

5th Edition



Food Service Workers Safety Guide



Prepared by the Canadian Centre for
Occupational Health and Safety

Summary

Food preparation and service involves many safety and health hazards. Important ones are listed in the table below.

Injury/Illness	Source
Cuts and amputations	Use of knives, cutters, slicers, choppers and grinders
Burns and scalds	Contact with open flames, hot oils, steam, ovens, appliances, utensils
Electric shock, electrocution	Kitchen appliances Cleaning equipment
Slips and falls	Slippery and cluttered floors Inadequate lighting
Soreness and loss of function of wrists and arms	Repeated awkward movements or vibration Working in one position for a long time
Back pain	Heavy lifting involving awkward postures and difficult loads
Itching, swelling, redness of skin	Temperature extremes; physical abrasion; exposure to detergents, cleaning solutions, food additives, some plant materials, pesticides on fruits and vegetables
Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath	Exposure to flour, grain dust, spices, additives

This guide presents ways of working safely to prevent injuries and illnesses.

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1. Safety Inspections

Purpose

Occupational health and safety legislation requires regular workplace inspections. The purpose of an inspection or safety tour is to identify unsafe conditions and practices, and to recommend corrective actions.

Inspection Team

Inspections may be carried out by a designated worker or by a team with a mix of personnel such as employees, supervisors and managers. Generally, the legislation sets out procedures for designating a person or persons to carry out workplace inspections.

If you are carrying out an inspection, you must use required personal protective equipment for your own safety and to set a good example.

Roles and Responsibilities

Inspections are undertaken in accordance with a schedule agreed on by the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) and your employer. The inspection teams generally use a checklist as a guide for conducting inspections.

Inspection Reports

Inspection reports are communicated to all levels of the organization. Posting inspection reports on the bulletin board, reviewing them at joint health and safety committee meetings, and sending a copy to management for review are all good communication methods.

Follow Up

Follow up to ensure corrective action is taken.

1. Cutting, Chopping and Mixing

- Knives
- Cutting, Slicing and Mixing Equipment
- Slicers and Dicers
- Band Saws

Safe Use of Knives

Risks of Injury when using knives

- cuts
- amputation



USE the right knife for the job.

ALWAYS use a proper chopping board or block.

MAKE SURE the knife is sharp.

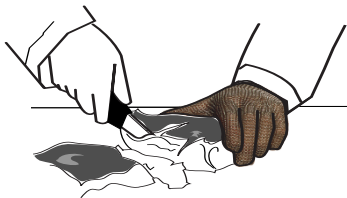
CARRY one knife at a time, tip pointed down at your side.

STORE knives securely in proper racks in a visible place.

HOLD the knife with the stronger hand.

CUT away from your body when cutting, trimming or boning.

USE protective clothing such as mesh gloves.

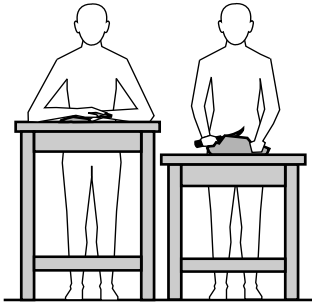


Mesh gloves provide protection while cutting

4. Working in a Standing Position

Different tasks require different work surface heights to prevent MSI:

- precision work, such as cleaning or sorting—5 cm above elbow height with elbow support.
- light work, such as peeling and cutting vegetables—about 5-10 cm below elbow height.
- heavy work, demanding downward forces, such as cutting or slicing meat – about 20-40 cm below elbow height.

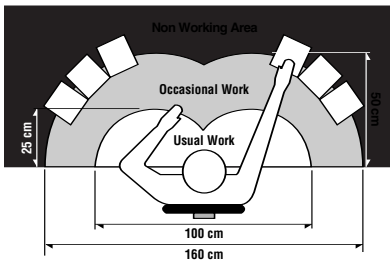


Adjustable work surfaces



ADJUST the height of the work surface according to your height. Use elbow height as the guide.

ORGANIZE your work so that usual operations are within easy reach.



1. Ventilation

Health and Safety Concerns:

- carbon monoxide toxicity
- unpleasant odours
- headaches, drowsiness, annoyance and stress
- eye irritation
- fires (flammable gases and vapours)



REPORT to your supervisor any occurrence of nuisance odours, dusts, gases, vapours, fumes and smoke. These symptoms indicate that something is wrong with the ventilation system.

MAKE SURE that the local exhaust system efficiently removes contaminated air, odours, fumes, smoke, steam and vapours of cooking oils and greases from cooking areas.

MAKE SURE that the filter systems are changed and maintained on a regular basis.

ENSURE that the ventilation system conforms with the National Building Code and the local Fire and Public Health Regulations.

MAKE SURE that whenever there are significant renovations or changes in the workplace design or work activities, any needed changes are made in the ventilation to maintain the required level of effectiveness.



DO NOT block air filter units.

DO NOT remove air filter units when the system is operating.

DO NOT block ventilation ducts.

Safe Food Handling	Accept.	Non-Accept.	
Refrigerator and Freezer			
open tin cans not used for food storage			
leftovers stored in covered containers			
raw foods not stored on top of cooked foods			
ground grown vegetables kept on bottom shelf			
appropriate temperature			
Cupboards			
no open bags of food			
no cleaning products stored next to foods			
proper quantities of food in storage			
Waste Disposal			
tightly fitted lids on garbage cans			
no overflow of garbage from garbage cans			
Cleaning Gear			
neatly stored			
sufficient quantities of cleaning products available			
all cleaning products stored with lids			
clean wiping cloths			