ladders.
- Leave oven, dishwasher, or cupboard doors open. These may create a tripping or contact hazard.

### **2-2: Ladders and Stepstools**

Ladders and step stools are accidents waiting to happen if you do not use them carefully. Here are some tips:

#### **Do:**

- Inspect a ladder before and after each use.
- Reject a ladder if it has loose, broken, or missing rungs; loose hinges; or loose or missing screws or bolts. Defective ladders should not be repaired by an unqualified person – it is best to dispose of the ladder.
- Set up barricades and warning signs when using a ladder in a doorway or passageway.
- Clean muddy or slippery footwear before mounting a ladder.
- Face the ladder when going up or down and when working from it.
- Keep the center of your body within the side rails.
- Locate the ladder firmly using slip-resistant feet or secure blocking, or have someone hold the ladder.
- Use a three-point stance, keeping both feet and at least one hand on the ladder at all times.

**Do not:**

- Work from the top two rungs. The higher you go on a ladder, the greater the possibility that the ladder will slip out at the base.
- Use makeshift items such as a chair, barrel, milk crate, or box as a substitute for a ladder.

**2-3: Stairways****Do:**

- Ensure that stairways are well lit.
- Keep stairs clear of obstructions.
- Use handrails.
- When carrying a load up and down stairs, make sure that the load does not block your vision.
- Report tripping hazards to your supervisor and place warning signs.

**2-4: Proper Footwear Helps Reduce Slips, Trips, and Falls**

One often overlooked factor in preventing slips trips, and falls is footwear. Here are some tips that will help prevent accidents. Follow the rules of your employer policy with regard to footwear.

- Wear slip-resistant shoes. For wet surfaces, the sole should have a well-defined tread as more edges will provide a better grip.
- Don't wear shoes that are dirty or worn out, as this affects their slip-resistance. To preserve your shoes, leave them at work and wear other shoes to and from work.
- Wear shoes with low or no heels.
- Wear shoes or boots with internal steel-toe caps if you lift and carry heavy objects.
- Wear footwear that is closed at the toe without a pattern of holes.
- Avoid porous fabrics such as canvas, which won't protect your feet from spills and burns.

**3 > Burns and Scalds****3-1: Hazards**

Another hazard found in virtually every Kitchen is burns and scalds. Contact with boiling hot liquid fat, grease, or oil, and hot food products like soup, tea, and sauces, account for most burn and scald injuries. Other sources are:

- Stoves
- Toasters and toaster ovens
- Ovens
- Hot utensils
- Pressure cookers
- Cooking pots
- Hot dishwashers

**Tips for Avoiding Burn and Scald Injuries:****Do:**

- Assume that all pots and pans and metal handles are hot. Touch them only when you are sure that they are not hot or when you are using proper gloves.
- Organize your work area to prevent contact with hot objects and flames.
- Keep pot handles away from hot burners.
- Make sure that handles of pots and pans do not stick out from the counter or cooking stove.

**Do:**

- Use oven mitts appropriate for handling hot objects. Use long gloves for deep ovens.
- Use only recommended temperature settings for each type of cooking.
- Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.
- Open hot water and hot liquid faucets slowly to avoid splashes.
- Lift lids by opening away from you so you won't get burned by escaping steam.
- Wear long-sleeved cotton shirts and cotton pants.
- Wear shoes that will repel spilled hot foods and oils.

**Do not:**

- Bend over a stove, grill, or other hot area in order to reach an uncomfortable distance—you could burn yourself or your clothing could catch fire.
- Spill water in hot oil.
- Leave metal spoons in pots and pans while cooking.
- Lean over pots of boiling liquids.
- Overfill pots and pans.
- Leave an electric element or gas flame of stove "on" all the time.
- Open cookers and steam ovens that are under pressure.

**3-2: Special Tips for Fryers**

Fryers are particularly dangerous. Here are tips for working with fryers.

- Dry off wet food and brush or shake off excess ice crystals with a clean paper towel before placing it in the fryer basket. Wet foods splatter and cause steam.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands and arms from splashes.
- Never fill fryer baskets more than half full.
- Gently raise and lower fryer baskets.
- Do not stand too close to or lean over hot oil.
- Keep liquids and beverages away from fryers.
- Follow directions for adding fat or oil.

**4 > Overexertion**

Overexertion includes two types of accidents—those related to manual handling of containers, such as boxes and cartons; and those related to tiredness. A tired person is not alert and has slower reaction time.

