

# SAFE WORK PRACTICES for FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

*Contra Costa County Schools Insurance Group  
Workers' Compensation/Health & Safety Services & Health Benefits Program Provider*



When lifting, keep load close to body,  
bend knees, lift with legs  
& keep your back straight



## SLIPS, TRIPS, FALLS

- Wear nonslip, closed toe shoes that are in good repair.
- Sweep floors regularly and do not allow food to accumulate.
- Use non-slip stable floor mats in wet areas.
- Use warning signs to keep people off wet floors.
- Keep walkways and work areas free of clutter.
- Always use a ladder or footstool to reach for objects.
- Ask for help if needed.
- When using a ladder, put the ladder on a stable, dry surface; make sure it is fully open and locked and do not stand on the top two rungs.
- Make sure shelves and storage racks are stable and secured.
- Never stack carts higher than eye level.

## ERGONOMIC

- When lifting, keep loads close to your body; bend at the knees and lift with your legs; keep your back straight; and do not twist.
- Use carts or hand trucks instead of carrying heavy loads by hand.
- Use caution when approaching corners and doorways with carts.
- Use smaller, lighter bus pans and trays.
- Store heavy items in easy-to-reach areas to avoid overreaching or bending.
- Push carts instead of pulling them, when possible.
- Do gentle stretches before, during and/or after your shift.

## SHARP OBJECTS

- While cutting, do not look away from knife and make sure knife blade is moving away from you.
- Never leave a knife under an object or in sinks filled with soapy water.
- Knives should never be stored in a drawer or on a rack with other utensils. Always store with the points away from user.
- Store knives in a drawer or on a rack, separate from other utensils.
- Use knives that are the right size and type for your task and keep knives sharp.
- Place a damp cloth under your cutting board to prevent slipping. When cutting, tuck in fingers on the hand that is holding the food.
- If you are doing a lot of cutting, wear cut-resistant gloves that cover the wrists, fit well, and have sturdy, tightly-woven seams.
- Before using a machine (such as a slicer), make sure machine guards are in place.
- Keep hands, face, hair, clothing, and jewelry away from moving machine parts.
- Designate one clearly-marked trash can for broken glass/sharp can lids.
- Store glasses, bottles, and dishware away from high traffic areas.

## SAFETY AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL

Whether preparing food, serving food or keeping the cafeteria clean, you provide nourishing meals so that children can thrive in the classrooms and on the playground. When you take care of your own health and safety at work, you avoid disruptions in your life, and can continue providing this important service to students.

### Did You Know?

- Food service employees suffer from overexertion, often caused by lifting, and are sometimes injured by slips, trips and falls.
- Some of the most common injuries among food service employees are caused by knives, slicers, grinders, food processors, broken glass and dishware.
- Employees working in central kitchens may be at greater risk of injury.

Keep yourself safe and healthy on the job by following the tips in this flyer on how to identify and avoid potential hazards.

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY SCHOOLS INSURANCE GROUP**

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# SAFE WORK PRACTICES for FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

## HOT SURFACES

- Use extreme care when working around stoves, ovens, or kettles. Do not touch their surfaces without knowing if they are hot or cold.
- Use extreme care when carrying hot liquids or grease. Get help if needed.
- Due to heat retention, do not wear wool clothing in kitchen and dish washing area.
- Make sure grills and other hot surfaces have built-in guard bars.
- Avoid overcrowding on range tops and set pot handles away from burners, making sure they do not stick out over the edge of the range.
- Use potholders, gloves, or heat-resistant mitts when checking food on the stove, placing food in boiling water, or reaching into ovens and broilers.
- Never use wet material (like a damp towel) as a potholder.
- Use splash guards on fryers. Reduce splattering by drying wet food and brushing off ice crystals before placing food in the fryer basket.

## ELECTRICAL SHOCK

- Any outlets near water/liquid sources should be Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) type outlets. Report any unprotected outlets.
- Unplug machines before cleaning them.
- Follow steps for proper lockout/tagout when cleaning or servicing equipment. Turn off and disconnect the equipment. Make sure the source of power has a lock or a tag.

## FIRE

- Know fire extinguisher location and operation.
- Clean hoods and vents regularly to prevent build-up of grease.
- Know procedures for activating fire extinguishing systems and emergency shut-offs.

## CHEMICALS

- Dilute chemicals (such as disinfectant) according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Open windows and doors, if possible, when using chemicals.
- Make sure all chemicals you use are labeled and that you have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each product.
- Do not mix chemicals unless instructed to by the manufacturer.
- Close all containers, especially spray bottles, when not in use.

## MISCELLANEOUS INJURIES/ILLNESS

- Ensure that student volunteers/workers follow all established procedures.
- Always wash hands after handling money and before handling food.
- If you come into contact with blood or other bodily fluids:
  - Wear disposable gloves
  - Wash your hands with soap and water
  - Disinfect any equipment or work areas that are affected

## INJURY PREVENTION THROUGH PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

### Three Easy Steps (5-10 min. total!)

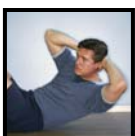


#### WARMING YOUR BODY

This involves gradually increasing your heart rate, body temperature and breathing rate. The main purposes of warming up are to raise both the general body and deep muscle temperatures and to stretch connective tissues to permit greater flexibility. This reduces the possibility of muscle tears and ligament sprains.

#### STRETCHING YOUR MUSCLES

Stretching permits a greater range of movement within the joint, the ligaments and other connective tissue are not so easily strained or torn. It also permits greater freedom of movement in all directions.



#### DEVELOPING YOUR CORE

The "core" is the torso, extending from the shoulders to the pelvis. It is the body's center of power. Training the muscles of the core will help correct postural imbalances, prevent injuries and develop efficient, functional movement patterns.