

**General Kitchen Safety Knife Handling and Hygiene**

Business Name:		ABN:	
Business Address:			
Contact Person:	Phone:	Email:	

**THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS APPROVED BY THE PCBU ON THIS PROJECT**

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation (WHS Regulation), a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) is required to ensure that a RISK ASSESSMENT is prepared before the proposed work starts.

Full Name:		
Signature:	Title:	Date:

**CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS**

Client:	SCOPE OF WORKS
Project Name:	
Project Address:	
Project Manager:	
Contact Phone:	
Date Risk Assessment supplied to Project Manager:	



RISK MATRIX									
LIKELIHOOD	INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR	CATASTROPHIC	SCORE	ACTION	HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS	
ALMOST CERTAIN	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE			<b>Elimination</b> Remove the hazard.	
LIKELY	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4A ACUTE	DO NOT PROCEED	<b>Substitution</b> Replace the hazard.	
POSSIBLE	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	3H HIGH	Review before work starts.	Isolation Isolate People from the hazard	
UNLIKELY	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	2M MODERATE	Ensure control measures in place.	<b>Engineering</b> Isolate the hazard	
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.	<b>Administrative</b> Change	
								<b>PPE</b>	

  

Risk Rating & Required Action:	
<b>4A</b>	Stop work. The risk is intolerable. Eliminate the hazard or redesign the activity before proceeding. A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or higher-level authorisation is required.
<b>3H</b>	Review and approve additional controls before task starts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.
<b>2M</b>	Ensure all nominated controls are in place and effective. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.
<b>1L</b>	Proceed, following standard operating procedures. Monitor and keep records.

  

Consequence Scale:			
Consequence	People (injury/illness)	Project / Assets	Compliance / Reputation
<b>Catastrophic</b>	Fatality or permanent total disability	project shutdown	Significant regulator intervention; criminal prosecution
<b>Major</b>	Serious injury/illness (hospital > 5 days)	critical delay	Improvement notice; major media coverage
<b>Moderate</b>	Medical-treatment injury; lost-time > 1 day	moderate delay	Minor breach; adverse client comment
<b>Minor</b>	First-aid only, no lost time	negligible delay	Isolated non-conformance
<b>Insignificant</b>	No injury	no schedule impact	Deviation caught and corrected on site

  

**Notes on Hierarchy of Controls:**  
Remember to apply controls in the preferred order shown by the coloured pyramid:

1. **Eliminate**
2. **Substitute**
3. **Isolate**
4. **Engineering**
5. **Administrative**
6. **PPE**

Always document **why** a lower-order control is accepted if elimination or substitution is not reasonably practicable.

*aligned with Safe Work Australia's Managing the risk of fatigue at work (2023) and ISO 45001:2018 clauses 6–8.*

JOB STEP	POTENTIAL HAZARDS	IR	CONTROL MEASURES	RR
SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
1. WHS Governance, Policies and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of a documented WHS policy that specifically covers kitchen knife handling and food hygiene obligations</li> <li>Failure to align internal procedures with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Australian Standards and Food Standards Code</li> <li>Lack of clear allocation of WHS responsibilities for supervisors, head chefs, and managers</li> <li>Inadequate consultation with workers on kitchen safety and hygiene risks</li> <li>No formal process to regularly review and update WHS documentation when menu, equipment or processes change</li> <li>Inconsistent enforcement of safe work rules in high-volume kitchen operations</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and endorse a written WHS policy that explicitly addresses general kitchen safety, knife handling and hygiene, referencing WHS Act 2011 duties</li> <li>Integrate Food Standards Code, relevant Australian standards and manufacturer instructions into site WHS procedures for knives, graters, can openers and large utensils</li> <li>Define and document WHS roles and responsibilities for owners, managers, supervisors and workers within the kitchen organisational structure</li> <li>Establish formal worker consultation arrangements (e.g. safety committee or HSRs) to review kitchen knife and hygiene risks at regular intervals</li> <li>Implement a document control system ensuring all kitchen safety procedures are version-controlled, accessible and periodically reviewed</li> <li>Include compliance with WHS kitchen policies and hygiene rules in management performance indicators and supervisory checklists</li> </ul>	3H
2. Kitchen Layout, Design and Workstation Ergonomics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor kitchen layout causing congestion, collisions and distraction while handling sharp tools</li> <li>Inadequate bench space for chopping and slicing of ingredients, leading to unstable cutting boards and unsafe body positioning</li> <li>Improper placement of commercial freezers, fridges and storage causing awkward reaching with knives or heavy items</li> <li>Insufficient lighting over preparation and cleaning areas, reducing visibility when cutting vegetables and fruits</li> <li>Workstations not adjustable for different worker heights, contributing to repetitive strain and loss of control of knives</li> <li>Inadequate drainage and floor surfaces around sinks where large cooking utensils are washed, increasing slip risk while handling sharp items</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a formal ergonomic and traffic-flow review of the kitchen layout to minimise congestion and cross-traffic in knife-handling zones</li> <li>Designate fixed food preparation zones with adequate bench space, stable cutting surfaces and separation between raw and ready-to-eat food areas</li> <li>Position commercial freezers, cool rooms and storage racks to avoid workers carrying knives through doorways or confined areas wherever practicable</li> <li>Ensure compliant task lighting is installed and maintained above all prep benches, sinks and grating/slicing stations</li> <li>Standardise bench heights or provide adjustable platforms to accommodate a range of worker statures and reduce over-reach with knives</li> <li>Specify and maintain slip-resistant flooring and adequate drainage in cleaning areas where large utensils and sharp tools are washed</li> </ul>	2M

