OVERVIEW OF RESTAURANT SAFETY

Restaurants and other eating and drinking businesses employ a very large number of people in the State of California, and many of these employers are under 20 years of age. Often, a teens' first work experience is in the restaurant industry. Having a large number of inexperienced young workers employed, being a fast-paced work environment, and being a workplace with exposure to many types of hazards, makes restaurant work very challenging in terms of keeping the workplace safe and healthful.

A brief overview of the most common Cal/OSHA violations, types of injuries, causes of work related fatalities, issues of young workers, and hazard control measures are given below:

Most Common Cal/OSHA Violations

- **Lack of An Effectively Implemented Injury and Illness Prevention Program**
  - Make sure employees are properly trained. This is particularly important when it comes to young workers
  - Proactively identify hazards in your workplace and conduct inspections regularly

- **Improper Cold Storage Room**
  - Walk-in rooms must have internal lighting
  - Make sure there is an inside latch release
- **Obstructed Walkways or Aisles**
  - Store materials properly, dispose empty boxes right away, etc.
- **Slip and Trip Hazards in the General Kitchen Areas**
  - Use high friction surfaces or mats when there are wet floors

- **Not Reporting to Cal/OSHA a Serious Employee Injury or Fatality**
  - An occupationally related fatality, injury, or illness involving loss of a body part, permanent disfigurement or hospital stay > 24 hrs requires immediate notification
- **Obstructed Exits**
  - Make sure exits are not blocked by stored materials
  - Do not lock exit doors unless equipped with “panic release” bars
- **Improper Cleaning, Repairing, and Servicing of Machinery and Equipment**
  - Make sure that a machine cannot be activated when an employee is fixing or adjusting it

Most Common Types of Injuries

- **Sprains and Strains**
  - Falls to floor (trip/slip)
  - Overexertion in lifting
  - Bending, climbing, reaching and twisting

- **Cuts, Lacerations, and Punctures**
  - Knives and other cutting/slicing tools

- **Heat Burns and Scalds Resulting from Contact**
  - Hot objects and open flames
  - Hot substances such as oils, water, etc.

- **Work-Related Violence**
  - Altercations with fellow workers and clients

Most Common Causes of Work Related Fatalities

- **Homicides**
  - Robbery
  - Customers and clients
- **Transportation Incidents**
  - Delivery drivers due to vehicle accidents

Issue of Young Workers (<18 years)

- **Applicable Labor Laws**
  - Limited working hours
  - Prohibited use of certain types of equipment as per Child Labor Laws 2000
    - **In California workers under 18 may not:**
      - Drive a motor vehicle on public streets as a main part of the job (17-year-olds may drive in very limited circumstances)
      - Use powered equipment like a box crusher, meat slicer, or bakery machine

- **Also, 14 or 15 year old workers may not:**

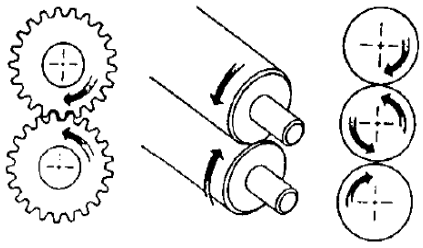
  - Do any baking activities
  - Cook (except with electric or gas grills that do not involve cooking over an open flame and with deep fat fryers that automatically lower and raise the baskets)
  - Load or unload a truck
  - Work on a ladder or scaffold

➢ **Inexperience**

- More supervision and training needed
- Issue clearly addressed in the Workplace Injury and Illness Prevention Program

Hazard Control Measures

➢ **Machine Guarding**



- Check all equipment that creates hazardous revolving, reciprocating, running (e.g., conveyor belts), shearing, punching, pressing, squeezing, drawing, cutting, rolling and mixing actions, including pinch and shear points that employees may come in contact with.

- Make sure these hazard zones are protected by physical barriers or other means that prevent entry by an employee's hands, hair, loose clothing, etc.

➢ **Lockout/Tag Out**

- Ensure a fully implemented lockout/tag out program anytime employees are required to work on equipment where machine guarding has to be removed, or they are exposed to electrical or other forms of stored energy – balers and compactors in particular.

