Occupational injuries and illnesses in the food service industry are problems affecting everyone involved — from dishwashers to servers, cooks, and cleaners. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reported high prevalence for health conditions in food service workplaces: 61% of workers claimed nasal irritation, 47% eye irritation, and 22% having post-hire skin problems. The American Burn Association indicates that the food service industry also presents the highest skin burn rate, at 26.5%, of all workers. In NYC specifically, a 2011 study found that a concentrated population of restaurant workers reported working in fast-paced, repetitive, and physically demanding environments, some of which involved chemical exposures. The most prevalent injuries associated with this group were musculoskeletal disorders, representing 63% of total injuries.

Maintaining a safe workplace for food service workers not only reduces injuries, it can lead to improved employee satisfaction, strengthen workplace relationships, and increase employee success. Employees who feel safe can help food service businesses/restaurants achieve higher financial performance and improved customer satisfaction.

Don’t Work Through Pain!
Protect yourself every day by:
- Wearing proper, personal protective equipment (i.e. gloves, shoes, sleeved shirts, etc.)
- Ensuring adequate ventilation
- Keeping spaces clear for walking
- Reducing distractions
- Using handtrucks to move large objects
- Knowing where first aid kits hang
- Establishing an action plan in case of injury or emergency

Workplace Hazard Awareness Checklist
Early awareness of potential hazards in the workplace can help prevent work-related injuries. Use the checklist below to stay aware of the potential hazards involved in your food service workplace!

**Burn Prevalent Items**
- Ovens/Broilers
- Grills/Stovetops
- Deep Fryers
- Microwave Ovens
- Coffee Makers

**Where Cuts Occur**
- Knives
- Power Slicers/Grinders
- Broken Glass
- Food Processors
- Box Cutters/Tools

**Slips, Trips, and Falls**
- Cords
- Clutter on Floors
- Slippery Floors
- Cluttered Exits
- Items in Climbing Reach

**Ergonomic Issues**
- Awkward Lifting
- Heavy Lifting
- Static Standing
- Repetitive Movements

**Chemicals & Toxicants**
- Dishwashing Products
- Cleaning Products Pesticides
- Proper Ventilation

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The Mount Sinai Selikoff Centers for Occupational Health are dedicated to providing cutting-edge clinical services with a focus on prevention to keep workers healthy and their workplaces safe. Our physicians are leaders in the field of occupational medicine, providing care to injured and ill workers and retirees in the New York City and Mid-Hudson Valley regions.

Our highly skilled and multilingual team of physicians, nurse practitioners, industrial hygienists, ergonomists, and benefits specialists provide comprehensive patient-centered services. We also help employers evaluate the work environment and establish programs to advance the general health and well-being of their entire workforce.

Our medical experts and outreach team members visit organizations, unions, and employers to bring quality training and education programs to the communities serviced by our clinical centers.

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