

# Kitchens

For many organisations the most dangerous room in their building is the kitchen. This one room contains more hazardous equipment, potential for accident and for health and hygiene problems than any other. The main causes of injury in a commercial kitchen are from slips, trips and falls, manual handling which can result in musculoskeletal injuries and exposure to hot or harmful substances. Good hygienic practices need to be concerned with avoiding the build up of dirt, protection against contamination, adequate ventilation and pest control.

Kitchen areas used for the preparation of food must be kept clean and well maintained. The layout, design, size and construction of the room must be fit to allow for proper maintenance and cleaning and to give staff enough working space so that they can conduct their duties in a safe and hygienic manner. A risk assessment should be carried out of any design to identify any shortfalls, for instance, the need to keep the food preparation area separate from the rest of the kitchen to negate the risk of cross-contamination. A good design should incorporate good workflow patterns and ergonomic solutions to building constraints.

Good hygiene practices need to be concerned with avoiding the build up of dirt, protection against contamination, adequate ventilation and pest control. The handling and storage of food is also a key factor that all food inspectors will check thoroughly when they inspect premises to ensure full compliance with the law. The Food Hygiene Regulations set out the employers responsibilities with regards to the hygiene of the premises as well as the staff's personal hygiene responsibilities.

Operational procedures in kitchens must take account of the many safety hazards. Slips, trips and falls in kitchens occur due to wet floors so there must be a process for the immediate removal of spillages and drying of floors. Safe procedures must be in place for the use of knives and other sharp kitchen utensils and when handling items made of glass. Staff must be properly trained in the safe handling of hot oil, water and equipment as well as in fire safety which is an ever present threat in a busy kitchen.

*This HSE information sheet brings together the main health and safety laws that apply to catering:*  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cais11.pdf>

A summary of all legislation relevant to food safety can be found at:  
[http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/fod/oc/500-599/520\\_18.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/fod/oc/500-599/520_18.pdf)