➢ **Ladders**

- Identify the elevated locations employees may have to access, along with surround hazards, such as hot surfaces or containers of hot liquids. Where feasible, eliminate the need of ladders. Do not use chairs, carts or buckets as ladders.

- Cal/OSHA regulations may be reviewed at www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3276.html.

- Training requirements:
  - Importance of using ladders safely, including: frequency and severity of injuries related to falls from ladders.
  - Selection, including: types of ladders, proper length, maximum working loads, and electrical hazards.
  - Maintenance, inspection, and removal of damaged ladders from service.
  - Erecting ladders, including: footing support, top support, securing, and angle of inclination.
  - Climbing and working on ladders, including: user's position and points of contact with the ladder.
  - Factors contributing to falls, including: haste, sudden movement, lack of attention, footwear, and user's physical condition.
  - Prohibited uses, including: uses other than designed, climbing on cross bracing, maximum lengths, and minimum overlap of extension ladder sections.

➢ Emergency Eyewash

- In addition to having employees wear personal protective equipment, employees involved in the handling and using of corrosive chemicals such as bleach, degreaser etc. need to have provisions for flushing their eyes in case of eye exposure. Depending on the chemical used, a restaurant may be required to have an emergency eye wash. Employees need to refer to the material safety data sheet (MSDS) of the chemical in use for specific requirements.

  When the emergency eyewash is required, employers need to make sure that the workplace has a properly functioning emergency eyewash that meets ANSI Z-358.1-1981 (it should be labeled as such) requirements. Having an emergency eye wash also helps employees whose eyes may accidently come in contact with materials such as hot oils, peppers, etc.

➢ Protective Gloves

- **Chemicals** – check with the supplier to make sure the kind of gloves used by your employees are appropriate for the chemicals they may come in contact.
- **Hot surfaces and liquids** – make sure the gloves being used are dry, in good condition and designed for what they are being used for.
- **Cuts** – where feasible, have employees use cut-resistant gloves and consider steel mesh gloves or other types that accommodate proper sanitation where needed.

➢ Non-Slip Shoes and Surfaces

- Ideally, have slip-resistant floors installed. In addition, requiring or providing slip-resistant shoes can be an effective complimentary strategy for preventing slips and falls.

Employers may refer to the following helpful information:

- Model shoe policy at the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP), U.C. Berkeley
  http://lohp.org/docs/pubs/smbiz/rest/rest_model_shoe_safety.pdf

- Preventing slips and falls – slip resistant footware
  http://www.purdue.edu/rem/injury/SlipTripFfall/LP5407-reventingSlipsAndFalls-Slip-ResistantFootwear.pdf

➢ **Fuel Gases (e.g., Propane, Natural Gas), Carbon Dioxide (Gas and Dry Ice) and Helium**

- Secure cylinders from falling over and protect valves.
- Ensure areas where they are being used are well ventilated to prevent asphyxiation and/or fire. Avoid use or storage in confined rooms or walk-in refrigerators or freezers.
- Make sure propane cylinders are equipped with an overfill protection device.
- Use a leak-detection solution to check all connections for tightness before lighting gas grill burners.
- Ovens need to be safeguarded against failure of fuel, air or ignition. For example, safety mechanisms installed by the manufacturer must be such that fuel will be shut off to both the main burner and pilot burner in case of failure of the pilot flame or spark igniter.
- Do not smoke while handling fuel cylinders.
- Close the main valve of the cylinder when it's not in use.

➢ **Burns**

- Exercise caution when transferring hot liquids to clear drains.
- Let oils/liquids cool before draining, filtering or transferring.

➢ **Food Flavorings**

- Review the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) of butter substitutes to determine if diacetyl, diacetyl trimer, acetoin, 2,3-pentanedione, 2,3-hexanedione, 2,3-heptanedione is present. Even if not listed on the MSDS, consider contacting the manufacturer to determine if any of these chemicals are present at any concentration.
- Ensure good room ventilation if any of these substances are determined to be present and they are melted or cooked.