



**BEST PRACTICES**



Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust

# **EMPLOYEE SAFETY IN FOOD SERVICE**

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## Best Practices For Employee Safety in Food Service

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## For More Information

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**2020**

## Section 1

# Introduction

The commitment to safety must be a top priority for management. This commitment must be communicated to mid-managers and employees because every individual plays an important role in the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses. MCIT has developed these best practices guidelines to assist supervisors in providing and maintaining a safe workplace and preventing employee injuries and property losses.

Workplace injuries and losses often result from a failure to follow policy or procedures, inattention or lack of knowledge. Supervisors not only set an example of using proper work methods, but are instrumental in training new employees and observing employees to ensure they are following accepted work practices.

### Purpose

These best practices guidelines are intended to:

- Help supervisors identify risk hazards
- Assist in the discussion of proper ergonomic work procedures and equipment design
- Provide corrective measures to reduce or eliminate hazards
- Add value to the safety and efficiency of the food service program and its employees

The ability to identify hazards and recommend corrective action is a key component of an effective safety program. Supervisors and employees must have the appropriate training and skills to recognize these hazards and the ability to formulate effective solutions to correct hazardous practices or situations.

### Application

The best practices guidelines apply to all work activities in connection with the development, modification and operation of food service workplaces. Supervisors are encouraged to use these best practices guidelines while conducting workplace inspections, employee training or any other way that may help reduce or eliminate hazards.

### Requirements for User Competence

These best practices guidelines are to be used in addition to formal or mandatory ergonomic and safety training provided by the organization in compliance with MNOSHA standards.

### Accountability

A safety culture is developed with effective policies, procedures, training and accountability. Safety performance can be documented in different ways and may include:

- On-site safety records
- Compliance with your organization's safety policies and procedures
- Written documentation by supervisors specifying action taken to promote safety (checklists, logs, written reports)
- Regular staff safety meetings
- Training that promotes safety
- Mounting safety posters in highly visible areas

### Definitions

There are references to certain terms throughout these best practices guidelines. For the purposes of this document, the terms are defined on the following page.

**Accident:**

An unplanned incident arising out of a work-related task may result in physical injury, illness, fatality or damage to property.

**Accident Investigation:**

A systematic approach to the identification of the causal factors of an accident and implementation of corrective actions in order to reduce or eliminate future accidents. The accident investigation does not place blame or assign fault.

**Carrying:**

Having an object in one's grasp or attachment while in the act of moving. The weight of the object becomes a part of the total weight of the person performing the task.

**Contact Stresses:**

Repeated or continuous contact with hard or sharp objects such as nonrounded desk edges or unpadded, narrow tool handles.

**Duration:**

The amount of time a person is continually exposed to a risk factor.

**Frequency:**

The number of times a person repeats a given exertion within a given period.

**GFCI:**

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter is a fast-acting electrical circuit breaker that senses small imbalances in the circuit caused by current leaking to the ground. The GFCI interrupts electrical power within as little as one-fortieth of a second.

**Holding:**

Having an object in one's grasp while in a static body position.

**Hood:**

Fan with enclosure designed to capture and vent unwanted and unhealthy heat, odors, gases, steam and smoke. The hood captures the air directly over the cooking surface and exhausts the contaminants outside.

**Hood Pull Station:**

Manual release to activate the fire suppression system over the cooking area/hood.

**Hood Suppression System:**

Fire suppression system designed for protection from kitchen grease fires. These systems come into play when water is not an effective suppression agent.

**NEC:**

National Electric Code - A consistent set of electrical wiring and installation standards used in the United States.

**NIOSH:**

National Institute for Occupational Health - A U.S. federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related disease and injury.

**Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI):**

Damage to tendons, nerves, and other soft tissues caused by repeated physical movements. RSIs are characterized by numbness, pain, and a wasting and weakening of muscles.

**Severity:**

The amount of damage that is (or may be) inflicted by a loss.

**Static Grasp:**

The grip on an object remains unchanged throughout use.

**Twisting:**

Moving the upper body to one side or the other while the lower body remains in a relatively fixed position or vice versa.

**UL:**

Underwriters Laboratories Inc. is an independent, non-profit product safety testing and certification organization. UL Standards for Safety are developed under a procedure which provides for participation and comment from the affected public, as well as their related industry.

**UL 300 Standard:**

Underwriters Laboratories standard for the testing of fire extinguishing systems for protection of commercial cooking equipment.

**Unsafe Act:**

An incident or event that has the potential to cause an accident.

**Unsafe Condition:**

A hazardous condition/environment that has the potential to cause an accident (independent of the employee).



## Section 2

# Workplace Safety

### Safety in the Workplace

Employees are exposed to different types of hazards every day. Learning how to manage hazards reduces the risk of injury or illness. Work-related injuries can be controlled by establishing and enforcing basic safety policies and procedures. These policies and procedures should be specific to the tasks performed and conditions that exist in the workplace.

To help maintain a safe work environment free from hazards, supervisors should:

- Make regular surveys of the work area
- Promptly correct hazards
- Record completed work
- Train employees to recognize, remedy if able and report potential hazards
- Train employees on what to do in an emergency

### Slip and Fall Prevention

Slip and fall injuries are one of the most frequently reported work-related injuries. These injuries may occur for many reasons.

