

## Restaurant Kitchen Safety

### Loss Control Bulletin

In restaurant operations, injuries to workers most frequently occur in the kitchen area. The presence of cooking equipment, knives, and powered food preparation equipment, all combined with periods of intense activity, constrained in relatively constricted areas tend to create the perfect setting for employees to sustain injuries. The primary hazards to guard against kitchen injuries are knives, hot objects or liquids, slippery floors, tripping hazards, dangerous powered equipment, and congestion.

Here are some basic guidelines for prevention of injuries in a restaurant kitchen:

#### Preventing Knife Injuries

- Install safe knife storage racks and require that knives be put away between use.
- Train staff on safe knife handling procedures, stressing the importance of maintaining sharp knives.
- Set up and maintain knife sharpening procedures.

#### Preventing Burn Injuries

- Locate deep frying equipment away from high traffic areas.
- Train staff in safe cleaning and draining procedures for deep fat fryers.
- Keep pot and pan handles turned inward, to prevent accidental spills.
- Store combustible materials such as aprons, towels, and cleaning cloths away from open flames.
- Permit only trained kitchen personnel to light or relight cooking equipment.
- Do not allow storage of material on the floor adjacent to cooking equipment where it can create a tripping hazard.
- Prohibit wearing loose fitting clothing near open flames.
- Promptly clean spills and grease from cooking surfaces to prevent fires.
- Provide an ABC rated fire extinguisher near the cooking appliances. Train all staff in proper use of fire extinguishers.
- Contract with a professional service for routine maintenance and periodic cleaning of kitchen exhaust systems.
- Maintain all automatic fire extinguishing equipment according to manufacturer's recommendations. Train all kitchen staff on how to operate the fire extinguishing equipment.
- Provide proper personal protective equipment such as rubber gloves, rubber aprons, face shield, and rubber boots to personnel lifting or moving large containers of hot liquids.
- Don't overload deep fat fryer baskets or shake off hot oil after lifting the basket.
- Don't allow any liquids to be stored or consumed near the deep fat fryers. Liquids that drop into the hot grease will cause violent splattering causing burns.



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### Preventing Slip and Fall Injuries

- Require that kitchen employees wear footwear that fully enclose the foot and have slip-resistant soles.
- Provide a slip resistant flooring surface or slip resistant floor covering mats in areas where spills or wet areas are likely to 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 from 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.

### Preventing Injuries from Operating Equipment

- Provide training for safe operation of meat slicers, large mixers, and other equipment and restrict operation of such equipment to trained employees.
- Provide electrical shock hazard safety training to all kitchen employees.
- Provide ground fault electrical circuit interrupter protection for equipment operated in wet areas.
- Require that employees with long hair wear a hair net or other acceptable hair covering when working near moving machinery. Prohibit wearing loose clothing in those same areas.
- Locate the placement of potentially hazardous equipment to allow a safe clearance between the operator and heavy traffic.

The above guidelines provide a starting point in setting up a safe workplace and developing specific safety rules and procedures that address the particular hazards of your restaurant operation. If you require additional assistance, please call Republic Indemnity's loss control department.