



## Safe Use of Knives

### Introduction

Use of knives is prevalent in the F&B kitchens, fish and poultry processing trades.

Injuries often happen when the blade meets the handler's hands when the knife slips during cutting or trimming. This may cause:

- » Minor injuries from cutting or stabbing of the forearm, or parts of the hand
- » Major injuries from deep cut that sever the hand nerves, or stabbing wound into the body
- » Fatality when it damages an important body organ

These guidelines provide the best practices in the use of knives as part of work activities.



### Duties of the Employer

The Employer should:

- » Conduct a risk assessment in the use of knives
- » Ensure employees are trained in the safe use of knives
- » Provide the use of protective equipment such as cut resistant gloves if necessary

Risk control measures come in various ways and effectiveness.

These include:

- » Eliminating the use of knives where the food items are supplied pre-cut by the vendors
- » Substituting old blunt knives with new sharpened knives
- » Use of engineering controls such as providing wider working space to reduce the risk of getting cut or stab by others working in the same area
- » Administration controls such as the safe work procedures for knives
- » Use of Personnel Protective Equipment such as cut resistant gloves

## Best Practices

- » Use a plastic or wood cutting board securely placed on a flat and stable work surface
- » Select the correct type of knife for the job as different knives are used for different uses
- » Only pick up a knife by the handle
- » Check that the knife handle provides a good grip to reduce the potential of slipping
- » Check the knives are sufficiently sharp as using a blunt knife increases the risk of the knife slipping or skidding
- » Avoid walking around with an uncovered blade in your hand
- » Replace the knife in its scabbard or knife stand when not in use as a knife laying on a work surface could be hidden by other objects
- » Never try catching a falling knife with the limbs - just let it fall

## Personal Protective Equipment

The wearing of a correct protective clothing, aprons and gloves can prevent knife-related injuries

### Protective Aprons



The protective aprons are usually made from overlapping metal disks or interlocking metal rings and are used for any tasks that requires pulling of the knife towards the body. Its weight should be borne by the wearer's shoulder and not the neck

### Cut Resistant Gloves



Cut resistant gloves are for use on the non-knife hand by inexperienced employees, staff undergoing training, and activities such as washing of knives, and cleaning of slicer.

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