In food service workplaces, slips are mainly caused by surfaces made slippery by water, food waste or oil. Improper footwear or obstacles in the workplace also contribute to this hazard. To reduce slip, trip and fall hazards supervisors should instruct employees to:

- Clean up spills immediately
- Keep small objects off the floor
- Keep cords out of walkways/pathways

- Store frequently used or heavy items at waist level
- Wear sturdy, nonslip shoes
- Post warning signs where potential slip hazards exist



**Slips, trips and falls in kitchens can be reduced dramatically by incorporating these simple measures:**

- Place anti-fatigue mats at employee workstations
- Require employees to wear nonslip shoes
- Keep pathways clean
- Instruct employees immediately to close doors to cupboards, freezers, refrigerators, ovens, dishwashers, etc.
- Encourage employees to walk, not run
- Post safety signs to remind employees of slip, trip and fall hazards

The checklist on the next page can be copied and used to evaluate your premises on a daily or weekly basis. This checklist is not all inclusive. It is to be used as a tool for identifying common hazards. Additional hazards or unsafe acts and conditions may exist in your work environment and should be incorporated into the checklist.

**Step Wisely program** helps members create slip and fall hazard awareness among employees. Materials are provided at no cost to member. Check them out at [MCIT.org/step-wisely](http://MCIT.org/step-wisely).

# Slip and Fall Checklist

<b>Exterior</b>	<b>Corrective action needed</b>		
	Y/N	N/A	
Parking lot is in good repair			
Curbs are flush with sidewalks			
Sidewalks are level and unobstructed			
Water drains away from sidewalks and parking areas			
Sidewalks and parking areas are well illuminated			
Changes in exterior surface levels or elevations are marked			
Snow and ice is removed, surfaces treated (seasonal only)			
Stairs have a nonslip surface			
Stairwells are illuminated, clean and unobstructed			
Handrails are present, tight and are in good condition			

<b>Interior</b>	<b>Corrective action needed</b>		
	Y/N	N/A	
Public access areas are clean, well illuminated and unobstructed			
Carpet is tight, smooth and free of tears and rips			
Doormats are flat, slip resistant and clean			
Mats absorb tracked-in moisture			
Stairwells are illuminated, clean and unobstructed			
Handrails are present, tight and are in good condition			
Changes in interior floor level or elevation are marked			
Emergency lighting is operational			
Emergency phone numbers are clearly posted			
Trash is regularly removed			
Walking paths are free of cords, cables, open drawers, other obstacles			

Checklist completed by	Initials	Date	Time

## Snow and Ice Removal

Snow and ice create an exposure for employers in Minnesota. Proper precautions can mitigate the frequency and severity of an exposure and help prevent injuries and accidents.

To help your organization adequately prepare for winter:

- Prepare for ice and snow in advance
- Develop and implement a snow removal program
- Assign one employee to coordinate in-house snow removal efforts
- Make sure the appropriate equipment, tools and supplies are available
- Start early to allow snow and ice removal treatment to take full effect
- Provide adequate lighting for all pedestrian areas
- Redirect downspouts that empty onto walkways
- Place mats or rugs at all building entrances
- Clean up wet floor areas immediately and post cautionary signs in the area

Some organizations contract snow removal. If contracting:

- Identify your snow removal vendor early and complete the contract before it is needed.
- Ensure contracted services include regular checks, 24 hour service and on-call capabilities
- Assign one employee to coordinate the vendor and contract snow removal.
- Make sure the snow removal vendor has a certificate of insurance— both property and workers' compensation coverage.

Supervisors should record pertinent data on a snow and ice removal log. The snow and ice removal log on the next page can be **copied and used to assist with your premises evaluations.**



## Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement

When writing contracts, it is important to consider hold harmless and indemnification language. The following is sample language that should be modified to fit each individual situation.

*The vendor agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold (Organization Name), its employees and officials harmless from any claims, demands, actions or causes of action, including reasonable attorney's fees and expenses arising out of any act or omission on the part of the vendor, or its subcontractors, partners or independent contractors or any of their agents or employees in the performance of or with relation to any of the work or services to be performed or furnished by the vendor or the subcontractors, partners, or independent contractors or any of their agents or employees under the agreement.*

Another key recommendation is to have contractors show certificates of insurance as proof they have insurance in place for any given project.

## Emergency Action Plan

Every organization needs to have policies and procedures to address an emergency. A well thought out emergency action plan can prevent or mitigate further injury, accident or loss. A successful emergency action plan includes provisions for a fast, safe way out of the building, as well as identification of severe weather shelter areas.

An emergency action plan does not substitute for your organization's disaster recovery or business continuity plan.

In the unfortunate event of an emergency, train employees on where to go and how to respond. To ensure employees exit the building or proceed to shelter safely and quickly, it is important to:

- Keep pathways to exits free of obstructions
- Ensure exit doors are not locked from the inside
- Clearly mark and visibly post floor maps depicting emergency routes and shelter areas

Your local fire department or building department can assist in identifying the proper location of emergency lighting, exit signs, egress doors, etc.

