PPE Hospitality Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

In the hospitality industry, keeping staff safe goes beyond friendly service. Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is crucial in preventing injuries and illnesses. The specific PPE needed depends on the job. Housekeepers might use gloves and disinfectants, while chefs rely on heat-resistant mitts and non-slip shoes. Even front-of-house staff like waiters and waitresses can benefit from PPE like face masks to minimize exposure to germs, especially during cold and flu seasons.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Hospitality workers can be exposed to a surprising number of hazards. From slippery kitchen floors to lifting heavy luggage, the potential for injuries and illnesses is ever-present. Without proper PPE such as gloves, goggles, and aprons, hospitality workers who handle cleaning chemicals and disinfectants are at risk of skin irritation, chemical burns, and respiratory problems due to inhalation of fumes.

Employees tasked with cutting and slicing food items are vulnerable to cuts and puncture wounds. Failure to wear cut-resistant gloves or appropriate hand protection increases the risk of injuries from sharp kitchen tools and utensils. These hazards highlight the importance of selecting and using appropriate PPE to mitigate risks and ensure the safety and well-being of hospitality workers in various functions and environments.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Hospitality thrives on creating a welcoming and comfortable environment for customers. Behind the scenes, however, staff operate in a dynamic and sometimes risky work environment. This is where personal protective equipment (PPE) comes into play. PPE

acts as a crucial line of defense, minimizing risks and safeguarding employee health.

Identifying Hazards and Selecting the Right PPE

The first step to effective use of PPE is hazard identification. Conduct a thorough workplace assessment, considering the specific tasks and environments faced by each employee. Most common hazards and corresponding PPE for different functions in the hospitality industry:

Housekeeping Risks: Exposure to cleaning chemicals (skin irritation, respiratory problems), slips and falls (wet floors), lifting heavy objects (back strain).

PPE:

- **Gloves:** Chemical-resistant gloves protect hands from harsh chemicals. Opt for different types like latex, nitrile, or vinyl, depending on the specific cleaning agents used.
- **Disinfectant Wipes:** Minimizes direct contact with harsh chemicals.
- **Slip-resistant Shoes:** Provide good traction on wet surfaces to prevent falls.

Chefs and Cook Risks: Burns (from hot ovens, grills, and liquids), cuts (from knives and graters), slips and falls (greasy floors).

PPE:

- **Heat-resistant Mitts and Oven Mitts:** Offer protection from extreme heat during cooking operations.
- **Cut-resistant Gloves:** Provide an extra layer of protection for hands when handling sharp knives and graters. Look for gloves with Kevlar lining for enhanced cut resistance.
- **Slip-resistant Shoes with Arch Support:** Ensure good traction on greasy kitchen floors while providing arch support for long hours spent standing.

Waiters and Waitresses Risks: Musculoskeletal disorders (carrying heavy trays), slips and falls (carrying food and drinks, wet floors), exposure to germs (from handling plates, utensils, and

interacting with guests).

PPE:

- **Non-slip Shoes:** Like cooks, waiters and waitresses benefit from slip-resistant shoes for safe navigation of potentially wet floors.
- **Ergonomic Carrying Aids:** Trays and carrying devices designed to distribute weight evenly can help prevent muscle strain and back injuries.
- **Face Masks (Optional):** While not always mandatory, face masks can offer additional protection against airborne germs, especially during peak cold and flu seasons.

Additional Considerations:

- In situations involving exposure to strong cleaning chemicals, respirators might be necessary. Ensure proper training on selecting the right respirator type and fit for the specific hazard.
- Safety goggles or face shields can protect eyes from splashes of chemicals, grease, or flying debris.
- In high-noise environments such as busy kitchens or laundry rooms, earplugs or noise-canceling headphones can be used to prevent hearing damage.
- For specific tasks like nighttime deliveries or working in parking lots, reflective vests or jackets can enhance visibility for staff.

FINAL WORD

PPE is most effective when used in conjunction with other safety measures like proper training on safe work practices and maintaining a clean and organized work environment. Regular inspections of PPE are crucial. Damaged or worn-out equipment should be replaced immediately.