



Restaurant Hazards

As one of the nation's biggest employment sectors, restaurant workers comprise one of the largest groups of workers injured in the U.S. each year. Regardless of how careful you work, your business may still experience an illness or injury that could have been avoided. Reduce your losses by implementing safe operating practices and training your employees to recognize and control hazards. Assess conditions in your restaurant, identify hazards, and consider appropriate hazard control measures. Follow manufacturer's recommendations when handling equipment.



Fire and fire extinguishers

Fire is the number one hazard in most restaurants. Look for grease buildup on your grills and surrounding areas. Determine how often the hoods, ducts, fans, filters, deep fat fryers, etc. need to be cleaned. Overfilled grease traps can catch on fire. If you have an automatic dry-chemical extinguishing system, keep it in operable condition and check it regularly. Fuel supplies for your cooking equipment should have an automatic shut-off valve that functions when your extinguishing system is activated. Clean your exhaust system filters regularly.

Your [portable fire extinguishers](#) must be mounted and accessible. Employees [expected to use fire extinguishers](#) must be trained. Training must include how to activate the overhead fire suppression system. Keep a supply of baking soda nearby for small skillet fires and a Class K 6-liter fire extinguisher for larger

fires. Policies on the use of [fire extinguishers](#) and number of employees may require you to develop and post an [emergency action plan](#) containing evacuation procedures and numbers to the fire department.

Electrical

Electrical wiring must be in good condition and face plates kept on all electrical outlets. Frayed electrical cords or faulty equipment may spark and cause an electrical fire. Ground your ice machines, appliances, and all other electrically operated equipment. Do not use extension cords connected to outlets in lieu of permanent wiring for longer than 90 days. Mark the breakers in your panel boxes to identify what they operate, and keep the panel box doors closed and free from obstructions.

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Hazard alerts provide information on hazardous materials, equipment, or practices. For more information contact the Oregon OSHA Standard and Technical Resources Section at 503-378-3272, toll-free at 800-922-2689, or visit our Web site at www.orosha.org.

Housekeeping

A large percentage of injuries in restaurants are a result of slips and falls. Good **house-keeping** practices will prevent most of these events. Maintain aisles to 22-inches wide, and keep them and floors clear of tripping hazards and overstocked product. If possible, coat your floors with anti-slip surfaces. Shoes with slip-resistant soles will prevent slipping hazards caused by water, grease from deep fat-fryers, and sticky syrup from soft drink tanks. Keep the floors around the sinks dry.

Material handling

Instruct employees on proper **material handling** procedures to avoid strains, sprains, and repetitive motion disorders that occur when moving tables and chairs, stocking shelves, or lifting products. Make sure employees build secure stacks of stored products and shelves are securely anchored when necessary.

Machine guarding

Pay particular attention to any equipment that requires guarding of moving parts for safe operation. Equipment, such as mixers may require guards to prevent hands from getting into the beaters when they are in operation.

Personal protective equipment

Assess the hazards, provide your employees with **personal protective equipment** appropriate to the tasks being performed, and require its use. For example, employees must wear **eye protection** whenever there is the possibility of chemicals splashing into their eyes, such as when they are changing the chemicals for the dishwashing equipment. Proper eye protection is required when a product label or material safety data sheet (MSDS) identifies that exposure to the product could cause eye damage.

Protective gloves are required when employees are handling chemicals, working with hot cooking oil, or subject to cuts from sharp edges, such as those found on meat slicers. Hot oil is a hazard for workers cleaning deep fryers. Workers can be burned if oil or grease is not allowed to cool before handling or if the right equipment is not used.

New fryers have automatic draining systems that minimize the risk to workers. Special equipment is available including fully enclosed wheeled containers with easy-pour mechanisms, special carts for handling the older containers, and metal buckets with metal lids and clasps that seal tightly to prevent splashing.

Your local restaurant equipment supplier has this information.

Guidelines for handling hot oil:

- Follow the instructions and procedures of the equipment manufacturer.
- Allow hot oil and grease to cool overnight before disposing.
- Be sure your containers can withstand high temperatures and do not use plastic.
- Do not over fill containers – make sure they are large enough to do the job.
- Use carts, when available, and tight fitting secured lids when moving containers of hot oil or grease to prevent spills and splashing. Be aware of holes and rough spots in floors.
- Clean oil spills promptly to prevent slipping hazards.
- Wear the right personal protective equipment like a face shield, oil resistant apron or coveralls, and elbow length gloves.

Hazard communication program

A written hazard communication program is required when your employees use products that contain a cautionary label, such as those found on your cleaning compounds. You must have an **MSDS** for each product available to your employees. The MSDS or label will provide information about the physical and health hazards associated with use of the product, requirements for personal protective equipment when handling the product, and first aid measures to take when over exposure occurs. Secondary containers may also require labeling contents.

Training and supervision

Train and supervise your employees in the proper use of equipment. Nothing replaces **effectively supervising** and **enforcing** safe work practices. Supervisors must be trained to recognize and correct hazardous conditions and to hold all employees accountable for safety and health. Rely on your established **safety committee**, or safety meetings, to assist in enforcing safety and health rules and to recognize hazardous conditions.

*For information in Spanish see the **PESO Restaurant Tip Sheet.**
For more information about Oregon OSHA rules, visit www.orsha.org/rules_laws.html*



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