

food MATTERS

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Keeping Restaurant Workers Safe and Healthy

Working in a restaurant kitchen can be hazardous. Restaurant workers can slip on spills, strain muscles while lifting heavy objects, and cut themselves with knives or other equipment with blades. Workers often stand for long periods and perform repetitive tasks, which can strain joints, muscles and ligaments. Working around hot foods, stovetops and ovens also increases the risk of burns.

Employers must provide a safe and healthy workplace for their employees. Here are some tips for reducing restaurant workers' risk of injury:

- Train all employees on health and safety policies and procedures. Encourage workers to report dangerous conditions and welcome their input on how to fix problems.
- Eliminate conditions that could lead to slips, trips and falls:
 - Keep pathways and exits well-lit.
 - Clear objects from paths and exits.
 - Install mirrors at blind corners.
- Clean up spills and splattered grease right away.
- Advise employees to wear non-slip shoes.
- Reduce the risk of cuts and other injuries:
 - Provide employees with cut-resistant gloves.
 - Require workers to use guards with food slicers and plungers to feed meat into food grinders.
 - Store knives in a specific rack or drawer.
- Reduce the risk of strains and sprains:
 - Teach employees safe lifting techniques.
 - Encourage workers to ask for help when lifting heavy or large items.
 - Instruct employees to use a cart or hand truck for heavy loads.
 - Provide rubber floor mats.
- Reduce the risk of burns:
 - Provide pot holders, oven mitts and long gloves.



- Instruct employees to turn pot handles and cooking utensils away from the edge of stoves and counters.
- Make sure that hot oil is never left unattended and is cooled before handling.

These practices can reduce the risk of injury among employees in your restaurant kitchen.

Welcome More Customers With a Wheelchair-Friendly Decal

The New York City (NYC) Health Department has partnered with the Mayor’s Office of People with Disabilities (MOPD) to help New Yorkers who use wheelchairs know their options for dining out. Food service establishments that meet MOPD requirements can receive a wheelchair-friendly decal to post at the entrance to their establishment.

To receive the decal, you must be able to answer yes to these questions:

- Is the main entrance level with the sidewalk, or is there a ramp, lift or other usable entrance for a wheelchair?
- Is the entrance opening at least 32 inches wide?
- Are there wheelchair spaces throughout the seating area and is there a level path to those spaces?



To request a wheelchair-friendly decal, please visit on.nyc.gov/wheelchairfriendly.

Norovirus Outbreak at Manhattan Restaurant

The Health Department responds to complaints from anyone who believes they became sick after eating in a restaurant. These investigations often identify illness outbreaks and reveal poor food safety practices.

The Health Department responded to reports of gastrointestinal illness (e.g., stomach pain, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting) in people who ate at a Manhattan restaurant, and identified an outbreak caused by norovirus. The outbreak affected 17 people. Three of six food workers at the restaurant tested positive for norovirus.

Norovirus is very contagious and can be spread when sick food workers touch food, objects or surfaces. The Health Department’s investigation revealed that customers likely became ill after eating food that was prepared by sick restaurant workers. When a restaurant complies with NYC’s Health Code, it helps prevent



foodborne illness. To prevent an outbreak at your restaurant:

- Have a sick leave policy and make sure that sick food workers stay home.
- Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and areas where food is stored, prepared and served.
- Maintain appropriate food temperatures during food preparation and transport.

- Report all customer reports of suspected food poisoning to the Health Department by calling 311.

Service Dogs in Restaurants

The Health Department no longer issues service dog tags to owners of service dogs. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service dog is any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. In NYC, service dogs do not need a service tag to enter any place to which the public has access.

Under the ADA, and New York State and NYC Human Rights Laws, it is illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities. The ADA states that “state and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people



with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.”

NYC food service establishments must continue to welcome customers

with service dogs and cannot ask to see a service tag before entry.

For more information about service dogs and disability rights, visit nyc.gov/humanrights.

Food Safety Workshops Across the City

In spring 2017, the Health Department held six free food safety workshops called *Practicing “A” Grade Food Safety*. More than 700 food service operators participated and learned about food safety best practices. Workshops were held in all five boroughs and were co-sponsored by Borough Presidents Adams, Brewer, Diaz Jr., Katz and Oddo. Interpretation services were available in Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and Bengali.

Participants learned about “active managerial control” – or making sure that safe food handling practices exist and are being followed. Health Department staff



discussed how to avoid common violations and how to achieve and maintain an “A” grade. Participants who registered in advance received an individualized Inspection History Report, which describes their restaurant’s past repeat violations and how to correct each problem. All

participants were encouraged to ask questions and receive guidance from Health Department staff.

The Health Department sent an e-blast to food service operators to promote the workshops and encourage online registration – a new approach that reached 19,500 restaurants.

In response to the positive feedback provided by participants, the Health Department plans to hold more workshops in 2018.



Food Safety Challenge

1. Which of the following does not reduce the risk of muscle strains and sprains among restaurant workers?

- A. Teach employees safe lifting techniques
- B. Instruct employees to use a cart or hand truck for heavy loads
- C. Install mirrors at blind corners
- D. Provide rubber floor mats

2. Which of the following can help prevent a norovirus outbreak at a restaurant?

- A. Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and areas where food is stored, prepared and served
- B. Make sure that food workers stay home when sick
- C. Maintain appropriate food temperatures during food preparation and transport
- D. All of the above

3. A customer with a dog that they identify as a service dog wants to enter your restaurant. You should welcome them:

- A. Only if the customer shows proof that it is a service dog
- B. Only if the dog is wearing a service dog tag
- C. Without asking to see a service dog tag
- D. Only after determining what the customer's disability is

4. Restaurants that display a wheelchair-friendly decal must have:

- A. An entrance that is at least 32 inches wide and is level with the sidewalk or has a ramp, lift or other usable entrance
- B. An elevator
- C. Wheelchair spaces throughout the seating area with a level path to those spaces
- D. Both A and C

5. Which of the following is not an appropriate way to prevent slip, trip and fall hazards?

- A. Advising employees to wear non-slip shoes
- B. Providing pot holders, oven mitts and long gloves
- C. Cleaning up spills and splattered grease right away
- D. Keeping pathways and exits well-lit and free of trip hazards



Did You Know?

1) Renewing your permit online is easy. Go to nyc.gov/dohmhpermits. Registration is required. Payment is by credit or debit card only.

2) Interested in resources the City offers to businesses? Go to nyc.gov/business.

3) Settle a food service establishment violation. If you receive an offer of settlement, you may save money by accepting it. Visit nyc.gov/business and click on the Violations tab.

4) Your establishment will get fewer violations if more of your staff learn food safety practices. For more information about the food protection course, go to nyc.gov/healthacademy.

5) Need information about opening and operating a food service establishment in NYC? Visit nyc.gov/health/foodservice.