



## Restaurant & Food Services

*Advancing priorities through research and partnerships*

### Improvements through partnerships and research

The National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) is a partnership program to promote innovative research and improve workplace practices. Unveiled in 1996, NORA is a framework for guiding occupational safety and health research and interventions throughout the Nation. NORA stakeholders collaborate to identify critical workplace issues in industry sectors. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) convened a number of these partners to develop the National Services Agenda, which includes safety and health goals for the Food Services Industry. Groups such as employers, employee organizations, government agencies, and food services associations can build partnerships to implement these goals and help ensure that food services work environments are safe for all employees.

### Who works in the food services industry?

The food services industry employs nearly 9.5 million workers in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> The industry has four major groups: full services restaurants, limited-service eating establishments, special food services and drinking places.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 80% of the 425,000 food services firms are small businesses that employ fewer than 20 people.<sup>3</sup> Many youth workers obtain their first jobs in this industry.<sup>4</sup>

### What are the important health and safety issues in food services?

- Sprains, strains, bruises and contusions from slips, trips, and falls
- Cuts and lacerations from knives and other tools
- Heat burns from hot oil, steam, hot water and hot surfaces
- Ergonomic hazards from repetitive motion, bending, lifting, and pushing carts
- Workplace violence and elevated homicide risks
- Occupational stress due to workloads, limited rest breaks, and prolonged standing

In addition to the sources above, exposures to chemicals, biological materials, and smoke are prevalent in many food services facilities.



NIOSH is the federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations to prevent work-related injury, illness, and death. Its mission is to generate new occupational safety and health knowledge and to transfer that knowledge into practice.

## How can you help improve safety and health in the food services industry?

Small businesses may not have occupational safety and health professionals on staff, yet they can reduce injury and illness risks by obtaining safety and health information and adopting recommended practices. Most franchisors, trade associations, workers' compensation insurance groups and state health or labor departments are excellent resources for safety and health program materials. Comprehensive injury and illness prevention programs are recommended to reduce the risks for occupational injury, illness and death.

You can:

- Identify and evaluate hazards and adopt hazard controls and safe work practices to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Lead a work group to address priority issues to help inform employers and policy makers about hazards and interventions.
- Assist in the design of an effective system to track occupational injuries and illnesses in the food services industry.
- Represent a partner organization to work on a goal implementation plan.
- Provide input to the NORA Coordinator on the implementation of goals ([noracoordinator@cdc.gov](mailto:noracoordinator@cdc.gov)) and suggest important issues to consider for future goals.

## What are the Sector Goals for Food Services?

The NORA Services Sector Council developed strategic goals for the Food Services Industry to address priority workplace safety and health issues. The Council will ensure progress and track accomplishments through 2016.

Partnerships are needed to achieve these goals to reduce work-related injury, illness, and death among food services employees:

- Promote the development of comprehensive occupational safety and health programs for restaurants and other food service establishments.
- Reduce the frequency of workplace violence events in restaurants, drinking establishments, and food delivery services.

Restaurants and other food establishments may address these goals to ensure a safe work environment through: (1) effective communication of safety practices; (2) adoption of safe designs for facilities and systems; (3) proper use of personal protective equipment; and (4) support of worker wellness programs.

The above is a synopsis of the Food Services Industry goals established by the NORA Services Sector Council. To participate or to receive additional information please contact David Utterback ([dutterback@cdc.gov](mailto:dutterback@cdc.gov)), NIOSH. Please note that any mention of any company or product does not constitute endorsement by NIOSH.

## Where can I find safety and health information for the food services industry?

Many groups have developed extensive and freely available training materials specific for the food services industry.

OSHA: Restaurant Safety for Teen Workers (2009) [www.osha.gov/SLTC/restaurant/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/restaurant/index.html)

NIOSH: Preventing Deaths, Injuries and Illnesses of Young Workers (2003) [www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2003-128/2003128.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2003-128/2003128.htm)

California: Small Business Model/Restaurant Supervisor Safety Training Program (2010) [www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/SBMRMaterials.htm](http://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/SBMRMaterials.htm)

Oregon Restaurant Association: Oregon Restaurant Association's (ORA) quick guide to safety committees and safety meetings (2009) [www.ora.org/pdfs/oraosha\\_guide.pdf](http://www.ora.org/pdfs/oraosha_guide.pdf)

Connecticut: Working Safely in Restaurants (2007) [www.ct.gov/dph/LIB/dph/environmental\\_health/eoha/pdf/Restaurant\\_Safety.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/LIB/dph/environmental_health/eoha/pdf/Restaurant_Safety.pdf)

National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation: Workplace Safety (2011) [www.servsafe.com/catalog/OtherProducts.aspx](http://www.servsafe.com/catalog/OtherProducts.aspx)

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation: Restaurant Safety Orientation 2010, 15 minutes DVD [www.ohiobwc.com/employer/programs/safety/VideoLibrary.asp](http://www.ohiobwc.com/employer/programs/safety/VideoLibrary.asp)

## References

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Survey, [www.bls.gov/oes/2009/may/naics3\\_722000.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/2009/may/naics3_722000.htm).

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Survey, [www.bls.gov/oes/2009/may/oesrsci.htm#72](http://www.bls.gov/oes/2009/may/oesrsci.htm#72).

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, Statistics of U.S. Businesses, [www.census.gov/econ/susb/index.html](http://www.census.gov/econ/susb/index.html).

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Youth Worker Safety in Restaurants, [www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/)