Preventing Lifting Injuries – Restaurant Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Lifting injuries are a common hazard in restaurant settings, where employees often have to lift and move heavy loads of food, dishes, and equipment. These types of injuries can range from minor strains and sprains to more serious injuries such as hernias, disc herniation, or even fractures.

The employee may have to take time off work to recover, and in severe cases, may require surgery or other medical treatments. This can lead to lost wages, medical expenses, and potential long-term disabilities.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

LIFTING INJURIES HAS SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES FOR RESTAURANT WORKERS

The restaurant industry has a demanding and fast-paced environment, with employees constantly moving and lifting heavy loads of food, dishes, and equipment. Lifting heavy objects improperly can lead to serious injuries that can affect an employee's quality of life and ability to work.

- Lifting injuries occur when an individual lifts, pulls, or pushes a load that is too heavy or awkward to handle safely. The physical exertion of lifting heavy loads can cause a range of injuries, including strains, sprains, and even fractures.
- One of the biggest dangers of improper lifting in restaurants is the risk of back injuries. The back is a complex structure that supports the weight of the upper body and allows for movement and flexibility. Lifting heavy loads incorrectly can strain the muscles, ligaments, and tendons

in the back, leading to painful injuries such as sprains, strains, and herniated discs.

- Improper lifting can also lead to other types of injuries, such as shoulder and neck injuries. When lifting heavy loads, it is common for employees to compensate by using their arms and shoulders instead of their legs, leading to overuse injuries in these areas.
- Lifting heavy loads improperly can also lead to accidents such as dropping or losing control of the object being lifted, which can result in injuries to the feet, toes, or fingers. This can occur when an employee attempts to lift an object that is too heavy or awkwardly shaped, or when they attempt to lift from an awkward position.
- The risks associated with improper lifting in restaurants can also lead to long-term disabilities and chronic pain. A back injury sustained while lifting heavy loads improperly can lead to chronic pain that lasts for years and may require ongoing medical treatment. This can lead to missed workdays, reduced productivity, and potential long-term disabilities that can affect an employee's quality of life.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

HOW TO PREVENT LIFTING INJURIES IN RESTAURANTS

By following some basic safety procedures, restaurant workers can reduce the risk of sustaining lifting injuries.

Proper Lifting Technique. One of the most critical safety procedures for preventing lifting injuries in restaurants is using proper lifting techniques. Employees should use their legs instead of their back to lift heavy loads, keeping the load close to the body, and avoiding twisting or bending at the waist. It is important to lift smoothly and steadily, without jerking or sudden movements, as this can cause unnecessary strain on the back and lead to injury.

Use of Lifting Equipment. Using lifting equipment such as carts, dollies, and lifting straps can help reduce the strain on an

employee’s back and reduce the risk of injury. Employers should ensure that employees have access to proper lifting equipment and train them on how to use it correctly. Employees should also inspect equipment regularly to ensure that it is in good condition and report any issues or concerns to their supervisor.

Work Together. Encourage employees to work together to lift heavy loads whenever possible. Having a partner to assist with lifting can make the task easier and reduce the risk of injury. Employers should provide training on how to lift together safely and ensure that there are enough employees available to assist with lifting heavy loads.

Don’t Overload. It is essential to avoid overloading when lifting. Employees should be aware of the maximum weight limit they can lift safely and avoid lifting loads that exceed this limit. Employers should also establish maximum weight limits for lifting and provide employees with clear guidelines on what is safe and what is not.

Keep the Work Area Clean and Organized. Keep the work area clean and organized is an essential safety procedure for preventing lifting injuries. Cluttered or poorly organized work areas can lead to tripping hazards and increase the risk of lifting injuries. Employers should ensure that work areas are clean and free from clutter and that equipment and supplies are stored in a safe and organized manner.

Take Breaks. Take regular breaks to help prevent lifting injuries by allowing employees to rest and recover. Employers should encourage employees to take regular breaks, especially when performing repetitive tasks such as lifting, and provide opportunities for stretching or other exercises to reduce muscle strain.

Wear Proper Footwear. Wear proper footwear is another essential safety procedure to prevent lifting injuries. Employees should wear shoes with good arch support and slip-resistant soles to help prevent slips, trips, and falls, which can lead to lifting injuries.

Report Safety Hazards. Employees should feel comfortable reporting safety hazards or concerns to their supervisors, and employers should take these concerns seriously and take proactive steps to address them. Regular safety audits and hazard assessments should be conducted to identify potential hazards and risks, and appropriate measures should be taken to prevent accidents and injuries.

Ongoing Training. Provide ongoing training on lifting techniques and safety procedures to prevent lifting injuries in restaurants. Employers should provide regular training sessions, refresher courses, and ongoing support to ensure that employees are aware of the latest safety procedures and best practices.

FINAL WORD

Improper lifting in restaurants can lead to serious injuries that can affect an employee’s quality of life and ability to work. The risks associated with improper lifting can also affect the overall profitability and sustainability of the business, making it important for employers to take proactive steps to prevent lifting injuries. By providing proper training, access to lifting equipment, promoting safe lifting practices, and creates a workplace culture that prioritizes safety.