Food Service General Safety (EDU)

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Introduction

Food Services General Safety (EDU) Overview and Objectives

Welcome to Food Services General Safety. In this course we will discuss general safety conditions and practices in a school kitchen. The course will take you through actual conditions and practices in a school that can lead to accidents and injuries.

By the completion of the Food Service General Safety course you will be able to:

- identify the typical hazards of the food service industry
- employ the best work practices for the food service industry
- identify the correct protection equipment that needs to be utilized when conducting workplace activities
- state best practices for safe kitchen maintenance

The three leading types of injuries that occur in Food Services are:

- burns
- cuts
- slips, trips and falls

In this course we will discuss burns, cuts, and slips, trips and falls. Many of the accidents and injuries that are seen in this course can be minimized with the use of the proper personal protection equipment (PPE) and the implementation of best work practices and safe working techniques.

Burns

Preventing Burns

Let's take a look at what conditions and practices in a school kitchen may lead to burns. This lesson will discuss many areas that lead to burns, but does not cover all conditions or practices. We will look at the following burn hazards:

- handling different size pans
- handling hot pans and trays
- burns from steamers
- burns from steam in kettles
- deep fryer burns

Please pay close attention to see which situations may relate to your school's kitchen.

Food Service oven pans come in various depths, ranging from 6 inches to as shallow as 1 inch. Depth and weight of a 6-inch pan can cause difficulty in gripping and handling.

A good power grip can prevent burns caused by dropping or spilling hot food from these pans. Oftentimes, hot pads may not give you the ability to get a power grip on the deep pans, where personal protective equipment (PPE), like oven mitts, allow you to fully grasp and handle these deep pans. The use of an oven mitt allows for a power grip and provides better protection against contact with hot surfaces, such as the rack above or the inside oven doors.

Hot pads can be used for shallow pans.

Burns often occur from contact with an oven rack or inside oven doors when placing or removing pans or trays.

To prevent unintentional contact with these hot surfaces, proper hand and forearm protection should be used. Food Services staff should be constantly aware of rack clearances and oven door positions. As a best practice, oven doors should be fully open to allow for greater clearances.

When cooking in the steamer, it is important to be cautious when opening the steamer door. Excessive steam can be discharged into your face and/or body.

When using the steamer follow the manufacturer's instructions. Open the steamer door when the gauge indicates it is safe to do so. When opening the steamer door, make sure you slightly crack the door to allow excess steam to escape. Do not stand directly in front of the steamer door; stand to the side away from door opening.

When cooking in a large covered kettle, hot steam can build up under the lid. To avoid steam burns, crack the kettle lid and stand clear before fully opening the lid.

Deep Fryer Burn Hazards

Using the deep fryer can be dangerous because of the hot oil. Use these tips to avoid burns from the deep fryer.

Deep Fryer

When using the deep fryer for cooking food, it is important to watch for splashing or popping grease. To minimize splashing, use the automated raise and lower controls when they are available.

Emptying the Basket

When emptying the basket, allow sufficient time to let the hot grease drain. This will avoid burns from grease drippings.

Best Practices

It is a "best practice" to use insulated handles on the basket.
Only trained and experienced personnel should remove used grease from the deep fryer. Food Service staff must wear safety goggles or a face shield and elbow-length oven mitts when handling hot greases.

Cuts

Protecting Yourself from Cuts

Another common injury in school kitchens are cuts. In this section we will look at various conditions and practices that can lead to exposures to staff from cuts.

Food Services staff must use knives to perform their jobs. It is important that knife safety begins by ensuring the knife handle is in good condition and the blade is sharp enough to perform its function. Remember, dull knife blades require excessive force that can lead to injury from slippage.

It is important when using a knife that you cut in a direction away from your body. When using a knife, always keep your free hand and fingers out of the path of the knife.

Proper care and storage of knives is important to prevent cuts. Use storage cabinets, magnetic racks or other means to properly store knives. Do not throw loose knives in a drawer. This can cause someone to get injured when reaching into the drawer.

The sharp serrated edges on plastic film containers can cause a deep and painful laceration when coming in contact with fingers. A cut can occur from simply moving the container and coming in contact with the open edges or not paying attention to your finger positioning when tearing the plastic film. To avoid these situations, always close the container and secure the lid. Pay close attention to placement of fingers when tearing plastic film so as to avoid contact with a container's cutting edge.

The cutting blades on large mixers are extremely sharp. When removing the blades to clean, make sure you do not come in contact with their sharp edges. Hold the cutting blades by using the base handles. When carrying the mixer blade, be aware of your surroundings to avoid contact with others or tripping and falling.

