



H & S Guidance - Food Equipment & Machinery

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INTRODUCTION

Food sector employees make up to 9% of the UK workforce, and are employed in numerous undertakings including food production, processing, manufacturing, retailing and catering. During these processes, many different types of machinery and equipment are used, many of them so familiar that it is easy to forget the hazards they can present, particularly during cleaning and maintenance.

Work equipment varies in scale and complexity, from the simplest knife to large powered food processing equipment (e.g. cutters, slicers, mixers etc.).

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOD EQUIPMENT/MACHINERY

1. Instruction/Supervision/Training

- selection of appropriate staff
- training by a competent person
- maintenance of training records
- minimum age requirements for "prescribed dangerous machines"

2. Siting of Fixed Equipment

- adequate space around machine allowing operator to work without distraction
- floors in good condition and kept clean to prevent slipping
- machine on a secure base to prevent movement during use
- suitable and sufficient lighting, such that the operator is not distracted by shadows or glare. Awareness that fluorescent lights can make moving equipment appear stationary
- suitable positioning of appropriate warning notices

3. Electrical Safety

- procedures to maintain the safety of electrical equipment, including user checks, formal visual inspection and combined inspection and testing (where necessary)



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- use of a sensitive (30mA max.) residual current circuit breaker (also known as an earth leakage circuit breaker) fitted to pressure washing units and steam cleaners. Also recommended for all electrical equipment in wet or hazardous areas.

4. Maintenance (including cleaning)

- all cutting edges/blades to be maintained in a sharp state
- all electrical equipment isolated prior to any maintenance/cleaning
- use of blade carriers when removing blades for cleaning/sharpening
- regular checks of mechanical and electrical interlocks on equipment
- service contracts carried out
- provision and maintenance of suitable guards/safety devices
- provision of suitable protective clothing (including gloves, aprons, goggles etc.) when using cleaning chemicals (also includes the preparation of cleaning chemicals)

5. Protective Clothing

- chain mail gloves, arm protectors, aprons to protect against cutting/piercing injuries, e.g. boning work, or when using bandsaws
- gloves, aprons, goggles for use when using or preparing cleaning or other chemicals, or handling hazardous materials, e.g. hot oil/fat
- hats/protective clothing in a catering environment.
Flameproof and close woven to repel splashes of hot fat/liquids
- non-slip safety footwear to protect against slipping and impact damage to feet from falling, heavy or sharp objects.

6. Commonly Used Food Equipment/Machinery

- knives (hand held)
- worm type mincing machines
- microwave ovens
- rotary knife bowl type chopping machines
- dough breaks and mixers
- food mixing machines (including attachments for mincing, slicing, chopping, chipping etc.)
- wrapping and packing machines



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- circular knife slicing machines
- chipping machines (whether power operated or not)
- gas/electric cookers and ovens
- prescribed dangerous machines

7. Addressing Hazards

- carry out risk assessments where required
- ensure proper maintenance and use of all equipment through training and supervision
- introduce safe systems of work for all activities involving the use of equipment or machinery
- ensure that all staff are aware of hazards and are either informed, instructed or trained in risk control procedures

CHECKLIST - FOOD EQUIPMENT/MACHINERY

Have you established safe systems of work/safe practices to control risks associated with each piece of food equipment?
YES/NO

Have you informed, instructed or trained your staff (as appropriate) with regards to hazards in the workplace? YES/NO

Is all equipment subject to regular inspection and maintenance, and are such checks recorded? YES/NO

Have you completed risk assessments for all food equipment used?
YES/NO

REFERENCES/FURTHER DETAILS

1. Food Preparation Machinery HS(G)35(HSE)ISBN 0-11-883910-1.
2. Electrical Hazards from Steam/Water Pressure Cleaners - Guidance Note PM 29 (HSE) ISBN 0-11-883538-6.
3. Safety of band saws in the Food Industry - Guidance Note PM33. (HSE) ISBN 0-11-883564-5.
4. Health and Safety in Hotels and Catering - Hotel and Catering Training Board. ISBN 0-7033-0074-1.
5. Health and Safety in Kitchens and Food Preparation Areas HSG55 ISBN0717604926
6. Food Standards Agency. Tel: 0845 606 0667