# Snow and Ice Removal Log

For the Month of \_\_\_\_\_

Property (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Completing Log: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Time Started	Time Completed (Precise)	Weather Conditions Prior to and During Snow Removal		Snow Removal – Premises Location		Type of Work Performed (Shovel/Salting)	Person or Crew (List Names)	* General Comments
			Prior	During	Street Address	Area snow removed from			

Chart should be completed the day after snowfall until all snow is melted

\* Comments should focus on condition of premises after snow removal, accidents or unusual circumstances.



# Section 3

# Property

## Hood Suppression Systems

The mechanical code may require that your food service kitchen have a hood fire suppression system. The hood fire suppression system is necessary when water is not an effective fire suppression agent, such as with kitchen grease fires.

Proper maintenance of hood and duct systems is a necessary fire prevention practice. To ensure safety, your organization should:

- Hire a third-party contractor to steam clean hoods, fans and ducts at least semi-annually (due to the specialized equipment needed for a thorough cleaning)
- Use rooftop exhaust fans that have the ability to drain grease out of any traps or low points formed in the fan or the duct
- Install access panels in fans and exhaust ducts that allow grease to be trapped
- Replace wire mesh filters with baffle-type filters

Employees should be trained to:

- Remove grease and oil sludge with special attention to ducts and exhaust fans
- Remove and clean filters regularly (at least once per week)
- Clean hoods with wire mesh filters daily

### **UL 300 Fire Suppression System**

Introduced in 1994, the UL 300 Standard tests the fire extinguishing system of commercial equipment. Most kitchens today use vegetable oils for deep frying in high-efficiency fryers. Dry-chemical systems may not extinguish fires on equipment using vegetable oil. The dry-chemical agent reacts with lard (animal fat) and creates a foam blanket on the grease thereby extinguishing

the fire. It will not react with vegetable oil to create a foam blanket. Thus, a dry-chemical suppression system does not have the ability to keep the fire suppressed and it permits the fire to flash back and continue burning.

To promote safety, if your kitchen is currently using a dry-chemical kitchen hood extinguishing system:

- Consider upgrading to a system that meets the UL 300 standard
- Do not deep fry food using vegetable oil

### **Budgeting Is Important**

If you are using an old system, consider conducting a cost benefit analysis and obtain quotes for replacing the system.

You also may want to contact the manufacturer to determine the availability of parts for your system and when the parts and system will be phased out. This approach will help your organization budget accordingly.



## Fire Extinguishers

Fires are categorized into different classes. Fire extinguishers are marked according to which class or classes of fires for which they may be used. You must know the source of the fire to use the proper fire extinguisher. Using the wrong fire extinguisher can make a fire worse.

Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class K
<b>Ordinary Combustibles</b>	<b>Flammable Liquids</b>	<b>Electrical Equipment</b>	<b>Flammable Metals</b>	<b>Cooking Oils &amp; Fats</b>
Wood	Grease	Television	Magnesium	Cooking Oil
Paper	Oil	Computer		Cooking Fat
Plastics		Power Tools		
Cloth		Breaker Boxes		

To ensure safe and proper use of extinguishers:

- Install the fire extinguisher within 30 travel feet of deep fat fryers
- Keep the path to the extinguisher unobstructed
- Place a sign near the extinguisher that reads, "The automatic fire suppression system covering the cooking areas must be activated before using the fire extinguisher"
- Train employees about using extinguishers

**Cooking oil fires *cannot* be extinguished by traditional range hood extinguishing agents or portable Class B fire extinguishers.**

Class K fire extinguishers and UL 300-listed range hoods are designed to extinguish fires involving vegetable oils in deep fat fryers.

If your kitchen has a deep fat fryer and uses vegetable oils, consider taking immediate steps to obtain a UL 300 listed range hood and Class K fire extinguisher.



Train employees to ensure proper fire safety precautions are in place for kitchen equipment. Employees should regularly:

- Check to ensure the spray nozzle pattern covers the entire cooking surface
- Inspect hood, filters and nozzles to ensure they are clean and free of grease buildup

### Did You Know?

- The ignition temperature for animal fats is 550-600 degrees Fahrenheit
- The ignition temperature for most vegetable oils is 685 degrees Fahrenheit



### Fire Safety

The following safety tips help prevent injury and loss:

- Vent ovens and other gas-fired units before lighting them
- Do not use flammable liquids in the kitchen
- Do not leave hot cooking equipment unattended
- Turn off stoves and appliances when not in use
- Unplug electrical appliances when not in use
- Keep flammable objects (e.g., pot holders, dish towels) at least 3 feet from the stove
- Know where the hood pull station is located
- Regularly conduct practice fire drills

When a fire occurs, employees should be trained to:

- Call 911
- Sound alarms
- Attempt to determine the fire source (grease, paper)
- Attempt to extinguish a small, contained fire using appropriate fire suppression equipment only if trained and in accordance with emergency action plan
- Keep a clear escape route
- Leave the building if they have any doubt about safety
- Close all available doors to contain the fire before leaving
- Wait for the fire department to permit re-entry into the building

## Ground-fault Circuit Interrupters

Combining water and electricity is dangerous and can be disastrous. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), each year approximately 400 people are electrocuted and thousands more injured by electrical shocks or electrical fires. Many electrical accidents can be avoided through the use of an inexpensive device called a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).

