

Safety Tips and Topics - Recognizing Job Hazards

What are Job Hazards?

Anything at work with the potential to harm a worker either physically or mentally is considered a job hazard.

Some hazards in restaurants are easily visible. For example, restaurant workers can see that the hot griddle or deep fryer can potentially burn their hands or that the meat slicer can potentially cut their fingers. Some hazards are less visible and can cause workers to be injured or become ill. Minor things such as working too quickly may cause an injury. Chopping vegetables all day or lifting heavy objects may hurt workers' wrists and backs over time, or using strong cleaning products every day may damage workers' lungs.

Job hazards are grouped into different categories.

- Safety hazards that cause immediate accidents and injuries. For example, knives, ovens, and slippery floors are hazards that can result in burns, cuts, or even broken bones
- Ergonomic hazards that cause sprains and strains, such as doing repetitive tasks or heavy lifting.
- Other health hazards include additional workplace conditions that can make people sick, such as noise, chemicals, heat, and stress.

Remember, restaurant workers are exposed to many job-related hazards that may cause injuries and illnesses that in turn impact their lives, income, and family members. Restaurant employers also face financial challenges in making health and safety improvements and complying with state and federal laws.

Restaurant workers and employers can develop skills to identify visible and less visible hazards in the workplace and develop solutions to prevent injuries and illnesses.

The Hazard Communication Standard

This standard gives you the right to know about the chemicals you work with and requires that employers:

- Make an inventory of all the chemicals used or stored at the workplace.
- Label all chemical products.
- Make available to employees copies of the Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for all chemicals. Safety Data Sheets give you detailed information about the chemical itself, its possible effects on a person's health, and how to work with these chemicals safely.
- Train all employees about the chemicals they work with and how to use them safely.
- Read labels before using the product
- Wear personal protective equipment

Additional Resources:

Cal/OSHA

Effective Workplace Training eTool — https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/etools/09-002/index.htm

Model Hazard Communication Program for Restaurants — https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/RsgHazcomModel.doc

Hazard Communication — https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/hazcom.pdf

OSHA (Federal)

Hazard Communication — https://www.osha.gov/hazcom

Job Hazard Analysis — https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/osha3071.pdf