



HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK: **KITCHEN**

MARCH 1995

WorkCover. **Watching out for you.**



New South Wales Government

Disclaimer

This publication may contain occupational health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au) or by contacting the free hotline service on 02 9321 3333.

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

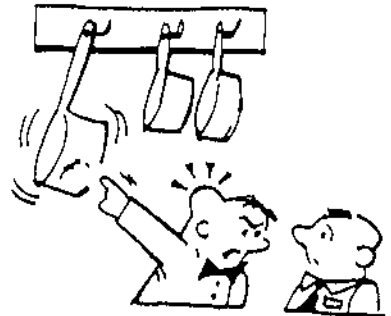
If you work in the hospitality industry ... here are a few tips

Whether you are casual or permanent, work full or part-time, your employer must:

- make sure the place where you work is safe and will not cause any health problems
- have a workers compensation insurance policy. Details of this policy must be displayed at the workplace.

You must:

- help your employer and the people you work with to make sure that the workplace is safe
- report all accidents as soon as they happen
- report any hazards you find to your supervisor
- not operate any machinery unless you have been trained to do so.



Cuts

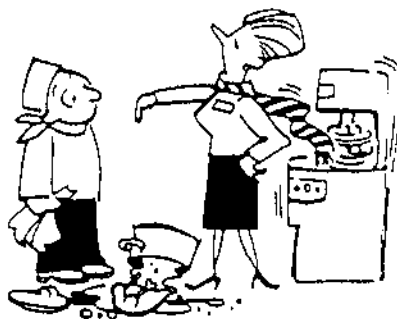
Cuts and even amputations can be caused by the misuse or poor maintenance of knives, mincers, food processors, dough mixers, meat band saws. Or from broken glass. So in general -

Make sure you:

- receive proper training in operating the equipment
- put back all guards and safety devices after cleaning
- clean up broken glass as soon as possible
- pick up loose pieces of broken glass with a damp paper towel and put them in a solid plastic or metal container.

Do not:

- try to clean or "just brush something off" a moving part such as cutting blades or beaters in mixers
- wear loose or frayed clothing or jewellery that could get caught
- pack down garbage by hand.



With knives make sure you:

- use the right knife for the job and that the blade is sharp
- always use a proper chopping board or block
- always cut away from your body when cutting, boning or trimming.



Do not:

- try to catch a falling knife
- leave a knife in dish water
- carry a knife in your pocket.

With *mincers, food processors and dough mixers* make sure you:

- always use a pusher to push meat down the feed throat
- always use a pusher to avoid contact with moving blades
- check that the safety guards are in place before starting
- check that the bowl and attachments are properly locked in place before starting a dough mixer
- turn off and unplug the machinery before taking it apart and cleaning.



Do not:

- try to reach any part of the worm with your fingers
- ever put your fingers in a food processor to guide the food
- remove safety interlocks and safety guards.

With *slicing machines* make sure you:

- check all safety guards are in place before turning the machine on
- return the meat thickness setting gauge to zero setting after each use
- turn off the machine before removing a blockage or cleaning.

Do not:

- clean the blade while the machine is running.

With *meat band* saws make sure you:

- follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- operate the saw after lowering the blade guard to the correct height (this setting allows the meat through the minimum clearance)
- use the pusher plate when feeding meat into the saw blade
- keep the floor and work areas around the machine clear of rubbish.

Do not:

- force the meat through the saw
- clean the saw or try to clear food from it unless the power is turned off.

Burns and scalds

Burns and scalds can be caused by contact with stoves, pressure cookers, toasters, boiling liquid, cooking pots, hot utensils. So in general -

Make sure you:

- organise your work area to prevent contact with flames and hot objects
- see that handles of pots and pans do not stick out from the counter or stove



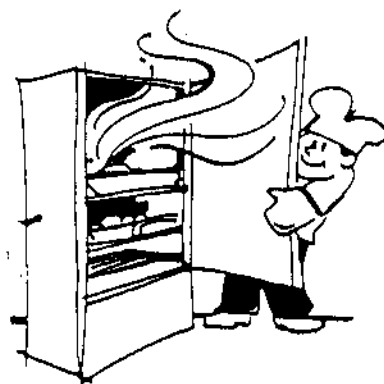
- use oven gloves or mittens for handling hot objects and long gloves for deep ovens
- lift lids by opening away from you.

Do not:

- overfill pots and pans
- leave metal spoons in pots and pans while cooking
- spill water in hot oil
- use a wet cloth to lift lids from hot pots
- open cookers and steam ovens which are under pressure
- leave a hot electric element or gas flame “on” all the time
- open dishwashers while they are working or reach into them while they are still hot.

With steamers make sure you:

- shut off the steam supply and wait for about two minutes
- stand to the side and open the door, keeping the door between yourself and the open steamer
- remove items carefully using oven mitts and place them on a trolley. If you carry steamer trays across the kitchen you will leave a trail of dripping hot water.



With deep fat fryers make sure you:

- clean away any split grease with warm water and detergent as soon as possible or cover it with salt if you cannot clean it up immediately.

Slips and falls

Slips and falls can be caused by slippery and cluttered floors

and stairs, loose or bumpy carpets and mats, and things left lying around.



