

Hazard alert

Restaurant Hazards

As one of the nation's largest employment sectors, many restaurant workers are injured in the U.S. each year. To take steps to avoid injury and illness, implement safe operating practices and train employees to recognize and control hazards. Follow each manufacturer's recommendations when using 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, and grease traps need cleaning. 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, if present. Keep baking soda nearby for small fires, and a Class K six-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 procedures for evacuation and notifying 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.

Housekeeping

A large percentage of injuries in restaurants are a result of slips, trips, and falls. Maintain aisles to 22 inches wide, and keep them and floors clear of tripping hazards and overstocked product(s). If possible, coat floors with anti-slip surfaces and/or provide stable, non-slip floor mats in areas that typically get wet. All employees should wear shoes with slip-resistant soles to prevent slipping caused by water, grease from deep fat-fryers, sticky syrup from soft drink tanks, cleaners, and other liquid hazards. Keep the floors around the sinks dry.

Material handling

Instruct employees on proper material handling procedures to avoid strains, sprains, and repetitive motion injuries 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. Provide training in safe lifting methods, and provide hand trucks for transporting goods, and proper footstools for stocking.

Machine guarding

Pay particular attention to any equipment that requires guarding of moving parts for safe operation. Equipment may require guards to prevent injuries while in operation, such as mixers with beaters and splash guards on fryers.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Assess the hazards, provide employees with PPE appropriate to the tasks being performed, and require its use. For example, employees must wear [eye protection](#) whenever there is a possibility of chemicals

splashing into their eyes. Proper eye protection is required when a product label or [safety data sheet \(SDS\)](#) identifies that exposure to the product could cause eye damage. First Aid kits should be adequately stocked and marked.

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.



Guidelines for handling hot oil:

- Follow the instructions and procedures of the equipment manufacturer.
- Wear appropriate PPE for the task, such as an oil-resistant apron and/or elbow-length gloves.
- Be sure your containers can withstand high temperatures. Do not use plastic.
- Do not overfill 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.
- Allow hot oil and grease to cool overnight before disposing.
- Clean all spills immediately to prevent slipping hazards, with warning signs posted notifying other employees.

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 cleaning compounds. Employers must have on hand safety data sheets (SDS) for all products available to employees. The SDS or label provides information about the physical and health hazards associated with use of the product, requirements for PPE when handling the product, and first aid measures to take if overexposure occurs. Secondary containers may also require labeling contents.

Training and supervision

Train and supervise employees regarding the proper use of equipment. 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 identify hazardous conditions.

For more information in Spanish, see the [Oregon OSHA PESO Restaurant sheet](#).

