



Top Restaurant Safety Exposures – and How to Manage Them

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a typical restaurant reports three workplace injuries a year for every 100 employees. Beyond harm to injured employees, accidents can affect customer service, increase hiring and training costs and inflate experience modifications.

By investing in a strong safety culture and building a workplace safety program, restaurant owners and managers protect employees and mitigate the costs of work-related injuries. It could mean saving \$4 to \$6 dollars for every safety dollar invested, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA).

A culture of safety reduces the risk of workplace injuries and related costs while encouraging better productivity. Typical restaurant injury exposures and controls:

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Lifting/Overexertion Strains

Worker	Exposure	Controls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servers • Bus persons • Bartenders • Cooks • Dishwashers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overloaded trays/bus tubs • Multiple plates • Trash • Kegs • Soda syrup boxes • Bulk produce/meat • CO2 cylinders • Fryer oil • Tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce use of carts and hand trucks. • Limit the number of items carried at one time. • Keep heavier stock stored at waist height. • Ensure ladders are available to reach top tier stock. • Encourage two-person lifts for heavy items. • Provide instruction on safe lifting techniques. • Regularly identify and correct unsafe habits.

Slips/Trips/Falls

Worker	Exposure	Controls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servers • Bus persons • Cooks • Dishwashers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet floors • Grease accumulations • Frayed carpet • Deteriorated slip-resistant mats • Poor illumination • Broken ladder • Climbing racks • Ice cubes • Inclement weather • Housekeeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce use of closed-toe/slip-resistant footwear. • Use wet floor signs. • Place slip-resistant mats in vulnerable areas. • Replace worn or frayed mats. • Regularly replace or stretch worn carpeting. • Keep corridors and stairs free from obstruction. • Provide step stools in a dry storage area – and inspect their condition regularly. • Ensure mop and water are clean.

Burns

Worker	Exposure	Controls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooks • Servers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking equipment • Fryer oil • Grease • Hot plates/foods • Candles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep cooking equipment clean and free from grease accumulations. • Let oil cool before handling. • Ensure hot pads and oven mitts are available and used. • Avoid reaching across hot surfaces. • Apply signage in areas where hot surfaces are not obvious.

Cuts/Lacerations

Worker	Exposure	Controls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooks • Prep cooks • Dishwashers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric slicer • Meat grinder • Knife storage • Repetitive cutting • Dull knives • Broken glass • Wine glass cleaning • Box cutters • Mandolin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only trained employees should operate slicer, grinder, mixer and mandolin. • Keep guards in place. • Ensure knives are regularly sharpened and stored on a magnet. • Don't condense or reach into garbage using unprotected hands. • Do not leave knives soaking in water with other utensils and dishes. • Use cutting gloves when completing repetitive cutting or when using mandolin. • Box cutter blades must have a protective cover. • Don't place broken glass or needles in the trash.

