



24

RESTAURANT
Safety Tips
for PIZZA MAKERS





24 Restaurant Safety Tips for Pizza Makers

To Help You Establish Proper Food Safety Guidelines

No matter how great your pizza might look and taste, or how spectacular your location is, one of the fastest ways to ruin your restaurant's reputation is to receive a poor health grade or follow unsafe food prep practices. No one wants to eat – or work – somewhere that has a history of making people sick.

Thankfully, food safety is one of the easiest variables for operators to control, but it takes full commitment from the entire team. Here are some practical tips to help you establish proper food safety guidelines and make them an everyday part of your restaurant's culture.



GENERAL TIPS FOR OPERATORS

Identify and enforce standard operating procedures (SOPs). Restaurants require multiple processes to run efficiently. Even if these processes are routine, having several shifts of people handling them can lead to confusion if clear directives aren't in place to guide uniform execution. SOPs are particularly important with regard to food safety and general operations since even minor mismanagement of certain tasks like rotating inventory or scheduling deliveries can have major consequences for your operation.

Create an employee safety-training program. The first step to creating a culture of safety at your restaurant is teaching your employees about safe restaurant practices from Day 1. Present new hires with your safety policy and show him or her firsthand how to follow it. If you demonstrate how to do jobs safely right away, it will simply be second nature to employees down the road.

Maintain a daily cleaning schedule. A restaurant kitchen needs to be cleaned daily, with certain areas, equipment and tools requiring multiple cleanings throughout the day. Make a tasks checklist of everything that needs to be done on a daily basis, create a schedule for when cleaning should happen each day, and assign employees accordingly.

Perform regular self-inspections. When creating your safety policy, establish cleanliness benchmarks for your restaurant, and perform regular inspections to ensure they're being met. If one of your employees is cutting corners when it comes to sanitation and safety, you'll want to catch and correct that behavior before it leads to a major health violation or other problem.



Know your local health codes, and keep them posted in an easily visible area.

One of the easiest ways for operators to create a safer and cleaner work environment is by keeping the local health codes posted in an area for all your employees to see. Not only will this serve as a constant reminder to work safely, but employees know exactly what they should be doing in order to earn the highest health grade.

Inspect incoming food shipments. Even if you have a comprehensive internal health and safety policy for your employees, you can't always trust other companies to meet your standards. Ensure the food you serve is safe by carefully checking all incoming food shipments for potential problems before allowing them in your kitchen or serving any of it to your patrons.

Establish an emergency plan. With restaurants and bars reporting an average of about 7,400 structure fires to U.S. fire departments each year, it's essential that your restaurant has an emergency plan ready in case of a fire. Run drills with your employees so they are well aware of what to do in the event of a fire, and keep a copy of your plan posted by the fire extinguisher for easy access in an emergency situation.



BACK OF HOUSE (Kitchen and Food Prep Areas)

Thoroughly wash hands and practice proper glove etiquette. This is one of the most talked-about issues when it comes to food prep safety and sanitation. If your employees wear gloves, make sure they use a new pair every time they change tasks or utensils. You shouldn't cut vegetables wearing the same gloves you used to cut raw chicken, for example, as this can lead to salmonella transfer. If your employees don't wear gloves, they should wash their hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds every time they switch tasks. Consider placing signs and boxes of new gloves next to the sinks as a reminder to stay clean.

Ensure employees follow proper clothing rules. Plain and simple, no one likes finding a hair on their pizza. No matter how "unstylish" your employees think things like hair nets and hats might look, they're necessary for maintaining a sanitary work environment, and it's crucial that your kitchen staff wears the proper attire at all times. This includes hairnets and hats, aprons, gloves, closed-toe shoes, socks, and your restaurant's uniform.

Clean/disinfect utensils before every use. Just like you wouldn't reuse gloves for different tasks, it's equally important to make sure your knives and other utensils are clean every time they're used for something new.



Avoid burns. Each year, approximately 12,000 restaurant workers report burning themselves while working, with the actual non-reported number likely being much higher. To help keep your kitchen employees from burning themselves:

- Keep oven mitts and hot pads in an easily accessible location next to the ovens
- Use long, wooden pizza peels to remove your pies from the oven
- Don't overcrowd your oven or stove range
- Have staff wear long-sleeve shirts and avoid loose clothing when working around the oven and stove

Use caution with sharp knives and utensils. Mishandling knives and other sharp utensils is among the top causes of restaurant worker injury. If your employees are going to be preparing food with knives, it's extremely important that they use extra caution and follow the proper knife handling "do's and don'ts" as laid out by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA):

DO...

- Keep knives sharpened and let other staff know when knives are newly sharpened
- Use the appropriate knife for the job, and only use a knife for its intended purpose
- Have workers carry knives with the cutting edge slightly away from their bodies
- Properly store knives in racks or knife sheaths after cleaning

DON'T...

- Touch knife blades
- Try to catch a falling knife
- Hand a knife to someone; set it on the counter and let him or her pick it up
- Leave a knife soaking in water as an employee could reach in the sink and cut themselves
- Talk to people while using a knife



Prevent fires. According to the I-codes section 904.2.1 of the International Building Code, Type 1 exhaust hoods are used for commercial conveyor ovens where grease vapors are produced, and contain automatic fire-extinguishing systems to deal with any potential grease fires. In order to comply with the fire code and prevent dangerous grease fires, you're required to have a Type 1 exhaust. Likewise, for any type of pizza oven, it's essential that you clean your oven on a nightly basis to remove any charred toppings that could start a fire if left unchecked.

