



ONTARIO TECH

GUIDELINES FOR KITCHEN SAFETY AND FOOD HANDLING

Cooking is a leading cause of injuries and home fires, and kitchens can present significant hazards if safety measures are not followed. While common kitchen risks—such as fire, electrical issues, burns, slips, improper equipment handling, foodborne illness, and improper storage—exist, they can be mitigated through proper precautions. This guideline provides essential food safety protocols for use in Ontario Tech University kitchens and cooking spaces. Below are important considerations and tips to help you stay safe and reduce cooking-related risks.

Safety Guidelines for People and Property

- Wear appropriate safety attire in the kitchen:
 - Gloves/mitts, aprons, hairnets, and closed-toe footwear.
- Handle sharp utensils, like knives, with care:
 - Avoid holding food in your hand while cutting; use a cutting board.
- Understand the ingredients (“know the food”):
 - Identify potential allergens and ensure allergenic items are stored separately.
 - Check for spoiled or contaminated food before use to prevent foodborne illness.
 - Wash hands, fruits, and vegetables thoroughly.
- Minimize grease splatter:
 - Keep a safe distance from hot oil.
 - Use a lid to cover pots when cooking with oil at high temperatures.
- Respond to spills and burns promptly:
 - Keep a first aid kit accessible for minor injuries.
 - Clean spills immediately to avoid slips.
- Proper handling of hot items:
 - Place hot items on heat-resistant mats or surfaces.
 - Communicate clearly when carrying sharp or hot items.
- Cook food thoroughly:
 - Use a food service probe thermometer to verify internal cooking temperatures:
 - Meats, poultry, and seafood must reach safe internal temperatures.
 - Cold food should not exceed 4°C (40°F); hot food should remain above 60°C (140°F).
- Maintain proper storage temperatures:
 - Set refrigerators to 4°C (40°F) and freezers to -18°C (0°F).
 - Do not refreeze thawed food unless it has been cooked first.
- Prevent cross-contamination:
 - Use separate utensils and cutting boards for raw meat, vegetables, cheese, and other items.
 - Sanitize surfaces and utensils after each use.
 - Store cooked and ready-to-eat food above raw items.
- Discard potentially contaminated food:
 - Dispose of uneaten served food and any food suspected of contamination.
 - Cover stored food with lids or plastic wrap to prevent contamination.



Fire Safety

- Identify the location of the nearest fire extinguisher.
- Keep a fire blanket readily accessible.
- Be aware of flammable materials and liquids.
- Never leave food unattended while cooking.
- Ensure all cooking areas have proper ventilation.

Additional Considerations

- Equipment Use and Maintenance:
 - Assess risks associated with each appliance (e.g., cooktops, standalone cookers).
 - Regularly inspect and clean all equipment.
 - Ensure electrical appliances are properly plugged in, with dry hands.
 - Inspect cables and wiring for damage; unplug equipment when not in use.
- Equipment Use and Maintenance:
 - Assess risks associated with each appliance (e.g., cooktops, standalone cookers).
 - Regularly inspect and clean all equipment.
 - Ensure electrical appliances are properly plugged in, with dry hands.
 - Inspect cables and wiring for damage; unplug equipment when not in use.
- Certifications and Permissions:
 - Obtain appropriate food handling certificates (e.g., COI with catering endorsement) before starting.

If you have any inquiries regarding this document, please contact the Office of Risk Management at orm@ontariotechu.ca