

Preventing Cuts and Lacerations

Explore the cutting edge in safety – training and awareness

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, cuts, lacerations, and punctures accounted for 15 percent of grocery store injuries in 2000 (most recent available grocery-specific statistic). Because potentially hazardous machinery such as slicers, meat saws, grinders, and cubers are used frequently in the food industry, failure to use proper safety measures can result in serious injury and lead to costly workers compensation claims. Of all grocery store employees, deli workers, butchers, and meat cutters suffer the most severe finger injuries. However, specific measures can be taken to ensure the safety of your entire work force. The following guidelines can help prevent cuts and lacerations in your store.

General Rules:

- Only use machinery that you have been trained to use.
- Always use guards and shields provided on the machinery. Do not remove them.
- Turn off the machinery when unattended.
- Keep hands away from any moving parts and blades.
- Turn off machinery and wait for all moving parts to stop when adding or removing food.
- Turn off, unplug, and lockout (if necessary) the machinery when cleaning.
- Always wear cut-resistant gloves when cleaning or handling the blades of the cutting equipment.
- Turn off the machinery if anything looks or sounds wrong.
- Do not leave sharp objects in hazardous positions, such as blades soaking in a sink.

Training is the key. Ignorance causes injuries. Training must be provided, documented, and reinforced on a regular basis. Training should include demonstrations of the proper use and cleaning of machinery, including the use of cut-resistant gloves.

A simple laceration can cost \$250 to \$2,000 in medical expenses, lost wages, and production, while a laceration of a tendon or nerve or a finger amputation can cost upwards of \$20,000 to \$70,000.

Contact the Grocers Safety Supply Catalog to obtain training material, videos, cut-resistant gloves, and lockout devices at 800-777-3602 ext. 1622 or www.grocersinsurance.com.