

Master Brewers Safety Toolbox Talk



Kitchen and Restaurant Safety

Overview

According to Brewers Association statistics, 2,200 brewpubs are now operating nationwide. Many brewpub owners are familiar with food safety standards but may not think about injury prevention and how OSHA standards apply to kitchen staff, restaurant servers, and bartenders.

Common Restaurant Injuries

- Sprains, strains, slips, trips, and overexertion in lifting, bending, climbing, reaching, and twisting
- Cuts, lacerations, and punctures from knives and cutting/slicing tools
- Heat, burns, and scalds resulting from contact with hot objects, open flames, and hot substances
- Work-related violence—altercations with fellow workers and clients

OSHA Health and Safety Rules

Health and safety requirements vary. Check with state or OSHA websites for specific requirements. For example, California requires restaurants to have their own injury and illness prevention program (IIPP) if the restaurant employs 20 or more employees. The state of Washington requires a safety committee if the establishment has 11 or more employees. Safety data sheets and chemical handling training are applicable to most workers (see the [MBAA Toolbox Talk on GHS](#)).

Young Workers

The first work experience for many youths is in the restaurant industry. Of workers employed by restaurants and other food/beverage service businesses, 30% are younger than 20 and are twice as likely to be injured while being exposed to the same occupational risks as adult workers and are more likely to get hurt within the first 6 to 12 months of employment.

Protecting Brewpub/Kitchen Workers

Injuries can be prevented by following good safety practices.

Slips/Trips

Have a closed-toed shoe policy that includes slip-resistant soles and low heels. A regular cleaning schedule and cleaning spills and splashes immediately are good practices. Nonslip floor matting can aid in injury prevention and mats should be kept clean and secured. Eliminate cluttered and obstructed work areas.



Use antislip mats to prevent falls and injuries.

Report to your supervisor any blind corners, problem floor surfaces, or hazardous areas.

Safe Knife Handling

Cuts/lacerations are common injuries in kitchens. To help prevent injuries 1) keep knives sharp and let staff know when knives are sharpened; 2) use a knife only for its intended purpose; 3) always use a cutting board; 4) carry knives with the point down and the cutting edge away from your body; 5) store knives properly in racks or magnetic holders or use knife sheaths close to where they are used. At all times, be in control of your knife blade, your body, and the food you are cutting.

Preventing Burns

Burns can be prevented by wearing proper personal protective equipment (PPE), such as long sleeves and long pants; using dry potholders, and gloves/mitts; and wearing sturdy footwear to protect your feet.

Follow safety practices by adjusting the burner flames to cover only the bottom of the pan and keeping pot handles away from burners. Avoid steam by opening lids away from you and use caution when removing items from the microwave.

Be attentive to grease as it is being heated. If you see wisps of smoke, turn down the heat and remove from grease from the burner to cool. Never use water to put out a grease fire. Smothering is the best practice for putting out small grease fires—cover the fire with a metal lid or cookie sheet or cover with baking soda.

Safe Lifting, Carrying, and Ergonomics

When moving/carrying material, it is important to lift safely: 1) use mechanical devices/carts or get help; 2) use good body mechanics when lifting—keep your head up, your back straight, and lift with your legs not your back; 3) bring the load as close to you as possible before lifting; 4) keep the load directly in front of your body; 5) move your feet when turning to avoid twisting your back; 6) lift at waist height with your elbows in and close to your body; 7) limit lifting above your shoulder level.

Safety Training and Culture

There are many training resources applicable to brewpubs. It is important to create a good safety culture.

[CAL/OSHA Guide to Restaurant Safety](#)
[Kitchen Safety Showdown](#)
[Washington State Guides to Restaurant Safety](#)
[OSHA Restaurant Safety Training Guide](#)

If you have any questions or comments regarding this Toolbox Talk, please contact a member of the Brewery Safety Committee.