When cleaning these blades, make sure you use running water to rinse the blade. To finish cleaning, hand-wash the blades using a cloth or brush.

Food Service personnel frequently suffer cuts when using or cleaning the meat slicer.

When using the meat slicer, the slicer guard must be in position at all times. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on proper use. Only trained staff are permitted to use a meat slicer.

Cleaning the Meat Slicer

When cleaning, unplug the machine and set slice thickness to zero, so blade is flush with machine. Use a dry brush to clean and remove crumbs. Use warm soapy water to rinse. Spray with a manufacturer-recommended sanitizing solution to finish cleaning the blade.

For disassembling and cleaning parts, follow manufacturer's instructions on proper disassembly, cleaning and sanitizing.

Always use personal hand protection, such as gloves, when cleaning to avoid chemical burns.

Tomato slicers can be found in a school kitchen. The blades on the slicer are very sharp. Oftentimes, pieces of tomatoes get caught in the blade and must be removed. During this process, cuts commonly occur. Use proper cut-resistant gloves when removing the slices of tomato. Do not to touch the blades with a bare hand, latex or plastic glove, or any glove that is not cut-resistant.

In addition, you must properly lubricate the tomato slicer to allow the slicer to move freely to avoid using excessive force that can lead to hand slippage and injury. Lubricate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Slips, Trips, and Falls

Avoiding Slips, Trips, and Falls

“Slips, trips, and falls" are the leading types of injuries to Food Service staff. When working in a kitchen, there are a variety of conditions and practices that increase your chances of incurring a slip, trip and fall injury. As we take you on a visual tour of the typical situations found in a kitchen's working environment, please pay close attention so that you will be able to recognize these conditions and take the necessary steps to avoid injury to yourself or a co-worker.

It is important that you recognize how slips can occur. A slip occurs when you lose foot traction while walking on a same-level floor surface. There are four basic conditions that must be considered when identifying the root cause of most same-level floor slips and falls. One or more of these conditions can lead to a fall. The four conditions are:

Floor Surface Design

Floor surfaces such as tile, concrete or metal have their own traction characteristics. In many school kitchens, the floor surface is typically constructed of slip-resistant tile. However, the cooler, freezer and the floor grates are constructed of metal.

Footwear

The type of footwear is critical in adding to or preventing a slip and fall. Footwear with good slip-resistant qualities (foot traction) can assist in preventing slips on wet or contaminated floors.

Foreign Debris

In a kitchen this can be a wet floor from the dishwasher, liquid or food spills or wet conditions while cleaning the floor. Other debris, such as grease, can also result in slippery floor conditions.

Walking behaviour

Brisk walking or running, pushing or pulling carts, carrying food trays or food containers, rushing and being in a hurry can all increase your chances of slip and fall injuries.

There are various conditions and practices that can contribute to increasing the slipperiness of a floor.

Grease on the floor is a serious slip hazard. Grease can get on the floor from somebody dropping grease, drippings from the deep fryer or deposits of tiny particles splattered during cooking activities.

Spilled water on the floor can interfere with your foot traction on the floor. Water is spilled and tracked through the work area in a number of ways.

Spilled food can also interfere with your foot traction on the floor. Stock boiling over, spilling liquids when transferring from cooking container to serving container, food preparation spills and servicing lines are key areas of introducing contaminants to the floor.

Wet conditions are the most common causes of slips in a kitchen. Therefore, we will describe common kitchen slip hazards. Are any of these conditions familiar?

Floors adjacent to sinks and dishwashers are traditionally wet from spills. The use of water to clean equipment and supplies can lead to water on the floor. If the water is not cleaned up immediately, it eventually will be tracked throughout the kitchen work area. Isolated spots of tracked water cause the greatest concern, because the remaining work area is dry.

Many workers fail to notice these isolated wet spots.

The ice machine is another contributor to wet floor conditions because of ice dropped on the floor. Drain clogs or drainage pipe breaks only compound the problem of a wet floor around the ice machine. Look for the condition.

Inside the cooler or freezer, condensation from different temperatures inside and outside of the cooler, frozen or wet products depositing water on the floor, or drainage problems inside the cooler or freezer can lead to water or ice on the floor. Report these conditions and take the necessary steps to clean up the water. The freezer floor should be kept dry.

Metal floor drain grates may be found in a kitchen. Metal surface characteristics differ from the general floor tile. Stepping on the metal grates should be avoided whenever possible. However, if you must step on them, watch your foot placement. Polished metal surfaces are more slippery than surrounding kitchen floor surfaces. This slipping hazard can be worse if there are water or food contaminants on the grate or on the sole of the shoe.