A GFCI is a fast-acting electrical circuit breaker that senses small imbalances in the circuit caused by current leaking to the ground. The GFCI continually matches the amount of current going into an electrical device against the amount of current returning from the device along the electrical path. Whenever the amount going in differs from the amount coming out by approximately 5 milliamps, the GFCI interrupts the electrical power within as little as one-fortieth of a second.

For example, if a person washing dishes while listening to a nearby radio accidentally knocks the radio into the sink, a dangerous electrical hazard exists. Retrieving the radio may cause the person to be electrocuted. When a radio is plugged into a GFCI receptacle and a person reaches into the water to retrieve the radio, the GFCI will detect a problem, shut off the power and prevent electrical shock. Although GFCIs are reliable, always remember to remove power to any device that has become wet until that device is dry and does not pose a shock hazard.

Because GFCIs are effective and inexpensive, the National Electrical Code (NEC) requires GFCI-protected electrical outlets on all:

- 15 and 20 ampere circuits
- 125-volt receptacles in kitchens
- Outlets within 6 feet of water sources
- Bathroom outlets
- Garage outlets
- Utility room outlets
- Outdoor outlets

Employees should be educated about how to test GFCIs. Employees should then test the GFCIs monthly.



### To test GFCI receptacles properly:

- Push the "Reset" button on the GFCI receptacle
- Plug in an electrical appliance and turn it on
- Press the "Test" button on the GFCI receptacle (the appliance should turn off)
- Press the "Reset" button (the appliance should turn on again)

## Compressed Gas Cylinders

The most common food service use for compressed gas cylinders are in kitchens that serve carbonated beverages. Improper storage and handling of compressed gas cylinders presents a serious hazard to employees and your property. There is enough pressure within an empty gas cylinder to propel it through a concrete block wall if the nozzle or cylinder body is damaged. To ensure safety:

- Chain all cylinders in an upright position
- Store cylinders in a well-ventilated area
- Secure valve protection caps properly
- Use pressure-reducing regulators for the gas and pressures for which they are intended
- Remove cylinders that are dropped, knocked over, involved in a fire, damaged or appear in poor repair immediately and contact the vendor for replacement

### Remember the Balloons!

If you use helium tanks, even on a temporary basis, the compressed gas cylinder safety precautions also apply to these units.

#### Never:

- Leave an unsecured cylinder unattended
- Roll a cylinder to move it
- Discard a cylinder in normal trash
- Force improper attachments onto the wrong cylinder



# Section 4

# In The Kitchen

## Basic Employee Hygiene

Employees can transfer bacteria and viruses to food. Poor personal hygiene can result in bacteria and viruses being transferred from a service worker's nose, hair, skin or area under the fingernails causing illnesses. One of the simplest and most effective measures for combating food borne illness is frequent and proper hand washing.

## Proper Hand Washing Procedures

Proper hand washing removes food contaminants. Employees should:

- 1) Wet hands and forearms with warm water
- 2) Lather hands and forearms with soap
- 3) Wash hands and forearms thoroughly for at least 20 seconds
- 4) Use a nail brush to clean under the nails and between fingers
- 5) Rinse thoroughly under warm running water
- 6) Dry hands with a disposable towel or hot air dryer

## When to Wash Hands

Bacteria can hitchhike on hands, so it is important to wash hands frequently and after any possibility of contamination. Hands should always be washed:

- Before beginning or upon returning to work
- After touching bare skin or hair
- After coughing or sneezing
- After eating, drinking or smoking
- After using the restroom
- After handling soiled equipment or utensils
- After handling money
- When switching between working with raw foods and working with ready-to-eat foods

- As often as necessary during food preparation to prevent contamination (especially when working with raw foods)

The same rules apply when employees wear food safety gloves. In addition, employees should wash hands before wearing gloves and change gloves after breaks, touching raw foods or changing tasks. Employees should be instructed to not wash disposable gloves.

## Proper Hand Washing Facilities

Proper hand washing facilities are a necessity for employees to practice good personal hygiene. Always:

- Provide an accessible hand washing sink with hot and cold running water
- Provide soap, disposable towels and a nail brush for employees
- Check towel and soap dispensers regularly
- Keep extra supplies on hand
- Post hand washing signs in highly visible areas
- Train employees in proper hand washing techniques
- Monitor employees to ensure good personal hygiene is practiced



# Wash Your Hands

When done correctly, handwashing is the single most effective way to prevent illness and infection.

## HOW



Adapted from UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program

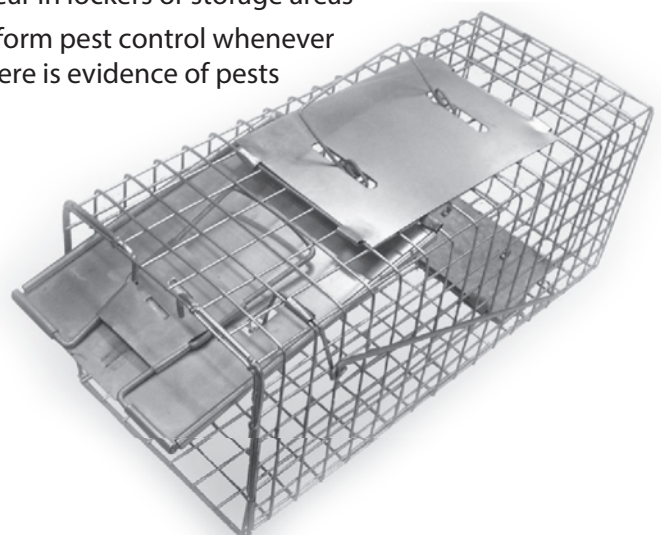
## Food Safety

All food should come from an approved and inspected facility and an approved food source. Consult Minnesota Food Code 4626 for specific requirements regarding the safe and proper handling and storage of food.

