

## TOOLS, TIPS & INFORMATION FOR THE KITCHEN ~

### Preventing Work Hazards

*A well-trained foodservice team is essential to meeting the important goal of feeding children healthy, nutritious meals through a sound child nutrition program.*

*However, workplace hazards can cause accidents that disrupt team harmony, program efficiency, and the goal of feeding children.*

*There are two steps in preventing accidents: identifying hazards in the kitchen area and the importance of each employee taking responsibility to identify and/or correct workplace hazards. Then, the child nutrition program can meet the goals of feeding children and operating in an efficient, financially stable manner.*

- Slips; trips and falls; strains and sprains; cuts and lacerations; and burns are the four leading categories of kitchen injuries.
- An accident is always waiting to happen. It only needs an opportunity. There are plenty of those opportunities in a busy kitchen – slippery floors, knives and other sharp tools, hot surfaces, heavy pieces of moveable equipment, awkward cases of food, and congested work spaces.
- Add to these dangers the activity during meal preparation and service and an accident can be just a moment away.
- Be alert to potential hazards and hazardous situations each and every day. Workplace safety is a child nutrition program priority.
- Workers can prevent certain kinds of accidents, such as cuts, burns, and falls by developing and practicing habits that prevent accidents.

#### PREVENTING CUTS

1. Keep knives sharp. A sharp knife is safer than a dull one because it requires less pressure and is less likely to slip.
2. Use a cutting board. Do not cut against a metal surface. Place a damp towel under the board to keep it from slipping.
3. Pay attention to work when using a knife or cutting equipment. Have only one knife at a time on the cutting board. Knives not in use should be on the worktable near but not on the cutting board.
4. Cut away from yourself and other workers.
5. Use knives only for cutting, not for jobs such as opening bottles.
6. Don't try to catch a falling knife. Step back and let it fall.
7. Don't put knives in a sink, under water, or in any other place they can't be seen.
8. Clean knives carefully- with the sharp edge away from you.
9. Store knives in a safe place, such as a rack, when not in use.
10. Carry knives properly. Hold the knife beside you, point down, with the sharp edge back and away from you. Whenever possible, carry knives in a sheath. Warn people when walking past them with a knife in hand.
11. Keep breakable items, such as dishes and glassware, out of the food production area.
12. Sweep up—don't pick up—broken glass.
13. Discard chipped or cracked dishes and glasses.
14. Use special containers for broken dishes and glasses. Don't throw them in with other garbage.
15. If there is broken glass in the sink, drain the sink before trying to take out the glass.
16. Remove all nails and staples when opening crates and cartons and dispose of them.

## PREVENTING BURNS

1. Always assume a pot handle is hot. Don't just grab it with a bare hand.
2. Use dry hot pads to handle hot pans. Wet ones will create steam, which can burn.
3. Keep pan handles out of the aisle so people won't bump into them. Also, keep handles away from the open flames of gas burners.
4. Don't fill pans so full they are likely to spill hot foods.
5. Get help when moving heavy containers of hot food.
6. Open lids away from you to let steam escape safely.
7. Use care when opening compartment steamers.
8. Make sure gas is well vented before trying to light ovens or pilot lights. Strike matches before turning on the gas. Also, strike matches away from your body.
9. Wear long sleeves and a double-breasted jacket to protect yourself from spilled or spattered hot foods or fat. Wear sturdy leather shoes with closed toes.
10. Always warn people when walking behind them with hot pans or when walking behind someone who is working with hot items.

## PREVENTING INJURIES FROM MACHINES AND EQUIPMENT

1. Do not use any equipment unless you understand its operation.
2. Use all guards and safety devices on equipment. Set slicing machines at zero (blade closed) when not in use.
3. Don't touch or remove food from any kind of equipment while it is running, not even with a spoon or spatula.
4. Unplug electrical equipment before disassembling or cleaning.
5. Make sure the switch is off before plugging in equipment.
6. Do not touch or handle electrical equipment, including switches, if your hands are wet or if you are standing in water.
7. Wear properly fitting clothing. Tuck in apron strings to avoid getting them caught in machinery.
8. Use equipment only for its intended purpose.
9. Stack pots and other equipment properly on pot racks so they are stable and not likely to fall.

## PREVENTING FALLS

1. Clean up spills immediately.
2. Throw salt on a slippery spot to make it less slippery while a mop is being fetched.
3. Keep aisles and stairs clear and unobstructed.
4. Don't carry objects too big to see over.
5. Walk, don't run.
6. Stand on a safe ladder, not a chair or piles of boxes, to reach high shelves or to clean high equipment.

## PREVENTING STRAINS AND INJURIES FROM LIFTING

1. Lift with your leg muscles, not your back.
2. Don't turn or twist your back while lifting. Make sure your footing is secure.
3. Use a cart to move heavy objects long distances, or get help.

### Proper Lifting Technique



## RESOURCES

Institute for Child Nutrition, No Time To Train – Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants - *Identifying Kitchen Area Work Hazards*