

Example risk assessment for food preparation, cooking and service

This example risk assessment applies to food preparation and food service areas (restaurants, cafés, sandwich bars, pubs, takeaways or hotel kitchens).

Important reminder

This example risk assessment shows the kind of approach a small business might take. It can be used as a guide to think through some of the hazards in your business and the steps you need to take to control the risks. Please note that it is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your company name on and adopt wholesale without any thought. This would not satisfy the law – and would not be effective in protecting people.

Every business is different – you need to think through the hazards and controls required in your business for yourself. This example risk assessment is not intended to meet the requirements placed on your business by food safety legislation and would not be useful in setting up a 'Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point' (HACCP) system.

For further information on food safety please refer to guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency (www.food.gov.uk).

Setting the scene

The catering manager carried out the risk assessment in this café. The business employs five permanent staff working a variety of shifts to prepare, cook and serve food. A young person under 16 helps on a Saturday to serve food and load and unload the dishwasher. An employment permit for the young person has been obtained from the local authority. One staff member does not speak English well. The business, which is located on the high street, is open from 7.00 am to 5.30 pm.

How was the risk assessment done?

The manager followed the guidance in *Five steps to risk assessment* (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf).

- 1 To identify the hazards and risks, the manager:
 - looked at the guidance on HSE's web pages for catering and hospitality and the employment of young people;
 - walked around the kitchen, the stockroom and all other areas, noting things that might pose a risk and taking HSE's guidance into consideration;
 - talked to staff to learn from their knowledge and experience, and to listen to their concerns and opinions. He paid particular attention to the requirements for ensuring the young person's safety;

- looked at the accident book, to understand which risks previously resulted in incidents.
- 2 The manager wrote down who could be harmed and how.
- 3 The manager then wrote down what controls, if any, were in place to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of somebody being hurt. He compared these controls to the good practice in HSE's guidance. Where he did not consider the existing controls to be good enough, he wrote down what else needed to be done.
- 4 The manager put in place the actions the risk assessment identified as necessary. He discussed the findings with staff, pinned it up in a prominent place so that all staff could see it and made it part of the induction process for new staff. He told the young person's guardians about the findings of the risk assessment and how risk to that young person will be controlled. He also made sure that the worker, who had difficulty understanding English, had the safety arrangements explained to her in a language she understood.
- 5 The manager decided to review the risk assessment every year, or straightaway if major changes in the workplace happened. To get a better understanding of the risks, the manager also asked staff to report any accident, however minor.

Company name: Smith's Café

Date of risk assessment: 27/7/07

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Slips and trips	Kitchen/food service staff and customers may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good housekeeping – work areas kept tidy, goods stored suitably etc. ■ Kitchen equipment maintained to prevent leaks onto floor. ■ Equipment faults leading to leaks reported promptly to manager. ■ Drainage channels and drip trays provided where spills more likely. ■ Staff clean up spillages (including dry spills) immediately using suitable methods and leave the floor dry. ■ Suitable cleaning materials available. ■ Good lighting in all areas including cold storage areas. ■ No trailing cables or obstruction in walkways. ■ Steps and changes in level highlighted. 	■ Consider whether it is appropriate to change floor surface with better surface roughness.	Manager	27/8/07	14/8/07
			■ Remind staff to maintain good standard of housekeeping.	Manager	27/8/07	1/8/07
			■ Repair damaged floor tiles by the dishwasher in the kitchen.	Manager	27/8/07	26/8/07
			■ Ensure suitable footwear with good grip worn by staff.	Manager	27/8/07	1/8/07
Manual handling Handling heavy items such as flour sacks, ingredients, boxes of meat, trays of crockery, kegs etc	Kitchen staff and food service staff may suffer injuries such as strains or bruising from handling heavy/bulky objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ingredients bought in package sizes that are light enough for easy handling. ■ Commonly used items and heavy stock stored on shelves at waist height. ■ Suitable mobile steps provided and staff trained to use them safely. ■ Handling aids provided for movement of large/heavy items. ■ Sink at good height to avoid stooping. ■ Staff trained in how to lift safely. 	■ Ensure team working for moving heavier items (eg pots).	Manager	27/08/07	14/08/07
Contact with steam, hot water, hot oil and hot surfaces	Kitchen staff, food service staff may suffer scalding or burns injuries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained in risks of hot oils and on procedure for emptying/cleaning fryers. ■ Staff trained in risks of release of steam. ■ Water mixer taps provided. ■ All staff told to wear long sleeves. ■ Heat-resistant gloves/cloths/aprons provided. 	■ Display 'hot water' signs at sinks and 'hot surface' signs at hot plates.	Manager	27/8/07	26/8/07
			■ Ensure handles on pans maintained.	Manager	27/8/07	26/8/07
			■ Ensure staff trained in use of coffee machine.	Manager	Ongoing	