**4-1: Manual Handling**

The key to preventing manual handling injuries is to reduce or eliminate the risk factors. Workplace factors associated with overexertion accidents include:

- Awkward back posture held for a period of time or repeated due to poor working heights and reaches. Examples include reaching for linen or food supplies located on high shelves.
- Heavy or frequent lifting, pushing, pulling, and carrying. For example, lifting and carrying bulk food containers, or taking materials from awkward places or putting them into awkward places.

**4-2: How to Reduce Manual Handling Accidents**

Here are examples of steps you can take to reduce overexertion accidents:

- Store heavier or frequently used items at a height between workers' hips and chest to reduce awkward postures when handling these items.
- Use carts to move heavy products from storage coolers and freezers.

- Use platforms, counters, and tables to eliminate repetitive bending and lifting from the floor.
- Design or alter "pass through" windows in Kitchens to reduce the risk of back injury. If they are too high or too deep, workers are forced to use long reaches and awkward postures to pick up orders.
- Use smaller banquet trays to lighten loads and to make them easier to handle.
- Store clean plates on spring-loaded dollies to reduce repetitive bending.
- Add a footrest or matting to a hostess counter to give some relief from prolonged standing.

#### **4-3: A Special Note on Storage Areas**

Storage areas offer potential hazards including haphazard stacking of supplies, and strains and falls while lifting. Freezer storage may present the hazard of ice on the floor or melted ice outside the freezer.

##### **Do:**

- Make sure shelves are firmly secured in place against walls and on the floor.
- As long as the shelf is sturdy, put the heaviest items at waist height because it is easier to lift them that way.
- Ensure adequate lighting.
- Store chemicals, detergents, and pesticides in a separate area away from foodstuffs.
- Ensure that chemicals that are not compatible with each other are not stored together. (Check the material safety data sheets. MSDS)
- Use bins and racks as much as possible. Do not overfill or pack them too tightly with materials.
- Leave adequate clearance space between the top of the stored goods and the ceiling in areas protected by a sprinkler system.

##### **Do not:**

- Block passages in the storage area.
- Stack loose items on the top shelves.
- Overload shelves; a shelf full of large mayonnaise containers, for example, is quite a heavy load.
- Store cardboard cartons in damp areas.

#### **4-3: Tiredness**

If work gets frantic for long periods, tiredness will lead to carelessness and that means accidents. Workers can help by getting adequate sleep, taking breaks, and pacing themselves.

#### **4-4: What Workers Can Do To Prevent Injuries**

- Stay in shape with regular exercise.
- Warm up the muscles used in work activities before the shift.
- Use the proper handling (that is, lifting, pushing, pulling, and carrying) technique:
  - ▷ Place feet apart for good balance.
  - ▷ Bend the knees.
  - ▷ Keep the load close to the center of the body.
  - ▷ Use smooth, gradual motions.
  - ▷ Avoid twisting the body.
- Work with a partner the load is too heavy. If possible, spread activities that require heavy exertion throughout the day rather than trying to do them all at one time.

**The bottom line:** Follow the rules for Kitchen safety and, although you want to work fast, remember to use personal awareness keep it under control—injuries and wasted time are the results of frantic rushing or not paying attention to your surroundings.

**Handout #2: PRE -QUIZ - Kitchen Safety – Personal Awareness**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Please provide the best answer for each question – the “best” answer may be open to discussion during review of the quiz!

1. Which of these kitchen activities could cause a back injury?  
a) improper lifting   b) pushing heavy objects   c) awkward reaching   d) improper climbing   e) all of these
2. Which of these terms refer to proper use of a knife?  
a) carry in pocket   b) can opener   c) horseplay   d) keep it sharp   e) be distracted   f) all of these
3. Personal awareness is the key to prevention of injuries.   True   False
4. Good housekeeping and proper use of equipment reduces the risk of a trip, slip or fall.   True   False
5. It is a good practice to organize the work area to avoid contact with or between hot objects.   True   False
6. “MSDS” refers to “Multi-School Distribution System” for food services.   True   False
7. Which of the following terms apply to shoes worn for kitchen work?  
a) fashionable   b) slip resistant   c) good condition   d) porous   e) conductive   f) b and c
8. Being tired at work is safe because it slows you down and you are more attentive to details.   True   False
9. Which of the following terms apply to a properly maintained kitchen storage area?  
a) heavy items stored high   b) adequate lighting   c) blocked passageway   d) heavy items stored lower  
e) fire sprinkler clearance   f) defective shelving   g) b, d and e   h) a, c and f
10. It is best to lift gradually using the legs and not the back.   True   False
11. Bonus Question: Do you have something to add to the discussion regarding your experience with situations involving work in a kitchen setting? Make notes below:

