

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Cafe and restaurant industry - Knives and sharp tools safety

Cuts from knives and sharp instruments are common injuries in the kitchen.

Possible solutions

Take care of your knives

- Knives should be sharp and maintained in a good working condition.
- Provide the correct knife for the task and food being cut.
- Apart from cutting, knives should not be used for other purposes, such as opening cans, etc.
- Cutting should be done on a suitable cutting board placed on a firm table.
- Avoid placing knives near the edge of the table or with the blade facing outwards. When not in use, knives should be placed on a suitable knife shelf, in a knife block or sheath, or on a suitable magnetic strip mounted against the wall.
- Knives should not be washed together with other utensils or instruments.
- Train and instruct your workers about using and sharpening knives. The training should at least include the subjects covered in the previous dot points.

Use knives safely

- Avoid using knives where possible.
- Employees should wear protective clothing such as gloves and aprons when handling sharp implements.
- Ensure butchers' steels for knife sharpening have hand guards.
- Provide knives with handles that are comfortable to use.
- Provide mesh gloves and make sure workers use them when working with knives. Be careful when using these with serrated blades.
- Provide accessible first aid equipment and trained first aid officers.

Guard your slicers

- Provide guarding on slicing machines, for example a thumb guard to cover the blade at the far end of each cut.
- Attach a last slice device or pusher to prevent injury at the cutting section.

For more information on equipment and other workplace health and safety issues call 1300 369 915 or visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

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