Bakery Operation Safety Meeting Kit

The bakery business can be an enjoyable and rewarding profession, but some bakery processes can also be hazardous. Persons who work in bakery operations should be instructed in how to avoid or prevent potential hazards and be properly trained to follow recommended safe work practices.

SIGNIFICANT BAKERY HAZARDS

1. **Slips and Falls Are Common Accidents Due to Wet Floors, Spilled Dough, Batter, and Dry Ingredients.**

Stack materials neatly to keep walkways and production areas clear. Immediately clean up spills and post warning signs when floors are wet or slippery. Use a degreasing solution on oil and grease spills. Get safety training on use of ladders and steps tools. Slip-resistant floor coverings and shoe soles prevent slips and falls.

1. **Bakery equipment such as moving blades, mixing arms, and conveyors on dough brakes, pie and tart machines, mixers, rollers, and dividers pose cutting and caught/crush hazards.**

Maintain equipment in good condition. Guard moving and sharp parts. Keep equipment clearances to avoid accidentally bumping into moving parts. Use safety devices such as power interlocks, two-handed controls, and emergency-stop bars. Practice lockout/tagout during maintenance and cleaning. Place warning signs on equipment with moving equipment dangers.

1. **Gas and Electric Heat Sources Are Fire Risks.**

Know and practice your fire evacuation plan. Keep escape routes clear of storage and debris. Keep fire extinguishers handy; both the ABC Class for general fires and the K Class for kitchen fires. Turn off and unplug electrical appliances when not in use. High

temperature cut-off switches prevent equipment overheating. Control grease and oil buildup from donut machines, grills, and fryers with ventilation hoods and fire extinguishing systems.

1. **Boiling water, hot oil, and hot ingredients (syrups, milk) can scald bakery workers.**

Hot surfaces on warming trays and lights, grills, ovens, cooking pans, and trays can burn you. Use heat-resistant gloves or mitts for handling hot trays and pots. Don’t carry hot liquids around the work area and avoid splashes when pouring them. Label and guard hot water pipes and vessels. Know first aid for minor burns: cool the area under running water and wrap loosely in sterile dressing. For major burns, call 911. Maintain a first aid kit.

1. **Breathing Flour Dust Can Cause Asthma and Nose, Throat, and Eye Irritation.**

Repeated exposure to flour and dough can sensitize skin. Control flour dust with enclosed storage bins, adequate ventilation, and enclosed mixing. Don’t sweep flour from floors; use a high-efficiency vacuum cleaner or wet mopping. Clean work surfaces throughout the day to prevent dough and flour buildup. Use a nuisance dust mask if flour dust cannot be controlled. Gloves and long sleeves protect your hands and arms from dough and flour exposure.

1. **Ergonomic and Musculoskeletal Hazards**

Handling heavy ingredients, food trays, mixing bowls, and cooking vessels can result in back and muscle injuries. Use good lifting techniques or mechanical aids (carts, lifts) when moving heavy objects. Get training on forklifts and mechanical lifts. Secure each load because materials and bowls can cause severe injuries if they fall during transport. Organize your work area and storage to limit reaches. Adjust work surfaces or use stable platforms to get a comfortable working height.

BEST BAKERY WORK PRACTICES

Clean. No matter how busy you are, make sure your workplace is clean. Water, flour and sugar can create a slippy paste, so make sure surfaces are regularly wiped down. Keep equipment out the way when not being used so there's no danger of other bakers tripping over a rogue baking tray.

Anti-Slip. With those slippery surfaces, you may want to consider putting down anti-slip mats as well as making sure that floors are mopped regularly and free of standing water.

Double Duty. Furthermore, the food itself can cause dangers. Hot sugar and multiple ovens pose risk of burns. Make sure to protect your hands with heavy-duty tea towels (as oven gloves are impractical when you're moving from task to task). For lifting heavy objects, try and encourage teamwork to cause fewer musculoskeletal injuries as baker injuries can mean lost time and money for both the baker and the bakery.

Beat the Heat. For hot environments, consider a cooling system to keep your bakers cool and comfortable. Make sure the clothes, aprons, and hats worn are made of breathable and hygienic fabrics.

Noise Reduction. To combat noise, you may want to provide earplugs as an optional feature in the kitchen. You can find some ear plugs that allow a healthy amount of sound through – so you can hear your coworkers – but that protect your ears from harmful decibels.

Workplace Flow. An important safety feature to consider is the placement of mixing equipment and ovens, and how your bakers move around them. Make sure your kitchen has an efficient layout. Speak with the head baker about how everyone moves and works in the kitchen. Having a proper layout of both kitchen equipment and staff makes everything more efficient and safe.

Slip-Resistant Shoes. All bakers should wear the correct footwear at all times, and it's especially important that your footwear prevents slips and provides comfort. Wearing durable footwear means the shoes last longer, and are less costly over time.

FINAL WORD

Don’t let the bakery fool you! Wet floors, spilled dough and butter in bakery shops can be as dangerous and lethal as the floor of a paint and plastics foundry.