The first step to reducing slips on wet floors is to clean up spills immediately.

Another preventive step is to wear proper footwear with good slip-resistant soles that have good traction. There are various manufacturers that make good slip-resistant footwear. Not all athletic shoes or tennis shoes have slip resistant soles necessary for working in wet conditions.

In areas that are generally prone to spills or wet conditions, such as sinks or dishwashing areas, use slip-resistant mats or runners to keep the wet conditions from interfering with your foot traction.

If wet conditions cannot be avoided, such as cleaning up or mopping a floor, use visual warning signs to alert all staff so they may take an alternate path or use caution when walking through the area. Warning signs should also be used to visually alert others of spills when the situation does not allow you to immediately clean up the spill. But don't leave the wet floor sign up too long; it is important to clean up the spill as soon as you can. Wet Floor signs are important but should not replace good housekeeping practices.

It is important when mopping and cleaning the floor to constantly change mop water to avoid spreading dirty water film residue. Oftentimes, dry residue from dirty water is a major reason that floor surfaces become slippery in a kitchen.

It is also important to use warm water in the initial cleaning phase unless the cleaning solution manufacturer requires something different. Proper water temperature can assist in cleaning the floor.

If you are using commercial cleaning solutions, always follow the manufacturer's recommendations on the container of the cleaning solution. The manufacturer's recommendations have been trial-tested and should result in clean floors with good traction.

Tripping hazards differ from slip hazards. Trip hazards are caused by an obstruction in the walkway that leads to a sudden stop of your walking gait. This sudden interference leads to loss of balance, which can result in a fall.

Equipment in the walking area

Tripping hazards, such as electrical extension cords across the walking area of the floor, or water hoses routed across the walking area, can cause an injury. Equipment left in the walkway, such as handcarts, can also be a tripping hazard and may cause an injury.

Poor housekeeping arrangements

Poor housekeeping arrangements and storage practices that require staff to step over objects in the kitchen or in storage areas can be the cause of other tripping injuries.

Limited Storage space

Limited storage space of food products and supplies that does not provide adequate walking aisle-width or working space can lead to tripping. Corners of boxes protruding into the aisle can catch a foot and cause a fall.

Crowding of work areas should be avoided. Temporary placement of carts and equipment can disrupt normal movement in walking areas. Service lines that are heavily traveled, especially during peak times, should be kept clear and unobstructed.

There are other fall hazards that exist in the kitchen.

Wooden pallets may be found in the freezer because they keep the food off the floor. Some workers use them as ladders to reach higher shelves. Wooden pallets are not intended to be used—and should not be used—as ladders or working platforms. Wooden pallet slats may not be sturdy enough to hold a person's weight, and the narrow spacing between the slats could cause a misstep and a twisted ankle.

Standing on plastic crates is a practice that should also be avoided. The plastic crates can overturn, causing a fall. Plastic crates were never designed to replace step ladders or step stools.

Conclusion

Summary

Thank you for taking the time to take this course. We hope it has helped increase your safety awareness and that you will incorporate these general safety techniques into your everyday life, especially at work.

Subject Matter Expert Biography

Walter Smith

Walter L. Smith, II is a seventeen year veteran in the field of environmental engineering. His field of expertise is in the field of environmental due diligence, developing and teaching safety training programs and curriculums and consulting on matters involving environmental and industrial policies and their application to infrastructural development domestically and abroad.

Mr. Smith is a graduate of the FAMU/FSU College of Engineering and was educated partly at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. While in the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Smith was trained in mining methods and safety and risk management in the colliery mining field. Upon his return to the U.S., Mr. Smith graduated from Florida A&M University with a B.S. in Civil Engineering. While much of Mr. Smith's early professional career was with regulatory agencies, like Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the South Florida Water Management District, most of his experience has been in the private consulting world as an environmental professional. As a consultant, Mr. Smith has managed remediation projects, conducts environmental due diligence assessments and consulting about matters regarding environmental impacts, economic and sustainable development (brownfields programs).

Mr. Smith is also a safety professional and has been responsible for training and certifying hundreds of people in occupational safety through industry standards set forth by the Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Mr. Smith is a certified Instructor for the Federal Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). He has also written curriculums for the Global Corporate Training College in St. Petersburg, Florida and video training modules that have been utilized by Learn Smart Systems nationwide. Mr. Smith has also acted as a safety consultant for various clients in the legal, non-profit, medical fields and colleges. Mr. Smith is currently the Team Leader for FEMA teams assigned to two South Carolina counties to assist the victims of Hurricane Matthew with relief needs services and eminent storm safety preparedness.