

CODES OF SAFE PRACTICES – FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

General Kitchen Safety Rules

- A. Be aware of where you are walking. Trip and slip hazards are common in the kitchen. Always put out “Caution, Wet Floor” signs before damp mopping a hard surface floor. Always mop up liquid spills immediately.
- B. Be aware of the location of the nearest fire extinguisher. It may come in handy. Read the instructions on the fire extinguisher now, before you need to use it.
- C. Watch out for other employees who may be daydreaming, in a hurry, or engaging in horseplay. All of those behaviors jeopardize both their own safety and yours.
- D. Know the general layout of the kitchen and the location of the nearest exit in case you have to leave the area in a hurry.
- E. Assume heat-producing equipment, such as stoves and steamers, are hot.
- F. Don’t use wet potholders or mittens. The moisture will transmit heat to your hands.
- G. Water and hot grease can be a burn hazard. Don’t put a wet basket into a hot deep fryer. This could cause splattering which results in a burn.
- H. Be cautious of loose clothing when operating equipment. It could get caught in the equipment.
- I. Be sure others are aware of what you are doing. This awareness could help prevent accidental or careless movements that could result in an injury.
- J. Rolling carts should be pushed, not pulled. If carts don’t move easily, inspect the wheels for damage. Be aware of cracks and bumps when pushing carts on asphalt or cement. Don’t overload carts and don’t load them top heavy.

Storeroom Safety Rules

An overcrowded, unorganized storeroom is an accident about to happen. A misplaced broom or mop may cause you to trip and injure yourself. Improperly stored food and cleaning supplies can cause serious injuries. A neat, clean storeroom can greatly reduce the potential for accidents.

- A. **Store supplies safely.** All chemical containers must be properly labeled. Store chemicals according to instructions on container labels. Be aware of where the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are kept for all the chemicals you use. Flammable cleaning supplies must be stored away from sources of ignition like hot water heaters. Cleaning supplies and food must always be stored separately.
- B. **Weight can be a safety hazard.** Heavier items should be stored on the lower shelves at about chest height or lower. Be careful not to overload shelves.

- C. **Electrical/water heater rooms are not storerooms.** Rooms with electrical panels are not designed as storerooms. However, if electrical rooms must be used for storage, make sure there is clear area at least 36” from electrical panels. Electrical rooms must be free of all liquids. A water heater is a source of ignition. Don’t store flammable materials in rooms with water heaters.
- D. **Keep it neat.** Keep at least one aisle of your storage areas open at all times. Protruding nails, and torn or sharp corners can cause serious cuts and bruises. Remove or pad them. Be alert to the careless actions of others.

Ladder Safety Rules

- A. **Use a straight ladder if you must lean the ladder against a support.** Avoid using an “A” frame ladder in this situation – it’s not the right equipment for the job. Metal ladders must not be used near exposed electrical circuits or power lines. “A” frame ladders are safest if they are ten feet or less in length – never use one over 20 feet long.
- B. **Inspect the ladder before you use it.** No ladder is safe if it is missing rungs, if the rungs or rails are defective, or if it is in a weakened condition. Wood ladders should be inspected for side rails that are cracked or split, and sharp edges or splinters on cleats, rungs or side rails. Make certain spreaders can be locked in place. Be sure straight ladders have safety feet. If a ladder cannot be repaired, dispose of it promptly.
- C. **Set up your ladder safely.** If you must set up a ladder in a traffic area, use a barricade or guard to prevent unexpected collisions. Lock or block any nearby doors that open toward you. Keep the area around the ladder base uncluttered. Avoid side-to-side tilting by resting your ladder base on a solid, level surface. When using a stepladder, make sure it’s fully open and its spreader is locked. Position a straight ladder at a four-to-one ratio – means every four feet of the ladder’s length to one foot away from the support point. Never lean a ladder against an unstable surface.
- D. **Use common sense when working on ladders.** Never reach or lean too far to either side. To maintain your balance, keep your belt buckle between the ladder rails. Don’t climb higher than the second tread from the top on a stepladder or the third rung from the top on a straight ladder. Only one person may be on a ladder at a time. Don’t place tools on the rungs or top of the ladder.

Tools/Equipment Safety Rules

Because you use your tools and equipment daily, you can begin to take them for granted. This is a safety hazard to be avoided. Always think “safety” when using kitchen tools and equipment.

- A. **Manufacturers supply manuals with tools and equipment.** Read the manuals before you use the equipment. Keep the manuals handy for future reference. Have an experienced operator provide instructions and a demonstration of the equipment before you use it. Practice using the equipment before you begin a large-scale job.
- B. **Prepare both the equipment and yourself for work.** Examine the tool/equipment for safety defects before you use it. Check electrical cords for frayed wires and defective plugs. Make sure the ground plug is in place. Keep safety guards in place at all times. Make sure the ground fault interceptor is

working properly. Wear the protective clothing provided by your supervisor and recommended by the equipment manufacturer.

- C. **Avoid hazards while operating equipment.** Clear the work area of trip, slip, and fall hazards and things that might get in your way while working. When working with electric equipment, make sure your hands are dry. Do not stand on a wet floor when inserting the plug into or pulling the plug from the electric receptacle. Be mindful of pedestrians and your surroundings. Students should not be allowed to operate tools or equipment.
- D. **Keep tools and equipment clean.** Always unplug electric equipment before cleaning it. Store tools, like knives and other utensils, in a place designated for the tools.
- E. **Report any inoperative or unsafe equipment to your supervisor.** Take any unsafe equipment out of service until it can be repaired or replaced.

Lifting Rules

It is just as important to keep your body in shape for the task as it is any other tool you use for other jobs. You can injure yourself just as easily lifting light objects as you can lifting heavier ones if you don't lift properly and your "tool" is not in shape for the job. Lifting is a thinking person's job.

- A. **Before you lift something, prepare yourself and plan the move.** Make sure you are limber and physically fit enough to do the task safely. Daily exercises will keep your body ready for lifting and help you feel better. Size up the load to make sure you can handle it safely. If you think the load is too bulky or too heavy, ask someone to help you or try to break it up into smaller, more manageable loads. Use a hand truck or dolly if necessary. Plan your route and make sure the path is clear of trip, slip, and fall hazards.
- B. **Use proper body mechanics when lifting.** Stand close to the object with your feet about shoulder width apart. Squat down, bending at the hips and knees. Keep your back straight. As you grip the load, arch your lower back inward by pulling your shoulders back and sticking your chest out with chin tucked in. Be sure to keep the load close to your body. When you set the load down, squat down, bending at the hips and knees, keeping your lower back arched in.
- C. **Turn, don't twist.** Twisting is not the thing to do. Instead of twisting, turn your whole body in the direction that you want to go. Twisting when carrying a load puts a lot of undo stress on your back.
- D. **Push, don't pull.** Whenever you have to move something that's on a cart, a dolly, or a hand truck, push the load. Pushing puts less strain on your back.
- E. **Don't store heavy objects higher than your waist.** If heavy objects aren't stored higher than your waist than you won't have to lift them higher than your waist. Lifting objects overhead puts a lot of undue stress on your back. It's one of the surest ways to injure your back.
- F. **Lift like a pro and avoid the pain.** Learning how to lift and carry safely is one of the most important things you can do for your back. It's not hard to put these suggestions to use, and the payoffs will be well worth the time and effort you put into it.