

Preventing Lacerations In the Kitchen

Cuts and punctures (most frequently to the hands and fingers) are some of the most common injuries reported in restaurants. These types of injuries can be reduced by implementing some simple strategies.

How can lacerations be prevented?

- Provide knives that are the right size and type for each job
- Provide box cutters for opening boxes
- Provide proper storage for knives (counter racks, wall racks, or storage blocks)
- Provide cut-resistant gloves that cover the wrists, fit well, and have sturdy, tightly-woven seams
- Allow workers enough time to work safely

Knife safety

- Keep knives sharp (dull knives are unsafe)
- Keep handles in good repair/tighten or replace loose handles
- Never leave knives soaking in water
- Place a non-slip pad or damp cloth under cutting boards
- Stop cutting and place knife in a flat, safe place if interrupted
- Pass a knife to colleagues by laying it on a counter, or pass it with blade pointed down
- Never try to catch a falling knife, instead warn others
- Carry and store knives in sheaths or protective cases when possible
- Keep fingers tucked on the hand that's holding the food when cutting.

Use appliances safely

To properly use devices that save workers time, like slicers, grinders and mixers, you must require both effective training when a new employee starts, and continuous attention to make sure that employee is following the proper procedures.

The kitchen supervisor should set an example by using proper work methods on a daily basis and encourage others to do the same.

Instruction and safety manuals should be readily available for all equipment, should someone need more information.

Slicers: “Zero” the blade after each use. When cleaning the blade, make sure the power is off and wipe from the center hub to the edge to avoid injuries.

Grinders/Tenderizers: Use push stick to feed grinder. Never place fingers in feed openings. Keep guards in place at all times when operating machine.

Mixers: Make certain beaters are properly fastened, and bowl elevator is locked in position starting the unit. Always stop the machine before removing anything from the bowl.

Dishwashers: Load trays properly. Do not overload or force trays into the machine. If tray is stuck in unit, use a long pole with a hook to pull out. Wear rubber gloves to avoid contact with harsh soaps and chemicals.

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: fwcruminsurance.com