

SURVIVAL TIPS

Suggestions to keep you healthy and free of injury

Food Preparation

Staff in the hospitality industry are exposed to many hazards and often work under pressure in hot conditions. The most common injuries and illnesses are from:

- slips, trips and falls;
- knives and cutting machines;
- burns and scalds;
- strains and sprains;
- poor personal hygiene and cross contamination to food/other people;
- customer illness from unsafe food preparation.

Tip 1: Check your floor surface

Slips, trips and falls can be caused by slippery floors and stairs, loose carpets and mats, and accumulated clutter. In kitchens, ensure effective drainage prevents pooling of water and grease. Keep all floors clean, dry and tidy. Improve slip resistance using adhesive strips and slip-resistant paint.

Tip 2: Handle knives safely

Use the right knife for the job, with a sharp blade and a chopping board. Always cut away from your body when cutting, boning or trimming. Don't try to catch a falling knife, or leave a knife in dishwater, or carry a knife in your pocket.

Tip 3: Avoid burns and scalds

Ensure that handles of pots and pans do not stick out from the counter or stove. Use oven gloves or mittens for handling hot objects. Wear long gloves

for deep ovens, and lift lids away from you.

Don't overfill pots and pans, or leave metal spoons in pots and pans while cooking, or spill water in hot oil. Don't use a wet cloth to lift lids from hot pots, or open cookers and steam ovens while under pressure, or leave a hot electric element or gas flame "on" all the time, or open dishwashers while they are working or reach into them while they are still hot.

Tip 4: Maintain good posture

Avoid strains by holding loads close to your body when lifting. If you must turn when lifting, move your feet - do not twist your body. Get help if the load is too heavy or large, and push rather than pull. Try to find a work surface that is the right height for the task. For cleaning or sorting - 5 cm above elbow height. For peeling and cutting vegetables - about 5 to 20 cm below elbow height. For cutting or slicing meat - about 20 to 40cm below elbow height.

Tip 5: Keep yourself clean

Regularly wash your hands in hot water with anti-bacterial soap, and always after handling raw meat. Keep fingernails short. Avoid dangling jewellery, and tie long hair back under a cap.

Tip 6: Use gloves properly

Always wear gloves for handling food - but if you handle money as well as

food, or if you don't change the gloves when handling different foods, the exercise is pointless.

Tip 7: Check your temperatures

Food must be cooked right through. Don't serve hamburgers with pink bits in the centre, or pink uncooked chicken (particularly near the bone). Hot food should be kept above 60°C (steaming hot) and cold foods below 5°C to stop most bacteria from multiplying.

Tip 8: Keep insects and flies off

Use insect screens and cover any exposed food at counter. Clear away food scraps regularly.

Tip 9: Check food segregation

Raw and cooked foods, such as salads and meats, must not touch each other in display units.

Tip 10: Inspect cutlery and glasses

Remove chipped, cracked or otherwise damaged items from service.

Disclaimer: these survival tips are general in nature and are not intended to be comprehensive. Always take into account your own particular circumstances. If you have any questions, please discuss them with your supervisor.

This issue's survival tips supplied by Auckland-based consultancy TQM Safety Ltd.