## Pest Control

Pest control in the kitchen and food storage areas is critical. When pests are found in the kitchen or food storage room, a sustained effort must be undertaken to eliminate them. The key to controlling pests is having a pest control service regularly inspect the areas. It is recommended to have these services at least monthly. To keep a pest-free kitchen employees should be trained to:

- Maintain good housekeeping in all areas
- Keep all work and storage areas clean, sanitary and dry
- Clean up any food and spills immediately
- Keep garbage areas clean both inside and outside the building
- Clean up garbage compactor or container leaks immediately
- Keep food in designated places
- Rotate stock in storage areas regularly
- Store stock away from walls and off the floor
- Refrain from propping outside doors open for ventilation
- Keep doors and unscreened windows closed
- Inspect raw materials.
- Reject produce or other foods that have signs of pests or contamination
- Keep street clothes (if uniforms are required) or outerwear in lockers or storage areas
- Inform pest control whenever there is evidence of pests



## Managing Fats, Oils, Grease

Fats, oils and grease are by-products that food service workplaces must manage. Sewer systems are not designed or equipped to handle fats, oils and grease. The best way to manage these by-products is to keep them out of the plumbing system. Most sanitary sewer operators require food establishments to have grease traps which are devices used to prevent grease from entering the sanitary sewer system.

It is important to provide employees with the proper tools and training to manage fats, oils and grease. Employees should be instructed *not* to:

- Pour fats, oils or grease down the drain
- Use sinks to dispose of food scraps
- Remove drain screens

Dry clean up such as scraping, wiping or sweeping is the best method to manage fats, oils and grease. To practice dry clean up encourage employees to:

- Use rubber scrappers to remove fats, oils and grease from utensils and cookware
- Use food-grade paper to soak up oils and grease from fryer baskets
- Use paper towels to wipe down work areas
- Collect oils in an oil rendering barrel and keep the barrel covered at all times
- Install properly sized and constructed grease traps

## Hood, Duct Cleaning and Grease Removal

Nearly one-third of all kitchen fires originate from grease in cooking equipment, filters and hood ducts. All cooking appliances that produce grease-laden vapors should be covered by a hood and duct. Controlling grease buildup is essential to preventing fire hazards.

It is important to note that regular cleaning of filters will vary depending on the amount of cooking done. You should consider the following,

Filter Hue	Action
Brownish tint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove</li> <li>• Clean</li> </ul>
Blackened tint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove immediately</li> <li>• Clean immediately</li> <li>• Check thermostat</li> <li>• Make necessary adjustments (blackened particles can be flammable)</li> </ul>

It is important to note that although older-style hoods have wire mesh filters that trap grease well, they are difficult to clean. As a result, grease fires in wire mesh filters are quite common. Also, as the wire mesh deteriorates over time, more grease escapes into the vent flue. It is prudent to replace wire mesh filters with baffle-type filters, which are easier to clean and last longer.



# Identifying Burns

## First-degree Burn

- Least severe
- Injures the top layer of skin
- Symptoms include red, sore, swollen skin

## Second-degree Burn

- Injures the top layer of skin and tissue
- Painful
- Symptoms include red and blistered skin

## Third-degree Burn

- Most severe
- Extremely painful
- Injures all layers of skin
- Symptoms include white, charred or leathery skin, chest pain and rapid heartbeat



It is always a good idea to consult a health care professional to appropriately identify and treat each type of burn.

## Preventing Burns

The multiple heat sources found in kitchens present a serious burn hazard to food service workers. Employees who serve hot foods are also at risk for burns. To help employees from being burned:

- Use dry, hot pads to remove pans and kettles from the range or oven
- Turn off burners that are not in use
- Turn pot handles away from burners and walkways
- Solicit help when handling large pans or kettles
- Warn others when they are in an area where a heat source is on
- Avoid wearing loose clothing
- Have separate doors for food servers who are entering and leaving the kitchen
- Do not overfill serving containers with hot food items

## Preventing Cuts

Food service workers often come in contact with knives or utility tools with sharp edges. These items can be a hazard if used or stored improperly. Employees should be properly trained in the correct and safe use of knives and other sharp equipment. They should be trained to:

- Keep knives sharp
- Store knives in racks, knife blocks or on magnetic strips
- Use the right knife for the job
- Turn the handles and blade away from walkways when not in use
- Use a cutting board or block when chopping or slicing
- Cut away from, not toward the body
- Stand to the side of the cut when slicing
- Tighten or replace loose handles
- Equip sharpening steel with a finger/hand guard
- Use slicing machines that have a safety guard
- Keep fingers in the clear
- Wear cut-resistant gloves when cleaning a meat slicer
- Maintain all machinery regularly