Properly refrigerate ingredients. Illness-causing bacteria can grow on perishable foods like pizza toppings within two hours of being outside the cooler or fridge, and that time is cut down to an hour when the temperature is 90°F or higher. Verify that your refrigerators run at a constant 40°F to minimize bacteria growth; note of the use-by date of all your ingredients; and, keep like ingredients near each other in the fridge to avoid cross contamination (e.g., veggies with veggies, cheeses with cheeses, meats with meats, etc.). Consider installing easy-to-check thermometers at your prep tables, reach-in coolers, and walk-in coolers for easy monitoring.

Practice safe pizza cooking practices. It's common for employees to forget some of the simpler safe cooking practices. For example, do your employees remember to wash all produce before chopping it up and adding it to ingredient containers? Do you regularly check your foods' internal temperatures to ensure they're out of the bacterial danger zone?

How ingredients are placed on a pie is essential for a proper bake. Help your staff remember the sequence by establishing a set order for each pie, such as:

- Sauce
- Cheese
- Flat meats
- Flat vegetables
- Bulky meats
- High-moisture vegetables
- Extra cheese
- Raw meats

Keep cleaning supplies separated from food. Because cleaning supplies contain dangerous chemicals that can potentially harm patrons if inadvertently mixed with food, store them in locations separate from the kitchen. Plus, always make sure any food is safely covered and out of the way when cleaning.



FRONT OF THE HOUSE (Dining Area)

Prevent slips, trips, and falls. Slips, trips and falls are the most commonly reported restaurant injuries. If your restaurant has carpeted floors or rugs, make sure all fabric is secure. Likewise, if you have tile or wood flooring, make sure that all spills and messes are cleaned up immediately, and be sure to use the proper signage to warn patrons and employees of the slippery floors.

Proper attire. Like your kitchen workers, your servers and other front of house staff should follow a dress code that minimizes the chances of an accident. This means hair should be worn pulled back, clothing should not be so loose that can get caught on furniture edges or objects on the table, and shoes must be tied at all times.

Warn patrons of excessively hot food and serving trays. There's nothing better than a fresh pie right out of the oven, and there's nothing worse a scalded mouth from biting into an extremely hot slice. To help your patrons avoid any painful burns, always remind them to use caution when their pizza is piping hot.

Clear and clean tables as soon as patrons leave. Just as a full sink of dishes can make the whole kitchen seem dirtier, tables full of used plates, utensils and glasses can also make your dining area unsightly. Once your patrons are done with their meals, clear the tables immediately and make sure you disinfect surfaces as soon as they leave. This will get rid of any germs immediately, plus keep up appearances.

Keep extra chairs and high chairs out of walking paths. Navigating through a maze of tables is hard enough for servers when carrying trays and pizza, let alone when obstacles are in the way. Keep any extra chairs and high chairs off to the side when not in use to prevent tripping.

Keep brooms, mops, and dustpans out of dining room during open hours. You may think patrons would be reassured by seeing cleaning supplies in your restaurant, but they really don't want to see your dusty broom and dingy mop right next to where they're eating. Not only that, cleaning tools can become dangerous tripping hazards. Unless you're attending to a spill or mess, keep cleaning supplies out of sight and away from food.

Make sure entrances are well lit and exits are clearly marked. The purpose of this is twofold: first, by having your entrance/exit well lit, there's lower risk of patron and employee trips, slips, or falls on their way in and out of your restaurant. Second, in case of an emergency, it's very important that everyone knows where to go to safely exit the building.

Keep the parking lot and sidewalk clear of ice and snow. For pizzerias in colder climates, winter's ice and snow can create quite the safety hazard. Keep your patrons safe by shoveling away any snow, and lay rock salt and/or sand on any icy areas.



Restaurant Safety Awareness Tips

PIN UP SHEET

BACK OF HOUSE (Kitchen and Food Prep Areas)

- Always wear: hairnet/hat, apron, gloves, closed-toed shoes, socks, and uniform
- Thoroughly wash hands before/between tasks, and change gloves with each new task
- Disinfect utensils and knives before every use, and handle them with caution
- Practice safe pizza cooking practices by:
 - ◇ removing charred food from the oven nightly
 - ◇ properly washing and storing ingredients
 - ◇ maintaining safe food temperatures
- Avoid burns by using hot pads, oven mitts, and peels. Wear fitted, long-sleeved shirts around the stove and oven—no loose clothing

FRONT OF HOUSE (Dining Area)

- Prevent slips, trips, and falls by:
 - ◇ securing rugs and frayed carpeting
 - ◇ immediately cleaning up spills and messes
 - ◇ posting signs to alert patrons and servers of slippery floors
 - ◇ removing extra chairs from heavy traffic areas
 - ◇ keeping entrances/exits well-lit and visibly marked
 - ◇ clearing the parking lot of weather-related hazards, like snow and ice
- Follow the dress code, wear your hair pulled back, and keep shoes securely tied
- Warn patrons of excessively hot food and serving platters to avoid injury
- Clear and clean tables as soon as patrons leave



With so many competing priorities within a service, workers often try to cut corners to get things done faster. To maintain standards and protect your reputation, this practice is unacceptable at any level of your operation, especially as it relates to food safety and sanitation.

Alive & Kickin' Pizza Crust is focused on providing safe, high-quality pizza crust every time you place an order. In addition to employing the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system, our facilities are regularly audited against Global Food Safety Initiative Safe Quality Food (SQF) standards to ensure our pizza dough meets the highest standard for both food safety and quality. All of our ingredients are tested for purity before use, and we internally audit and test each shift on a daily basis. It's this commitment to quality assurance that allows us to create a premium quality product, and peace of mind for you.



To learn more about how Alive & Kickin' pizza crusts and dough can help you create a safe, delicious eating experience, contact us at (920) 662-0304 or visit akcrust.com/resources.

