Facts for Food Service Employees

GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEADERS

BURNS & SCALDS
Burns and scalds occur when Food Service Employees (FSE) come in contact with hot oils, steam, open flames, ovens, appliances, and utensils.

What you and your school can do to prevent burns and scalds:

- Be aware that deep fat fryers are the number one cause of burns and do not leave hot oil or grease unattended.
- Provide grease containing units that dump automatically and fryers that lower food automatically into the hot oil.
- Provide splash guards on fryers.
- Provide training on electrical and fire safety guidelines and manufacturer's operating instructions for all equipment.
- Avoid overcrowding on range tops.
- Set pot handles away from burners.
- Adjust burner flames to cover only the bottom of a pan.
- Avoid loose clothing and keep sleeves buttoned when in kitchen. Wear oven mitts to handle hot objects.

CUTS & PUNCTURES
Cuts and puncture injuries (most frequently associated with sprains, strains, and tear injuries. Ergonomic assessments fitting the job to the worker with proper equipment and training can prevent many of these injuries.

- Pass a knife to colleagues by laying it on a counter or pass it with blade pointed down.

USE APPLIANCES SAFELY
Proper use of labor saving devices such as slicers, grinders, and mixers require both effective training when a new employee starts a job and periodically thereafter, to make certain that employees follow all necessary procedures.

- Have the kitchen supervisor set the example by using proper work methods on a daily basis and encouraging others to do so.
- Have available the instruction and safety manuals for all equipment should someone need further information.
- “Zero” the slicer blade after each use. Turn the power off when cleaning the blade and wipe from center hub to edge to prevent slashing injuries from the edge of the blade.
- Use push stick to feed grinder (grinders/tenderizers), never place fingers in feed openings, and keep guards in place at all times when operating machinery.
- Make certain mixer beaters are properly fastened, bowl elevator is locked in position before starting the unit, and always stop the machine before removing anything from the mixing bowl.
- Wear appropriate gloves to avoid contact with harsh soaps and chemicals.
- Load dishwasher trays properly. Do not overload or force trays into the machine. If tray is stuck in unit, use long pole with a knife to colleagues by laying it on a counter or pass it with blade pointed down.

SPRAINS & STRAINS
Sprains and strains of muscles and tendons and back injuries [also called musculoskeletal disorders (MSD)] are common among food service workers. Hazards such as improper lifting, repetitive motions, exerting excessive force, and working in awkward postures are often associated with sprains, strains, and tear injuries. Ergonomic assessments fitting the job to the worker with proper equipment and training can prevent many of these injuries.

- Never place fingers in feed openings.
- Tighten and replace loose handles.
- Provide instructions for all equipment.
- Avoid overcrowding on range tops.
- Set pot handles away from burners.
- Adjust burner flames to cover only the bottom of a pan.
- Avoid loose clothing and keep sleeves buttoned when in kitchen. Wear oven mitts to handle hot objects.

RESOURCES
Your NJEA UniServ Office

HEALTH & SAFETY RESOURCES

New Jersey Education Association • 180 W. State St., PO Box 1211 • Trenton NJ 08607-1211 • 609-599-4561 • njea.org
What you and your school can do to prevent burns and scalds:
• Review the school’s OSHA 300 injury and illness logs, 301 reports, workers’ compensation records, and the nurses’ reports of problems to see if MSD are occurring. This information can help show what caused the injuries so that prevention can be implemented.
• Ergonomic Assessment: The school needs to hire a professional firm to perform an ergonomic assessment to identify job tasks that can cause musculoskeletal disorders with the intention of designing out the hazards listed above.
• Lifting related injuries can occur because of a number of factors: the weight of the load, the size and bulk of the load, the height to which it is being lifted or lowered, and the frequency of lifting. The National Institutes of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) uses a Lifting Equation in order to calculate the maximum acceptable weight (MAW) that nearly all healthy employees can lift over the course of an 8 hour shift without increasing the risk of MSD to the lower back. [link]

Working in Awkward Postures
• Rearrange work spaces so it is easier to reach for supplies used routinely and to prevent overreaching and awkward back, shoulder and wrist postures.
• Vary repetitive tasks by spacing out activities.
• Lower rinse nozzle in the wash sink to rest at mid-body height to reduce overreaching.

SLIPS & FALLS
Slips and falls are common accidents among food service employees. The injuries caused by slips and falls can be costly, especially in terms of health effects. They can result in permanent disability or death. The major causes of slips and falls are hazardous conditions such as:
• Wet floors, icy walkways, and muddy walkways.
• Food spills.
• Uneven surfaces.
• Raised edges or lips-curbed or raised curbs.
• Poor lighting near steps and ramps.
• Walking with wet or slippery shoes.
• Defective ladders and foot stools.

What you and your school can do:
• Provide time to keep floors, steps, and ramps clear of spills. If water collects, install a platform to avoid it, and then prevent water from collecting.
• Block off freshly mopped or waxed surfaces to allow time to dry.
• Provide nonslip surfaces or mats in frequently wet areas.
• Wear Appropriate Footwear, sturdy shoes with slip-resistant soles and low heels (no leather soles, open toe, platform, or high heels). Keep shoes laced and tightly tied. Avoid porous fabrics such as canvas, which will not protect feet from spills and burns.
• Keep floors, working areas, and passageways free from fluids and any other obstructions.
• Check that ladders and foot stools are in good repair, take defective ones out of use, and throw away defective ladders.
• Provide safe clearance for foot traffic in areas where food handling equipment is used.
• Put guards on steps and ramps.
• Keep cupboards and drawers closed.
• Dispose of trash properly.
• Keep electrical wires from running across areas where people could trip.

If you do fall, try to minimize injury by “falling correctly.” There are two ways to do it: One way is to roll with the fall; the other is to bend your elbows and knees so your legs and arms absorb the fall. Report all accidents to the nurse and get medical attention immediately.

FIRES
Fires can be caused by ignition of hot oils and greases, faulty electrical equipment and cords, wet electrical equip-

For more information
New Jersey Healthy School Facility Environments
www.state.nj.us/health/healthyschools/
Access to the online resources of New Jersey state and federal agencies on issues such as indoor air quality, mold, asbestos, lead, and drinking water.

EPA Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids
https://www.epa.gov/schools
EPA Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids is a gateway to online resources to help facility managers, school administrators, architects, design engineers, school nurses, parents, teachers and other staff to address environmental health issues in schools.

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Washington, DC 20036-3290
202 833 4000
www.nea.org
http://nea.healthyschools.org/

PEOSH – NJ Dept. of Health
(Health hazards complaints)
PO Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360
609 984 1863
http://nj.gov/health/peosh

PEOSH – NJ Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development
(Safety hazards and discrimination complaints)
PO Box 386
Trenton, NJ 08625-0386
609 633 3896/800 624 1444
http://www.nj.gov/health/workplacehealthandsafety/peosh/complain.shtml

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