## Kitchen Machinery

Kitchen machines help food service employees work more efficiently. All equipment and appliances should be commercial grade. This includes small appliances, such as coffee pots, toasters, can openers, microwaves and electric mixers. It is important properly to train employees before they operate any machine. Supervisors should only allow employees with proper training to operate equipment. To ensure kitchen machinery is used safely, employees should be trained to:

- Keep guards in place when the machine is operating
- Keep hands and fingers out of all machines
- Turn off and disconnect the power supply before attempting to repair or adjust machines



## Slicers



- Zero the blade after each use
- Wipe the blade from center hub to edge

## Grinders



- Use a push stick to feed the grinder
- Never place fingers in feed openings
- Keep guards in place at all times when operating

## Dishwashers



- Do not overload
- Wear rubber gloves to avoid contact with harsh soaps and caustics/materials

### To use electrical appliances safely in the workplace ensure all appliances are:

- Operated according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Plugged directly into a permanent electrical outlet
- Situated out of traffic areas to avoid creating a tripping hazard
- Placed away from any portion of an exit
- Removed immediately when there is any sign of damage to the appliance components
- Powered down and unplugged at the end of each workday

## Mixers



- Properly fasten beaters
- Place bowl in a locked position before starting the unit
- Ensure the guard is in place before operating mixer (not pictured)
- Stop the machine before attempting to remove anything from the bowl

One of the easiest ways to prevent loss in the workplace is to be on the lookout for hazardous situations. **The following sample checklist can be copied and completed by a supervisor each week.** Prompt corrective action should be taken for any items noted as "not acceptable."

# Self-inspection Checklist

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Acceptable	Not Acceptable	Plan of Action
Employees understand the hazards and safe work practices that apply to their specific jobs			
<b>Slips and Falls</b>			
Employees wear nonslip shoes			
"Caution, Wet Floor" signs are used during and after mopping			
Floors are free of water, grease, debris and other slip and fall hazards			
<b>Dry storage area</b>			
<b>Ice machine</b>			
<b>Mop stall and sink area</b>			
<b>Grill/fryer</b>			
<b>Backline/kitchen area</b>			
<b>Frontline/counter area</b>			
<b>Lobby and tiled areas</b>			
<b>Beverage bar area</b>			
<b>Restrooms</b>			
Kitchen floor is degreased frequently to remove buildup			
Tray stands and service carts are in good condition			
Tray stands and service carts do not obstruct foot traffic			
Exterior areas are clean and in good repair			
<b>Parking lot stops and blocks</b>			
<b>No sign of cracks or pot holes</b>			
<b>Sidewalks and ramps</b>			
<b>Parking lot lights</b>			
<b>Trash dumpsters</b>			
<b>Back Injury</b>			
Heavy objects in dry storage area, freezers and coolers are stored on shelves between waist and shoulder levels			
Fryer oil is transferred to an outside grease container with transport equipment			
Employees request help in transporting heavy garbage to dumpsters			
<b>Cuts, Lacerations</b>			
Knives are stored in blocks or on magnetic strips when not in use			
Chipped, broken and cracked glass is discarded in a designated broken glass container			
Casters or wheels on food carts are in good working order			

# Self-inspection Checklist (Continued)

Item	Acceptable	Not Acceptable	Plan of Action
<b>Fire</b>			
New hires are instructed on how to activate cooking hood fire extinguishing system			
Locations of all fire extinguishers are noted to new hires			
All cooking equipment is covered by spray nozzles			
Hood, filters, nozzles are clean and free of grease buildup			
Hood exhaust fan is properly operating			
Hood and fire extinguishing system is cleaned every six months			
Service inspection tags are present on hood and extinguishing system			
Fusible links are replaced annually (these automatically activate extinguishing system and are behind hood filters)			
Fire extinguishers are serviced annually and are mounted on walls			
Deep fat fryer secondary high-limit switch is operational			
Employees are instructed to shut off gas prior to draining grease			
<b>Sanitation</b>			
Ice machines are cleaned and sanitized on a frequent schedule			
Refrigerated food containers are date labeled			
Monthly pest control services are in place			
Floors, walls, cooking equipment, shelves and cabinet surfaces are free of food spills, splashes and grease buildup			
Employees are trained about safe food handling practices			

I have personally inspected the above items. Those marked have been corrected with the following exceptions:

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Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Kitchen Safety Checklist

## Compliance:

- Health and Safety Checklists
  - Food Service Facility Inspection Report
  - Supplement to the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Evaluation
- Employee Hand-washing Sign
- Kitchen Use Warning

## Safety Checklist:

### Manual Handling

- Trays and carts are used to carry heavy or awkward items
- Trash bins are emptied regularly
- Oil waste is disposed of properly (not via drains)
- Proper lifting and handling methods are used
- Heat-resistant gloves are worn for handling hot utensils and equipment
- Nonslip footwear, preferably with rubber soles, are worn

### Work Environment

- Ventilation and air conditioning systems are in good working order
- Floor cleaning products that remove oil and grease are used
- Clothing with short or close-fitting sleeves are worn while cooking
- Towels, curtains and other combustibles are kept away from the range
- Spills are cleaned up immediately
- Exits are unobstructed
- Passageways and work areas are clear
- Adequate lighting is provided

### Machinery and Tools

- Knives are kept sharp
- Knives are stored in racks, knife blocks or on magnetic strips when not in use
- Employees are trained in the correct use of knives and machines
- Slicing machines have safety guards

