saif corporation

SAFETY ZONE

Knife and blade handling

It can happen to anyone

The majority of kitchen accidents are related to the use of knives and blades. Just ask Georges Perrier, a well-known Philadelphia chef, who learned the hard way that serious accidents with knives can happen to anyone. He sliced off the tips of four fingers on his right hand while changing a food processor blade, and the surgery to repair the damage took four hours. The operation was successful, but Perrier was off work for six months, and he still is not able to perform finer, more skilled knife work.

Training for safety

One way to get the most benefit from a knife without sacrificing safety is to make sure all your employees are well trained. Demonstrate proper cutting and handling techniques before allowing anyone to use a knife without supervision.

10 additional tips for preventing cuts:

1. **Keep knives sharp.** Dull knives are more likely to slip and cut you instead of the food.
2. **Use a cutting board.** A cutting board will provide a stable surface to improve control. Place a damp cloth under the cutting board to keep it from slipping.
3. **Use cut-resistant gloves.** Cut-resistant gloves should be used when cutting meats and for other employer-identified tasks where the risk of serious injury is high.
4. **Focus on the task.** Keep distractions to a minimum and don't be rushed.
5. **Use your knife for its intended purpose.** Use the appropriate knife for the job and never use a knife as a substitute for other tools.
6. **Cut away from your body.** You will be less likely to cut yourself if you or the food slips when slicing or peeling.
7. **Let a falling knife fall.** Step back. Warn others. Never try to catch the knife.
8. **Clean immediately.** Do not leave knives to soak in soapy water. Someone could reach into the cloudy water and get cut.
9. **Pass and store knives safely.** The proper way to pass a knife is to lay it flat on a table so the other person can pick it up. Store knives in a knife block or knife rack rather than loose in a drawer.
10. **Slicers, grinders, and food processors are dangerous.** Make sure you are properly trained before using a kitchen machine. Confirm that safety guards are in place. Keep hands, face, hair, clothing, and jewelry away from moving parts. Turn off and unplug machinery before cleaning or removing a blockage.

Safety Quiz

Hand injuries are estimated to cost the national food service industry $_____ million per year in medical costs, time lost from work, and other workers' compensation insurance losses.

A. $10 million

B. $50 million

C. $100 million

D. $300 million

Reported by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

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