

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 to hands and fingers) can be caused from handling knives or cutting equipment, and broken glassware or plates.

What you and your school can do to prevent cuts and punctures:

- **Provide** knives that are the right size and type for each job and box cutters for opening boxes.
- **Provide** proper storage for knives (counter racks, wall racks, or storage blocks).
- **Keep** knives sharp (dull knives are unsafe). Tighten and replace loose handles.
- **Allow** workers enough time to work safely.
- **Use** a proper cutting board and slip resistant matting to prevent board from sliding.
- **Provide** cut-resistant gloves that cover the wrists, fit well, and have sturdy, tightly-woven seams.

- **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 hook to pull back to leading end.

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.

HEALTH & SAFETY RESOURCES

Your NJEA UniServ Office

Region 1 – Galloway Twp. 609 652 9200	Atlantic/ Cape May
Region 2 – Mullica Hill 856 628 8650	Cumberland/ Gloucester/Salem
Region 3 – Voorhees 856 234 2485	Burlington Camden
Region 7 – Toms River 732 349 0280	Ocean
Region 8 – Trenton 609 896 3422	Mercer
Region 9 – Wall Twp. 732 403 8000	Monmouth
Region 11/12 – Edison 732 287 4700	Middlesex
Region 13 – Flemington 908 782 2168	Hunterdon/ Somerset/Warren
Region 15 – Cranford 908 709 9440	Union
Region 17 – Parsippany 973 515 0101	Morris/Sussex
Region 19 – West NY 201 861 1266	Hudson – North
Region 20 – Jersey City 201 653 6634	Hudson – South
Region 21 – Livingston 973 762 6866	Essex
Region 23/25 – Hasbrouck Heights 201 292 8093	Bergen
Region 27 – Wayne 973 694 0154	Passaic
Region 29 – Trenton 609 689 9580	Higher Education

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. <http://ergo-plus.com/niosh-lifting-equation-single-task/>
- **Provide** mechanical lifting devices such as: scissors tables/carts that raise and lower, powered hand trucks and garbage handling bags or garbage cans with wheels for garbage.
- **Ensure** materials are stored above floor level and below shoulder level.
- **Limit** the size of garbage containers to limit the weight of the load employees must lift and dump. Install dumpsters at or below grade level.
- **Limit** size of dirty dish containers to reduce the amount of dirty dishes that can be stacked and carried at one time – do not overfill. If possible, carts should be provided to put dirty dish containers on, to decrease the distance that workers have to carry heavy containers.
- **Determine**, by using the NIOSH equation, what the maximum acceptable weight is for each lifting task, and if the load is heavier use mechanical means or more than one person to lift. If it is lower than the MAW then –
- **Lift** an object only if the following are met: you have been trained in proper lifting techniques, you can handle the object comfortably and safely, the weight is within your physical strength, and you can see over the object if you have to carry it. If you have to turn to move the load, turn your whole body, not just your torso.
- **Provide** training on all aspects of preventing lifting related injuries as listed above.

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 edges of rugs, runners, and mats.
- 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.

For more information

New Jersey Healthy School Facility Environments
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/school>
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.

New Jersey Education Association (NJEA)
180 West State Street, PO Box 1211
Trenton, New Jersey 08607-1211
609 599 4561
<https://www.njea.org/health-safety-publications/>

National Education Association (NEA)
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-3290
202 833 4000
<https://www.nea.org/healthy-schools>

PEOSH – NJ Dept. of Health
(Health hazards complaints)
PO Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360
609 984 1863
<https://www.nj.gov/health/workplacehealthandsafety/peosh/index.shtml>

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 1644
<https://www.nj.gov/health/workplacehealthandsafety/peosh/compform.shtml>

New Jersey Work Environment Council (WEC)
(Labor, community, environment coalition)
E-mail: info@njwec.org
www.njwec.org

FIRES

- Fires can be caused by ignition of hot oils and greases, faulty electrical equipment and cords, wet electrical equipment and appliances, and faulty switches and power outlets. To prevent fires:
- **Repair** all faulty electrical equipment, switches, and outlets.
 - **Do not** accumulate cardboard boxes or paper bags in the cooking area.
 - **Provide** procedures, trainings, and drills to help everyone develop the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the procedures and their roles.
 - **Know** what to do in case of a fire or other type of emergency at your facility.
 - **Use** portable fire extinguishers to put out small fires if you are trained to use them.