- Cut-resistant gloves are worn when cleaning meat slicer
- All machinery is maintained regularly

### Heat

- Equipment containing hot fat or fluids is covered when not in use
- Signs are posted to warn of hot equipment
- Employees are trained in use of deep fryers and other hot items safely

### Electricity

- Only electrical appliances that have safety switches and that are splash proof or waterproof are used
- Only UL-listed electrical appliances are used
- There are enough power outlets
- Multiplug adapters and extension cords are not used
- All electrical equipment is in good condition (no frayed/spliced cords)
- All electrical equipment is tested and maintained regularly
- Employees are trained in electrical safety
- All kitchen outlets are GFCI protected

### Gas/Fire

- All gas equipment is located in a well-ventilated areas
- Employees are trained in fire safety
- Emergency drills for fire or gas leaks are conducted regularly
- At least one Class K fire extinguisher is in the kitchen (and within 30 feet of deep fat fryers)
- Fire extinguishers are mounted near exits and are unobstructed
- Smoke detectors are not located in the kitchen
- All grease-producing appliances are kept under the kitchen hood
- Grease filters are in place
- Hoods, ducts and grease filters are free from grease
- Hoods, ducts and grease filters are professionally cleaned at least annually
- Hood/duct fire suppression systems are tested and inspected semi-annually through a fire protection contractor (test date located on tag)

## Section 5

# Kitchen Ergonomics

Awkward positions, repetitive motions and exposure to temperature extremes are major risk factors for developing repetitive strain injuries. All employees should be trained to recognize risk hazards and implement the appropriate corrective actions to avoid injury and loss.

### Body Mechanics

Material handling injuries are anything from back strains to wrist strains. In the food service industry they are commonly caused by bending, lifting trays, carrying dishes, lifting items off stock shelves or carrying boxes.

To reduce the risk of back injury and other material handling injuries your organization may consider:

- Purchasing smaller-sized items
- Using suppliers that restock supplies

Employees should be encouraged to:

- Store items on shelves no higher than shoulder level
- Store frequently used and heavy items at waist level
- Use mechanical devices whenever possible (trash cans with wheels, two-wheel dollies)

### Proper Lifting

Generally 13 percent of MCIT workers' compensation claims are back-related injuries. Where lifting is a routine function of the job, employees should be encouraged to question whether there is a better way to store the item, to reduce the frequency of lifting or a mechanical device available to make the lifting easier. Practicing proper lifting techniques helps employees maintain healthy



### Material Handling & Proper Lifting

When handling or lifting materials employees should:

- Use carts and dollies whenever possible to carry loads to specific areas
- Size up the load before attempting the lift
- Keep the curves – bend at the hip, not the back
- Solicit help when attempting to lift heavy or bulky objects
- Store heavy items on lower shelves at waist level
- Always use the proper type of ladder to reach high objects
- Prevent excessive reaching by using slip-resistant step stools to get to out of reach items on shelving units

backs and prevent injury. Regular training in proper lifting procedures and techniques should be conducted for all new hires and reviewed or repeated annually for all other employees.

## Repetitive Strain Injuries

A repetitive strain injury is damage to tendons, nerves or other soft tissues caused by the overuse of a limited number of physical movements. The main risk factors contributing to repetitive strain injuries include poor posture, poor technique and overuse.

### Static Grasps

Cutting, chopping, stirring and picking up pans and kettles require static grasps. These grasps create strain on the hand, wrist and forearm muscles. These grasps also put pressure on the wrists.

To minimize strain and reduce the risk of a repetitive strain injury in the kitchen employees should:

- Keep a straight wrist
- Use tools with comfortable grips
- Use hand tools that reduce shock through energy absorption and cushioning
- Use tools with handles that place the wrist in a neutral position (bent no more than 10 percent)
- Keep tools sharpened, cleaned and in good repair to reduce forceful exertions
- Use the right tool for the job

### Job Rotation

Food service workers often perform repetitive tasks, such as cutting, chopping and stirring. When possible, rotate the type of work performed to reduce the risk of repetitive strain injuries. Encourage employees to:

- Take frequent mini-breaks from the repetitive task
- Stretch often

### Good Posture

Food service workers' job duties often require standing for prolonged periods. Employees' work areas should promote good posture to reduce discomfort and strain injuries. The work area should be directly in front of the body and in close proximity to the body. To encour-

age employees to maintain good posture when working in the kitchen:

- Keep frequently used items within easy reaching distance
- Take frequent mini-breaks
- Stretch often
- Wear comfortable, nonslip shoes

Other best practices include:

- Supplying level, nonslip floor mats to cover work areas
- Providing adjustable tables for food preparation

## Kitchen Preparation Area

Proper kitchen preparation staging minimizes the amount of stretching, twisting, bending, straining and awkward positions employees may encounter.