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Knives	Staff involved in food preparation and service could suffer cuts from contact with blades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained to handle knives. ■ Knives suitably stored when not in use. ■ First-aid box provided and nominated first-aider always on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tell staff not to use knives to remove packaging – suitable cutters will be provided. 	Manager	27/8/07	1/8/07
Food handling	Frequent hand washing can cause skin damage. Some foods can cause some staff to develop skin allergies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Where possible and sensible, staff use tools (cutlery, tongs scoops etc) to handle food rather than hands. ■ Food grade, single-use, non-latex gloves are used for tasks that can cause skin problems, eg salad washing, vegetable peeling and fish filleting. ■ Where handling cannot be avoided hands are rinsed promptly after finishing the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff reminded to thoroughly dry hands after washing. 			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide non-taint, nut-oil-free cream for staff to apply regularly to replace the moisture 'stripped' by frequent washing. 			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff to check for dry, red or itchy skin on their hands and to tell manager if this occurs. 			
Contact with bleach and other cleaning and washing chemicals	<p>Prolonged contact with water, particularly in combination with detergents, can cause skin damage.</p> <p>Staff cleaning premises risk skin irritation or eye damage from direct contact with bleach and other cleaning products.</p> <p>Vapour may cause breathing problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dishwasher used instead of washing up by hand. ■ All containers clearly labelled. ■ Where possible, cleaning products marked 'irritant' not purchased and milder alternatives bought instead. ■ Long-handled mops and brushes, and strong rubber gloves, provided and used. ■ Staff wash rubber gloves after using them and store them in a clean place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff reminded to thoroughly dry hands after washing. 			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide non-taint, nut-oil-free cream for staff to apply regularly to replace the moisture 'stripped' by frequent washing. 			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff to check for dry, red or itchy skin on their hands and to tell manager if this occurs. 			

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Gas appliances	Staff, customers could suffer serious/fatal injuries as a result of explosion/ release of gas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Daily check of gas appliance controls. ■ Inspection, service and test carried out by Gas Safe registered engineer every 12 months. ■ Staff know where the main isolation tap is and how to turn supply off in an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contact Gas Safe registered engineer to fit suitable flame failure device on oven. 	Manager	27/8/07	12/8/07
Electrical	Staff could suffer serious/ fatal injuries as a result of electric shock.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager visually inspects the system once a year, and is competent to do so. ■ System inspected and tested by an electrician every five years. ■ Staff trained to check equipment before use and to report any defective plugs, discoloured sockets or damaged cable and equipment. ■ Staff know where fuse box is and how to safely switch off electricity in an emergency. ■ Plugs, sockets etc suitable for kitchen environment. ■ Access to fuse box kept clear. ■ Residual current devices (RCDs) installed on supplies to hand-held and portable appliances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to inspect plugs, cables etc regularly. 	Manager	27/8/07	12/8/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Get electrician to inspect electrical equipment and advise on how often these should be inspected and tested. 	Manager	27/8/07	25/8/07
Fire	Staff, customers could suffer serious/fatal injuries from burns/smoke inhalation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fire risk assessment done as at www.communities.gov.uk/fire and necessary action taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ None 			
Machinery	Staff risk serious injury from contact with dangerous/ moving parts on machinery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained in cleaning, assembly and operating procedures. ■ All dangerous parts to machinery suitably guarded. ■ Daily checks of machinery guards before use. ■ Staff trained to spot and report any defective machinery. ■ Safety-critical repairs carried out by competent person. ■ Operating instructions easy to locate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff to always isolate (switch off from power supply) machinery before carrying out maintenance or cleaning work. 	Manager	27/8/07	1/8/07

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Falls from height	Staff risk serious injury (eg fractures) from a fall from any height.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Suitable stepladder provided for changing light bulbs and for retrieving items from racking or shelves. ■ Staff trained in safe use of stepladder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ None 			
Pressure systems Steam pipes, pressure fryers etc	Staff may suffer serious/fatal injury from explosion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Thorough examination carried out by qualified engineer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ None 			
Workplace temperature	Kitchen staff may suffer ill health when they overheat in hot working conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fans and extractors provided to control air temperature. ■ Staff encouraged to take rest breaks in cooler conditions when required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage staff to take regular drinks of water. 	Manager	27/8/07	1/8/07
Dining area	Food service staff, customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Risks from slips/trips and manual handling covered in previous sections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ None 			

Assessment review date: 27/7/08