



Why is summer an increased time for restaurant injuries?

A spike in workplace injuries usually occurs during the summer months due to new and temporary workers, including a large group of younger workers. Learn why it is important to implement restaurant safety tips to help reduce the risk of injury for these seasonal workers and throughout the entire year.

Keeping restaurant workers safe in the summer

For most teenagers and young adults, summertime means a break from the books and long hours of studying. However, it doesn't necessarily mean it's time to kick back and relax during those long, hot days. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), between April and July 2022, the number of employed youth aged 16 to 24 years old rose by 12.9% or 22.9 million younger workers. Whether these young people have a goal to save money for things like a car or college tuition, or to simply occupy their days while on break from the classroom, many find themselves working in the restaurant industry. In fact, many young workers' first job experience is in some type of food establishment.

BLS data also showed that 24% of 16 to 24 year-olds worked in the leisure and hospitality industry in 2022. As the lower range of this age group is still in school, they haven't had as much work experience or job-related training as those in their early twenties. However, the restaurant industry offers short-term training to help get them qualified and acclimated quickly.

Seasonal jobs and restaurant injuries in the summer

According to the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#), the rate of work-related injuries in emergency departments for workers aged 15-24 was 1.5 times greater than the rate for workers 25 years or older. The majority of these injuries occur within the restaurant industry. Additionally, inexperienced and/or newly hired seasonal workers are more likely to be injured than those who have been on the job for a while. Some of the main contributing factors to summertime work-related injuries in young workers in the restaurant industry include:

Less experience

- For many teens, a seasonal job in the restaurant industry is the first job they've ever had. This means they have less on-the-job experiences to draw from and may not fully understand best practices for staying safe while performing their required duties.

Inconsistent training

- Critical training on work requirements and safe operating procedures can often be sporadic for teens who are part-time or temporary employees, leaving them without the right information and guidance to help prevent work-related injuries.

Physical and mental attributes

- Both the physical and mental attributes for younger workers can create a higher risk for work-related injuries. For example, younger workers who are smaller in stature may be required to maintain awkward positions while using certain types of equipment, which can lead to strains and other injuries that an older, larger employee may not encounter. Also, because some younger workers lack experience and more mature judgment, they may engage in dangerous behavior that can increase their risk of injury.

Lack of knowledge regarding federal and state laws

- Child labor laws restrict the types of jobs, hours worked and equipment that can be used by employees under age 18. Employers should be well-versed in both federal and state child labor laws so they fully understand what duties their younger workforce can fulfill before hiring teens for the summer months.

Reducing restaurant injuries during the summer months

It's the employer's responsibility to ensure all employees, including those who are seasonal or part-time, have every opportunity to fully participate in training programs, to receive clear and consistent supervision in safe work practices, and be aware of their right to work in a safe environment. Keep in mind that young workers may be reluctant to ask questions or make demands about the tasks they're assigned, even if they have never performed such duties before. Employers should always assume new employees have no safety training at all, and then make efforts to provide it at the onset of their employment.

OSHA offers the following recommendations to help ensure young workers understand how to prevent injuries in restaurants during their seasonal, summertime jobs:

Put seasonal training programs into effect

- Avoiding some of the most common workplace injuries in restaurants can be as simple as ensuring all seasonal employees are properly trained in restaurant safety best practices. This training should include how to avoid slips and falls, fire and burn prevention tips, knife safety, repetitive motion injuries and more.

Implement a buddy system

- Allow new restaurant employees to shadow experienced workers in a variety of tasks. This can help young employees to feel more comfortable at the onset of their position by providing them mentors to turn to when they have specific job-related questions.

Label equipment off-limits to young workers

- Make it well-known which pieces of equipment should not be handled by those under the age of 18. This helps make it clear which equipment is safe and legal for young workers to access.

Host a Q&A session for new employees

- Remember, because recently-hired, young workers may not feel comfortable speaking up and asking questions, employers should consider hosting a question and answer session for new employees. Or, at the very least, encourage them to ask any questions as they go through their training process or shadow their mentor.

Explain the procedures for work-related injuries

- Make sure young employees know exactly what to do in the case of a work-related injury, whether they injure themselves or witness another employee get injured. The immediate reporting of incidents is a key procedure in better medical outcomes and holding claims costs down.

Loss control and restaurant insurance from AmTrust Financial

Help your seasonal, young workers avoid work-related injuries by considering the restaurant safety tips shared above. AmTrust's Loss Control Department can help identify specific hazards and offer solutions that fit your restaurant operation.

Victor and AmTrust are dedicated to providing the right recommendations and resources to create the most effective loss prevention program for your business. Additionally, we offer coverage to a variety of restaurant types, from fine dining establishments to cafés and diners.

Contact your insurance agent to learn more.