KITCHEN SAFETY

INTRODUCTION

Kitchens are busy and dangerous places. While working in a kitchen, employees may have to coordinate with waiters, dish washers, different workstations, etc. In addition to the coordinated chaos that can happen with line cooks, employees could potentially be exposed to the inherent hazards that are found in kitchens. Following the safe work practices presented in this lesson will help ensure employee safety.

HAZARDS

When working in kitchens, employees could potentially be exposed to some of the following hazards:

- Burns
- Cuts
- Slipping, tripping, or falling
- Repetitive motion injuries
- Exposure to cleaning chemicals
- Electric shock (from cleaning plugged in electrical equipment or when using electrical cords in wet areas)
- Fire

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Employees should wear the appropriate personal protective equipment, which may include:

- Closing-fitting clothing
- Close-toed shoes with non-slip soles
- Gloves (cut-resistant gloves are recommended when using knives for cutting or when cleaning equipment with blade, and chemical appropriate gloves are recommended when using cleaning chemicals)
- Apron or chef coat
- Safety glasses or goggles (when using cleaning chemicals)

Questions? Call 1-800-734-3574

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Before entering the kitchen, employees should do the following:

- Tie-back or cover long hair and remove all jewelry.
- Ensure that you are wearing the appropriate footwear for the kitchen.

When working in the kitchen, employees should do the following:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Keep walkways clean and clear of obstructions.
- Inspect equipment for damage. Report damaged equipment to your supervisor. Do NOT use damaged equipment.
    - This includes inspecting the electrical cords of equipment. Report damaged or frayed cords to your supervisor. Do NOT use equipment with damaged or frayed cords.
- Ensure that all manufacturer-provided guards on equipment (such as meat slicers) are in place and secured. Use manufacturer-provided guards when using equipment such as meat slicers or mandolins.
- Ensure that you are using the appropriate tool for the task. (Example: Using long tongs or frying baskets for fryers. Using the appropriately sized knife for the job.)
- Ensure that equipment such as mixers or meat slicers are stable on the work surface prior to operation.
- Use all equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep all electrical appliances and cords away from water.
- Ensure knives are sharp. Sharpen knives as needed. Do NOT use a dull knife.
- Ensure cutting boards cannot move while cutting.
- Ensure all knives are appropriately stored when not in use. Do NOT store knives in drawers.
- When using knives, cut away from your body.
- Keep paper towels, dish towels, and pot holders away from stovetops and oven doors.
- Immediately clean up spilled liquids.
- Ensure that you are using safety words such as "behind" or "hot" when moving around in the kitchen.
- Practice proper ergonomics when lifting large pans, pots, or items such as boxes.
- Use pot holders when handling hot pots, pans, or when moving items in or out of the oven.
- Open pot lids away from you.
- Keep pot handles turned towards the stove.
- Ensure workstations are clean before, during, and after use.
- Use cleaning chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If you have any questions in regard to appropriate personal protective equipment for the chemical being used, you should check the safety data sheet for the chemical or ask your supervisor.
- Store cleaning chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Report injuries to your supervisor.

When working in the kitchen, employees should NOT do the following:

- Do NOT initiate or engage in horseplay. (Example: Hitting or whipping someone with a towel.)
- Do NOT run. Running can increase the chances of slipping or other accidents.
- Do NOT use water to put out an oil or grease fire. Depending on the size of the fire employees should either try to smother the fire using a pot lid or use a class K fire extinguisher for fires involving cooking oils or grease.
- Do NOT use knives as can openers.
- Do NOT carry items in a way that will block your vision.
- Do NOT mix chemicals. Mixing chemicals could result in the production of deadly gases.

CONCLUSION

Kitchens can be hectic and dangerous places to work. Kitchens are places of coordinated chaos, which can increase the chances of accidents occurring. By following the safe work practices presented in this lesson, employees can help minimize their chances of an accident occurring when working in a kitchen.