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Safety Matters

Kitchen Safety

Preparing and serving food involves working around a variety of hazards that can lead to workplace injuries. Kitchen workers are subject to burns, cuts, slips and falls, lifting, and other risks. To reduce the chance of injury in the kitchen, consider these tips.

- **Take care when moving large pans, food ingredients or other heavy items.** Whenever possible, use carts, dollies, or other tools to assist with lifting and moving materials. If items must be manually lifted and carried, bend at the knees – not at the waist – and use your legs to raise the load. If the item is too heavy, get help from a co-worker to assist.
- **Focus on the floors.** Clean up food and liquid spills as soon as possible. Until the spill can be cleared, let others working in the area know about the issue so they can avoid it. Use signs to identify wet floors. In areas that are commonly wet – such as in front of a sink – use anti-slip mats to improve floor traction.
- **Choose the right shoes.** Despite your best efforts to keep kitchen floors clean and dry, they may be wet at times. To reduce the chance of a slip and fall, wear appropriate non-slip footwear. Avoid shoes with leather soles or open toes, as these do not provide the proper protection for kitchen use.
- **Ensure you are trained before operating kitchen equipment.** Kitchen equipment can be dangerous if operated without proper training. Always follow the manufacturer's operating instructions and ask for help if you're unsure how to safely operate equipment. Ensure guards are in place near dangerous moving parts and do not use your hands to guide food near these areas.
- **Check hot foods carefully on stoves, deep fryers, and microwaves.** Uncover a container of steaming food away from your face. Avoid splashing when adding food items to boiling water or fryers. Use oven mitts when handling hot cooking equipment.
- **Handle, use and store knives safely.** Cut in the direction away from body and keep your fingers and thumbs out of the cutting line. Use protective wire mesh or Kevlar gloves for added protection. Do not talk with co-workers while using a knife as this may reduce focus. When cutting is complete, store the knives in a designated area.



Cuts from knives are just one of the many hazards workers must be aware of when working in a kitchen.