Consider the follow recommendations for the kitchen preparation area:

Description	Recommendation
Counter and Grill Surfaces Height	36"
Maximum Vertical Reach (Top Shelf)	60"
Maximum Forward Reach	32"

## Food Storage Rooms

Good work practice must also extend to food storage rooms. Train employees to:

- Minimize transferring materials
- Store items in areas that are easily accessible
- Use push rather than pull movements whenever possible



## Section 6

# Claim Information

Your organization's internal Workers' Compensation Contact is:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Your organization's internal Liability Contact is:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Work-related Injury, Illness Claims

It is important to report all employee injuries and illnesses. When a workplace injury or illness occurs:

1. Supervisor and employee call the MCIT-provided, Medcor-powered toll-free workplace injury hotline at **1.833.523.0277**. The employee should call the hotline directly if the supervisors is not available. If the injury/illness is life threatening, call 911 immediately; do not call the hotline.
2. After a short digital message, the supervisor and employee talk to a registered nurse. He or she gathers information about the injury.
3. Treatment recommended: self-care or referral for medial treatment.
4. Medcor sends a report of the incident to MCIT after the call. This serves as the first report of injury to begin the workers' compensation claim process. The report is also sent to your organization.

If the injured employee seeks medical care *before* placing a call to the hotline, you should not call the service. Rather, the incident should be reported to MCIT through the online member portal available at [MCIT.org](http://MCIT.org).

Minnesota employers must report the following to Minnesota OSHA

- all work-related fatalities within eight hours
- all work-related inpatient hospitalizations within 24 hours

- all work-related amputations within 24 hours
- all work-related losses of an eye within 24 hours

To file a report, the employer must call Minnesota OSHA Compliance during regular business hours, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday at 651.284.5050 or 1.877.470.6742. Outside of Minnesota OSHA Compliance business hours (e.g., weekend or holiday), the employer must call federal OSHA at 1.800.321.6742.

Accident investigation is an important component of any safety policy. Accident investigation allows the organization to determine the root cause of the problem and take corrective action to reduce or eliminate the odds of the accident occurring again.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, an unsafe act occurs in 95 percent of all analyzed injury accidents. Without complete reporting, it is difficult to have a clear picture of the unsafe conditions causing the accidents. In the long run, this may reduce the efficiency of the organization.

### Property/Liability Claims

Damage to entity-owned property and any liability claims (summons and complaint, notice of claim or similar notice) made against your organization by another party should be reported to MCIT as soon as the incident occurs. A claims representative investigates the situation and works with you to repair or replace scheduled

property or to assign defense counsel as provided by the terms and conditions of the MCIT Coverage Document. Submit an incident notice to MCIT through the online member portal at [MCIT.org](http://MCIT.org).

To assist MCIT in the unfortunate event of a loss, you are encouraged to gather relevant information immediately, such as:

- Obtain a detailed explanation of the incident
- Document the specific location where the incident occurred
- Inspect the area where the incident occurred
- Document the inspection
- Obtain the names, addresses and phone numbers of any witnesses
- Take photos of the area where the incident occurred
- Save video recordings (if you have one) and label and preserve it for review
- Retain the physical object involved in the incident (e.g., table, chair, machinery)
- Clearly label any physical object involved in the incident with the date and time and place it in a secure area until a claim representative can inspect and take possession of it



## Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust Claims Contact Information

100 Empire Drive, Suite 100  
Saint Paul, MN 55103-1885

### Hours of Operation:

8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

**General Local Number:** 651.209.6400

**General Toll Free Number:** 1.866.547.6516

**Website:** [MCIT.org](http://MCIT.org)



## Section 7

# Common Risks

## Tips Sheet



### **Risk: Deep Sinks**

Deep sinks can cause a static bent-over posture, placing significant strain on the low back.

### **Corrective Action**

When working on small items or when the sink is not full, make simple adjustments to ensure work is conducted at waist height. This reduces bending and back strain.



### **Risk: Standing for Long Periods**

Employees who stand for long periods increase the risk of placing strain on the back.

### **Corrective Action**

Anti-fatigue mats reduce back strain and improve circulation in the lower extremities. Standing mats should be at least one-half inch thick.



### **Risk: Lifting, Bending, Twisting**

Lifting, bending and twisting increase the risk of lower back injury. Placing items on lower shelves makes it difficult to lift safely.

### **Corrective Action**

Use carts to move heavy objects. This will reduce manual handling and muscle strain. Avoid using bottom shelves on tray carts. It positions loads below knee height, where no safe lift is possible.



**Risk: Bending to Scoop Ice**

Scooping ice requires a bent over posture.

**Corrective Action**

Add a soft mat to encourage kneeling or raise the machine



**Risk: Repetitive Actions**

Repetitive use of tools and utensils may cause strain on the wrist and forearm.

**Corrective Action**

Use larger, more secure handled tools to reduce forearm/wrist strain. Acceptable choices are available at most retail stores.

# Section 8

# Conclusion

**M**CIT is committed to safety and loss control initiatives. We value the relationship we have with our members, and we view ourselves as your partner in safety and loss prevention efforts. These guidelines were prepared to assist your organization with its health and safety strategies.

Loss control consultants, training, videos, guidelines, tools and other risk management services are available to assist in your safety and loss prevention efforts. To take advantage of these services, check out MCIT's website ([MCIT.org](http://MCIT.org)) or contact your loss control consultant. These services are included with membership in MCIT.

**Additional Sources Referenced in These Guidelines:**

American Family Insurance

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

Occupational Safety and Health Administration



## Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust

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100 Empire Drive  
Suite 100  
St. Paul, MN 55103-1885

MCIT.org  
866.547.6516 Fax:  
651.209.6496