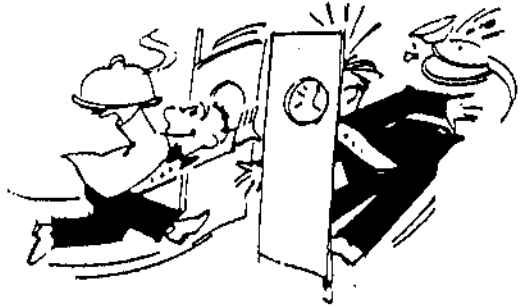
Make sure you:

- report any hazards you see to your supervisor. For example, not being able to see people coming through doors or around corners
- report any bad lighting
- keep floors and stairs dry and clean
- keep areas around ice machines clean and dry and use plastic or metal scoops to get the ice from the machine
- hang power cords over aisles or work areas to prevent tripping accidents
- park trolleys and carts near a wall and well away from doors, exits and walkways
- wear shoes which will not trip you up and which will not catch on uneven floors and which are comfortable for you.



Do not:

- leave oven, dishwasher or cupboard doors open
- rush through swing doors without thinking that someone may be on the other side.



Electric shock

This can happen from contact with faulty electrical equipment and appliances; outlets, switch panels, electric transformers.

Make sure you:

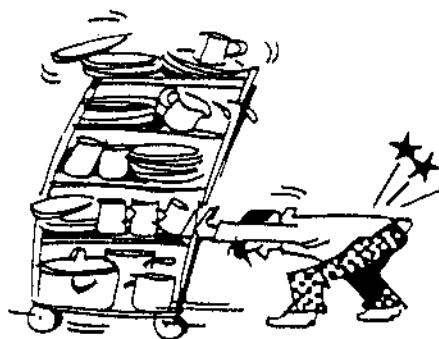
- report any damaged plugs, wires, electrical equipment
- keep power cords clear of the equipment during use
- pull the plug not the cord
- keep power cords away from heat, water and oil.

Do not:

- clean electrical equipment with flammable or toxic solvents
- carry electrical appliances by the power cord
- tie power cords in knots
- plug several power cords into one outlet
- allow carts and trolleys to pass over unprotected power cords
- use equipment with damaged fittings.

Strains and bad backs

These can happen for many reasons, but can be made worse by awkward postures, carrying heavy loads, frequently reaching above shoulder level, doing the same task over and over again.



Make sure you:

- organise your work so that you are in a comfortable position with your arms and forearms relaxed
- use the proper tools for the job lift by holding the load close to your body
- move your feet if you must turn when lifting - do not twist your body get help if the load is too heavy or large
- push rather than pull
- try to find a work surface which is the right height for the job you are doing.
- Use elbow height as the guide. For example:

Cleaning or sorting -
5 cm above elbow height



Peeling and cutting vegetables - about 5-20 cm below elbow height

Cutting or slicing meat - about 20-40cm below elbow height.

Chemical exposure

Exposure can happen from contact with some cleaning agents such as oven cleaners, bleaches, etc.

Make sure you:

- Read the labels or ask your supervisor about possible toxic effects
- get proper first aid if you inhale, swallow or come into contact with a toxic chemical.

Do not:

- use food containers or cooking utensils for storing chemicals
- mix liquids and powders with plastic spoons
- store liquid chemicals on top shelves.



Help

You can help management: report hazards and make suggestions about improving health and safety where you work.

You can form a health and safety committee in your workplace if the majority of people want one.

The committee can help workers and management find and fix hazards in the workplace.

For more information ring the **WorkCover Bookshop** (02) 9370-5303 and ask for:

How to establish an occupational health and safety committee in your workplace catalogue number 107 and

Occupational health and safety committees: powers, functions rights and duties catalogue number 108.

Or ring the **WorkCover Information Line** on 13 10 50

The information in this WorkCover publication is taken in part from the ***Food Service Workers Safety Guide*** published by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

If you have found this publication useful, here are some more resources available from the WorkCover Bookshop 02 9370 5303

Noise Regulation: hospitality and entertainment industry

Gives five easy steps to help people in the entertainment industry meet their responsibilities to manage noise exposure. 3 panel DL. Catalogue no. 125 Free

Restaurants, hotels and clubs employment injuries, workers compensation statistics NSW 1994/95

Focuses on restaurants, hotels and clubs as being one of the 15 worst performing industries because of the increase in new major claims in the last four years. 4 p. Catalogue no. 526. Free

Injury highlighting dangers of automatic doughnut making machine.
Free Safety Alert. Catalogue no. 4014

Methylated spirits causes kitchen fire risk

Free Safety Alert. Catalogue no. 4039

Backpak: a practical guide to help you comply with the manual handling law

Based on HazPak this is a step-by-step guide to help you find, investigate and fix workplace manual handling risks. Contains case studies and worksheets. 28p. Catalogue 112. Cost: \$10.00

BackWatch bulletins: a series of newsletters to help solve back injury problems in specific industries. Catalogue 731.1. Free

BackBasics...

A series of industry-specific pamphlets explaining in simple terms, the basics of the law concerning manual handling. Catalogue 740.1 cleaning industry. Free

Passive smoking in the workplace - policy and control

A guide to achieving a smoke-free workplace with emphasis on the legislative requirements, legal liability, case studies and developing a policy. 8 p. Catalogue no. 353. Free.

Hazardous substances in the workplace

A series of pamphlets describing the health effects of hazardous substances in specific industries. Catalogue no. 456.3: cleaners. Free

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