

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Cafe and restaurant industry – Manual tasks

Any task that requires a person to use force, lift, lower, push, pull carry or otherwise move or restrain an object may cause an injury if the force is excessive. Injuries may happen as a result of a "one-off" event, but more often they are the result of **stress and strain** over a long period of time.

Examples of tasks that may cause injury are:

- lifting and carrying full pots and pans in the kitchen and drums and bags of food
- lifting and stacking dishwasher trays
- carrying crockery and glass on trays and serving from them and carrying numerous plates
- bending into deep freezers and fryers to clean inside them
- reaching across counters and into storage shelves.

Possible solutions

Assess all areas to determine if lifting and carrying can be prevented altogether

- When purchasing new equipment consider the weight, work out how will it be used and cleaned, and consult the employees who will be using the equipment.
- Install self-cleaning units for deep fryers or outsource the cleaning.
- Install a rubbish chute system that links the kitchen to an outside bin.

Use mechanical aids wherever possible

- Use lever and wheel trolleys to unload goods from vehicles. The wheels should be kept free running.

- Ensure rubbish bins can be wheeled. Buckets for cleaning can also be on wheels.
- Use trolleys for crockery and utensils when setting up tables.

Purchase lighter loads and smaller quantities from suppliers

- Buy smaller, lighter cartons of stock and food supplies.
- Reduce size and capacity of pots and pans or split loads.
- Ensure that suppliers restock your fridges (soft drink etc) on an as needed basis.

Stock shelves safely

- Provide ample shelving. Ideally, no shelves should be above shoulder level but if they are, avoid storing heavy items above shoulder level.
- Store heavy and frequently used items around waist height, approximately 800 mm from the ground.
- Do not stack shelves too deeply to avoid having to stretch to the back of the shelves.
- Provide Australian Standard–approved stepladders or stools to access top shelves to avoid overhead reaching and stretching.

Reduce muscle fatigue

- Ensure enough employees are rostered on per shift to allow job rotation to avoid employees having to stand for prolonged periods of time.
- Ensure employees have comfortable seating for rest and meal breaks.
- Use team lifting when rearranging and setting up tables.

- Rotate equipment/cleaning tasks. Try not to schedule all these to the end of the shift.
- Provide employees with closed, non-slip shoes with low heels and cushioned soles.
- Provide fixed rubber flooring in areas where employees are required to stand for long periods.

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

Use ergonomics in the design and layout of the workplace.

- The working procedures and the physical build of employees should be considered when designing workstations, tools and equipment storage.

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