Young Workers and Restaurant Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The restaurant industry is a major employer of young workers around the world, providing them with an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and earn an income. However, there are several things at stake for young workers in this industry, including workplace safety, fair wages, career opportunities, and mental health.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

COMMON DANGERS YOUNG RESTAURANT WORKERS EXPERIENCE

Slips, trips, and falls: young workers in restaurants may be at risk of slipping, tripping, or falling due to wet or slippery floors, uneven surfaces, or cluttered walkways.

Burns and scalds: young workers in restaurants may be exposed to hot surfaces, boiling liquids, and open flames, which can cause burns and scalds.

Cuts and lacerations: young workers in restaurants may be at risk of cuts and lacerations from knives, slicers, and other sharp objects.

Musculoskeletal injuries: young workers in restaurants may be at risk of musculoskeletal injuries from lifting heavy objects, repetitive motions, and awkward postures.

Chemical exposure: Young workers in restaurants may be exposed to cleaning chemicals, pesticides, and other hazardous substances.

OTHER HAZARDS YOUNG WORKERS FACE

1. Ergonomic hazards: young workers may be required to stand

for long periods of time, leading to foot and back pain. They may also have to work in awkward postures, leading to musculoskeletal disorders such as carpal tunnel syndrome.
2. Electrical hazards: young workers may use electrical appliances such as ovens, mixers, or fryers, which can pose electrical hazards if not maintained properly. They may also come in contact with live wires, leading to electrical shocks.
3. Fire hazards: Restaurants have a high risk of fire due to cooking equipment, open flames, and flammable materials such as oils and greases.
4. Violence: Young workers may face verbal or physical abuse from customers or coworkers, leading to stress and anxiety.
5. Infectious diseases: young workers may be exposed to infectious diseases such as hepatitis A, norovirus, or COVID-19 due to close contact with customers or handling of food.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

PREVENT COMMON HAZARDS FOR YOUNG RESTAURANT WORKERS

- **Provide proper training:** Ensure that young workers receive adequate training on the tasks they will be performing, as well as on health and safety procedures, such as how to handle hot surfaces and equipment, how to properly use knives and other sharp tools, and how to handle chemicals and cleaning agents.
- **Use appropriate equipment:** Make sure that young workers are provided with appropriate equipment and tools that are designed for their size and strength.
- **Provide proper footwear:** Require young workers to wear slip-resistant, closed-toe shoes with good support to prevent slips, trips, and falls.
- **Address fatigue:** Ensure that young workers are not overworked and have adequate breaks during their shift to prevent fatigue, which can lead to accidents and injuries.
- **Address workplace violence and harassment:** Have policies in place to prevent workplace violence and harassment and

provide training on how to identify and report such incidents.

- **Provide supervision:** Ensure that young workers are properly supervised by experienced staff who can provide guidance and support as needed.

MORE PROTECTION FOR YOUNG RESTAURANT WORKERS

Education and more education: Read up on worker rights and what your employer is obligated to provide in terms of a safe working environment. Be knowledgeable with the laws and regulations in your area that protect workers.

Speak up: If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe at work, speak to your supervisor or manager. Let them know your concerns and ask for their assistance in resolving the issue. If you feel like your concerns aren't being taken seriously, you can report the situation to the appropriate authorities.

Use protective gear: When handling potentially hazardous materials or substances, use protective gear such as gloves, masks, and goggles. Make sure that you know how to use the gear correctly and that it is the appropriate type for the task at hand.

Take breaks: Make sure that you take regular breaks and that you have access to drinking water and restroom facilities. If you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed, take a break and speak to a trusted coworker or supervisor.

Stay informed: Keep up to date with changes to policies and procedures in your workplace. Attend any relevant training sessions and take advantage of any resources that are available to you.

OVERVIEW OF YOUNG WORKER SAFETY AT RESTAURANTS

1. Workplace safety is a critical issue for young workers in the restaurant industry. They may face various hazards, such as slips and falls, burns, cuts, and exposure to harmful chemicals.
2. Fair wages are crucial for young workers in the restaurant

industry. Many of them earn minimum wage or less, making it difficult to make ends meet.

3. Career opportunities can be limited for young workers in the restaurant industry. Many of them work part-time or temporary jobs while attending school or pursuing other interests.
4. The high-stress environment of the restaurant industry can take a toll on the mental health of young workers. Long hours, difficult customers, and demanding managers can all contribute to stress and burnout.

FINAL WORD

It is important for employers to provide proper training and safety equipment to young workers to minimize these hazards and ensure their safety on the job.