School Nutrition Education Program

Knife Safety & Procedures – Preventing Cuts and Lacerations
USDA Professional Standards Code 2610 / 2640

Lesson Objectives

• Identify the proper techniques for using knives and other cutting tools.
• Further knife training and knowledge to decrease the risk of painful and preventable injuries.
• Understand the importance of your role in prevent cuts and lacerations.
• Recognize how to best use the proper tools when performing various high risk tasks.
• Understand how to clean, store and maintain knives, blades, and slicers.
• Understand key safety procedures that should be practiced everyday that can greatly prevent injury.

What is the point?

• Knives, slicers, and blades, though essential in any kitchen, pose a threat of injury to food handlers on a daily basis.
• Cuts and lacerations are some of the most common injuries incurred by food handlers each year.
• With the proper training, painful cuts and lacerations can offend be prevented.
• The risk of injury is always higher for those who have not received proper training.
• Understanding how to correctly handle knives and other cutting tools will help you maintain a safe workplace.

Pay Attention!

• Any time while holding or using a knife or sharp object, you must concentrate on the task at hand.
• Being distracted while using a knife can be extremely dangerous to you and to others.
• It is not uncommon for kitchens to instruct employees not to communicate with others while using a knife.
• At all times, be in control of your body, your knife blade, and the food you are cutting.
• Take knife handling seriously. Along with proper training, focus is one of the first steps to preventing injury.

Proper Use –

• Always cut away from your body, not towards – this way the blade will not hit you if it slips.
• When you finish using a knife, always store it in a designated safe place.
• If you are walking thru a kitchen holding a knife, always hold the knife with the blade pointed down and carry close to your body with the cutting edge away from your body.
• Always hand a knife by holding the handle close to the blade and extending the rest of the handle toward the person you are giving it to, blade facing the floor.
• Never attempt to catch a falling knife, just let it fall.
• Never touch the blade of a knife.
Proper Equipment –
- Only used approved knives, slicing equipment and box cutters.
- Make sure that all guards for slicing equipment are in place and operational.
- Never use knives with damaged handles/blades or for purposes other than its intended purpose.
- Use a cutting board to prevent items from moving while they are being cut. You may even place a towel under the cutting board so it will not slip.
- Wear cutting gloves made from stainless steel, Kevlar or other cut resistant materials when available.
- Be sure these gloves fit correctly and remember they are cut resistant, not cut proof.

Proper Cleaning & Storage –
- Always wear cut resistant gloves when cleaning slicers. Never wipe a slicer with a cloth or rag.
- Always clean knives immediately after use and never leave a knife soaking in a sink of water.
- The most dangerous knives can be those you are unaware of so keeping a designated tub for dirty knives. Keeping knives out of general wash sinks can greatly decrease accidents.
- Store knives properly in racks or knife sheaths, near areas where they are used.

Proper Maintenance –
- Keep your knives sharp and let other employees know when knives are newly sharp.
- Dull knives slip and are difficult to use.
- Ideally, knives and blades should be sharpened at least once or twice a week depending usage.
- Report all damaged knives and knife issues to supervisor so they may be taken out of circulation or replaced.
- Report all sharp edges on counters or other equipment to your supervisor so it may be repaired.
- Never compact trash in waste cans with your hands to prevent cuts from sharp objects in trash.

Picking The Proper Knife -
- Serrated blades: Ideal for cutting soft products with a hard exterior crust or tough skin. Great bread, tomatoes, sausages, citrus fruits, pies or pizza.
- Chef’s knives: One of the most used knives in the kitchen. Chef’s knives are ideal for chopping large or very firm veggies such as potatoes, onions, celery. Can also be used for meat.
- Carving & Slicing Knives: Generally used for cutting meat. A sawing motion is ideal for cutting with one of these knives.
- Paring knives: Should be used for more precise cutting and work well for cutting small food items such berries, apples, shallots, garlic, herbs, plums or for peeling.
Wrap Up . . .

- Awareness while using a knife or sharp object, along with proper training, are two major ways to prevent an injury.
- Always cut away from you body keeping finger out of the way and wear cutting gloves whenever possible.
- Only approved equipment and always use a cutting board.
- Keep dirty knives in designated areas only and/or clean as soon as possible.
- Store knives in designated areas in proper sheaths/racks.
- Report sharp edges and knife or equipment issues right away to supervisor.
- Use the best knife for the job and always for its intended purpose.

Test your knowledge . . .

1. It is ok to touch the blade of knife ONLY if it is falling and you are trying to catch it. Is this statement True or False?
2. What is something you can do to help stabilize a cutting board?
3. Describe the proper way to carry a knife thru a kitchen and how to properly hand it off to a co-worker?
4. Why is it important to have sharp knives? Describe the general recommended frequency at which they should be sharpened?
5. Describe 2 different types of knives and on what type of foods they are used?

Congratulations!!
You have completed the Lesson for –
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Please note all staff in attendance appropriately at
SchoolFoodHandler.com