

Loss Control Bulletin

Employees who perform serving and busing functions in restaurants are exposed to a wide variety of hazards and working conditions. Injuries incurred from these job duties tend to fall in the categories of burns and scalds, knives and cuts, strains and sprains, slips, trips and falls. Fortunately, with planning, training, and implementation of some basic safety rules, many of these injuries can be prevented.

Planning for Injury Prevention

It's best to think about how injuries can be prevented during the early stages of designing or re-design of the restaurant facilities. Although the design is primarily centered around the customer experience, the plan should include as many of the following conditions as possible:

- Provide smooth, durable, slip resistant flooring materials.
- Eliminate the need for servers to have to use stairs in any part of the busing process.
- Provide good illumination throughout the path of travel used by the serving staff.
- Avoid creating server traffic paths that will also be heavily used by customers accessing exits, lounges, or rest rooms.
- Provide traffic paths that are wide enough to accommodate service carts or that allow traffic flow in both directions.
- Eliminate bottleneck areas or likely collision points.
- Install wide view mirrors in high traffic areas where travel around a corner is required.
- Install swing type doors with see through windows in openings leading from the kitchen to the dining area.
- Provide wheeled carts for servers to use for delivery of food to the tables or at a minimum, provide service trays that can be readily set up near the table to be served.
- Provide wheeled carts for busing personnel to remove used tableware.
- If carts are not used for busing, consider selecting lighter weight dinnerware to reduce the potential for strain injuries to busing staff.
- If carpeting is installed in the dining area, promptly repair any damaged sections.
- Provide security lighting in dark areas leading to employee parking lots.
- Provide security cameras to deter robbery attempts.

Burns and Scalds - Burns may occur while workers are serving or preparing hot foods or drinks or while they are operating machinery that makes hot drinks such as coffee, tea, or espresso. Carrying hot plates or plates that have been placed under heat lamps or reaching over candles placed on tables can also cause burns.

- Be properly trained to prepare hot items. Understand how to use the equipment you will be required to operate safely. Use caution when preparing hot drinks or using machines that dispense hot liquids. Don't stick your hands into areas where hot coffee or hot liquids are dispensed.
- Do not remove coffee pot until coffee is through being dispensed.
- Use trays to carry hot plates.

Safe Service and Busing Operations for Restaurants

- Use a waiter's cloth or hot pads or oven mitts to protect your arms or hands when carrying hot plates or trays. Be aware that plates under heat lamps are hot!
- Observe any safety procedures or wear any protective equipment (hot pads, mitts, aprons) provided for your use while preparing hot items.
- Do not reach over table candles while serving or removing food from tables. Do not carry lit candles because the wax can burn.
- Do not use wet towels to grab or hold hot items.
- Remember that items heated in a microwave continue to cook or heat after the microwave is turned off.
- Receive basic first aid training for the treatment of burns.

Knives and Cuts

- Do not use a glass to scoop ice. It can break from the cold ice. (The server could be cut and glass pieces could fall into the ice bin). Use a metal or plastic ice scoop for placing ice in glasses.
- Use a broom and dustpan to clean up broken glass.
- Do not pick up broken glass with your hands; use a broom and a dustpan.
- Use cutting boards for safe cutting and chopping.
- Avoid talking with co-workers or customers while using a knife.
- Focus your attention on the cutting task while using a knife or other sharp utensil. Distractions increase the risk of getting cut.
- Learn to use a knife safely.
- Cut in the direction away from your body.
- Keep your fingers and thumbs out of the way of the cutting line.
- Place dirty knives in a designated container for cleaning, rather than storing in sinks. Wear heavy-duty gloves while cleaning sharp utensils.

Strains and Sprains

Learn to lift properly and stay fit to help reduce the risk of injury from lifting:

- Lift with your knees, not your back.
- Lighten a heavy load that needs to be lifted or get help when lifting.
- Always make sure the load is balanced and even when lifting.
- Get help when lifting or pouring fluid out of heavy pots or use tilt containers to help minimize arm and back strain

Safe Service and Busing Operations for Restaurants

Slip, Trip and Falls

- Require kitchen employees to wear footwear that fully encloses the foot and has slip resistant soles.
- Provide a slip resistant flooring surface or slip resistant floor covering mats in areas where spills or wet areas may occur.
- Promptly clean up floor spills or water to prevent slip and fall injuries.
- Provide aisles with adequate width to allow safe travel by employees carrying items for the kitchen to the dining area.
- Keep aisles and heavy traffic areas clear at all times.
- Promptly store delivered goods in designated areas to maintain safe walking and working areas.

The guidelines provided in this bulletin are only intended to provide an overview of some of the more important steps that can be taken by management to establish a safe workplace. The guidelines are not considered exhaustive of all measures and controls that can be implemented by management to address all potential loss or injury producing causes. Ultimately it is the responsibility of management to take the necessary steps to provide for employee and customer safety. It is not intended as an offer to write insurance for such conditions or exposures. The liability of Republic Indemnity Company of America and its affiliated insurers is limited to the terms, limits and conditions of the insurance policies underwritten by any of them. © 2022 Republic Indemnity of America, 4500 Park Granada, Suite 300, Calabasas, CA 91302.