



## Using a Knife

## Safe Work Practices

Knife usage resulting in cuts are the most common injuries in a commercial kitchen setting. Most incidents are caused by using a dull knife or the wrong knife for the job. Maintaining knife sharpness is very important. A sharp knife is a safe knife as it will cut through the item rather than slip off into your hand or fingers. Don't use a knife as a substitute for another tool.

**Direct Hazards:** Sharp Knife Blades

**Potential Injuries:** Cuts, Lacerations, Puncture Wounds, Over-use or Repetitive Strain

**Equipment:** Cutting Board, Cloths, Sharpening Stone/Steel, Knife Rack/Block/Bag

**Personal Protective Equipment:** Slip-resistant shoes

**Training Required:** On-the-job Training

**Legal Requirements:** N/A

### Safe Work Practices

#### Before Use:

- Always be aware when using or carrying knives.
- Keep your knives sharp.
- When walking, hold the knife close to your side with the tip pointing down and blade exposed behind you, or have the knife wrapped. Bend your elbow slightly, so the knife isn't so low it could injure your calf as you walk. Say "sharp and behind" when moving past someone.
- Set up your workstation. Use a clean, damp cloth to secure your cutting board to the counter. Gather everything you need for your task, so you don't have to leave your station unattended during the task.
- Position yourself well in front of your workstation with your feet shoulder-width apart.

#### During Use:

- Never look away when cutting – stay focused on your knife and the task at hand.
- Hold the knife with your dominant hand.
- Grasp the item in the other hand tightly with your fingers curled inward, so your knuckles protrude. Use your knuckles as a guide for the knife.
- Always cut away from your body when trimming or de-boning.
- If you get interrupted or distracted when using a knife, put it down. Don't use a knife unless you can focus on your task.
- Place the knife down with the blade away from you if leaving your station unattended.

#### After Use:

- Never leave knives under food or on the edges of tables or boards.
- Use a cloth to clean the knife with the blade facing out.
- Clean knives immediately, or place them in a labelled container near the sink.
- Do not put knives in the dishwasher or leave them submerged underwater in the sink.
- When sharpening with a stone or steel, make sure the area is clear and unobstructed.
- Store them in a proper knife rack, block or knife bag when not in use. Use knife guards when appropriate.

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