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3. Knife and Sharp Tool Selection, Procurement and Standardisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of inappropriate knife types or poor-quality sharp tools for high-volume kitchen tasks</li> <li>• Inconsistent knife styles and handles increasing unfamiliarity and misuse between different shifts or sites</li> <li>• Procurement of knives without safety features such as finger guards or ergonomic grips</li> <li>• Use of domestic-grade can openers, graters and slicers not suited to commercial workloads</li> <li>• Lack of system to assess new products (e.g. mandolins, graters, specialty slicers) for inherent risks before purchase</li> </ul>	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a procurement standard that specifies suitable commercial-grade knives, graters, slicers and can openers for the type and volume of kitchen work</li> <li>• Standardise knife types and handle design across the workplace to reduce variability and enable consistent training</li> <li>• Preference procurement of tools with in-built safety features such as hand guards, non-slip ergonomic handles and stable bases for mandolins and graters</li> <li>• Require supplier safety information, instructions and test data to be reviewed before new cutting equipment is introduced</li> <li>• Include safety performance, ease of cleaning and durability as mandatory evaluation criteria in procurement decisions</li> <li>• Maintain an appropriate equipment register for all sharp kitchen tools used on site</li> </ul>	2M
4. Knife and Sharp Tool Maintenance, Sharpening and Inspection Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dull or damaged knives requiring excessive force when cutting fresh produce safely</li> <li>• Lack of a structured sharpening schedule leading to inconsistent blade condition</li> <li>• Cracked, loose or broken knife handles and damaged graters or can openers not identified promptly</li> <li>• No formal inspection process for large cooking utensils with sharp edges used in high-volume kitchens</li> <li>• Improvised sharpening practices without appropriate equipment or training</li> <li>• Uncontrolled access to sharpening tools leading to untrained workers attempting maintenance</li> </ul>	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Storage, Transport and Segregation of Knives and Sharp Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose storage of knives in drawers creating laceration risk when reaching in</li> <li>• Knives and sharp utensils stored with incompatible items (e.g. glass, cleaning chemicals) increasing confusion and injury risk</li> </ul>	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncontrolled transport of knives between prep areas, commercial freezers and dishwashing zones</li> <li>• Improper storage of blade guards, causing workers to handle unprotected knives during retrieval</li> <li>• Knives left on benches, in sinks or mixed with general utensils during busy high-volume service periods</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
6. Worker Competency, Training and Supervision in Knife Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate induction and competency-based training for new staff and contractors in safe knife handling and kitchen safety</li> <li>• No formal assessment of workers before allocating tasks such as chopping and slicing of ingredients or grating foods at speed</li> <li>• Limited supervision of young or inexperienced workers in high-volume kitchens</li> <li>• Failure to provide refresher training, leading to drift from safe techniques over time</li> <li>• Language or literacy barriers preventing workers from understanding knife safety and hygiene procedures</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Workload, Fatigue and Staffing Management in High-Volume Kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understaffing during peak service periods causing rushing and reduced attention while cutting vegetables and fruits</li> <li>• Extended shifts and inadequate breaks leading to fatigue and decreased fine motor control when handling sharp tools</li> <li>• Pressure to meet production targets compromising adherence to hygiene and safety procedures</li> <li>• Poor rostering practices causing inexperienced staff to work alone on high-risk knife tasks</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate planning for large events or seasonal peaks resulting in excessive manual food preparation</li> </ul>			
8. Safe Use Systems for Knives, Graters and Cutting Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of standardised procedures for tasks such as cutting fresh produce safely, opening canned goods and grating foods</li> <li>Improvised cutting practices (e.g. cutting in hand, using unstable boards) becoming normalised</li> <li>Unsafe use of commercial or manual can openers leading to jagged lids and laceration hazards</li> <li>Uncontrolled introduction and use of mandolins, slicers and specialty graters without risk assessment</li> <li>Inconsistent practices between shifts regarding safe cutting techniques and use of guards</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
9. Cleaning, Sanitising and Handling of Large Cooking Utensils and Sharp Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of procedures for safely cleaning large pots, trays and sharp-edged utensils in confined sink areas</li> <li>Workers placing knives and graters loosely into sinks or dishwashers, causing hidden laceration hazards</li> <li>Inadequate differentiation between cleaning chemicals and food contact surfaces leading to contamination risks</li> <li>Poor system for managing hot water and steam exposure during utensil cleaning, distracting workers handling sharp tools</li> <li>Inconsistent sanitising practices impacting food hygiene compliance</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Hygiene Management, Cross-Contamination and Food Safety Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate separation between raw and ready-to-eat food preparation areas, increasing cross-contamination risk</li> <li>Failure to enforce handwashing and personal hygiene standards in conjunction with knife handling</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No system for managing allergen control on knives, cutting boards and utensils</li> <li>Improper storage of knives and tools between tasks, allowing contamination from benches or sinks</li> <li>Inconsistent implementation of cleaning schedules during busy periods in high-volume kitchens</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
11. Commercial Freezer, Cold Storage and Access Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsafe opening and closing of commercial freezers and cool rooms while carrying knives or sharp utensils</li> <li>Poor organisation of frozen and chilled storage leading to over-stacking and falling items while handling sharp tools</li> <li>Ineffective temperature monitoring and defrost systems causing ice build-up and slippery floors near entry points</li> <li>Inadequate lighting or faulty door mechanisms increasing risk when accessing storage during busy or low-staff periods</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
12. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Corrective Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under-reporting of minor cuts, misses and hygiene issues, leading to missed learning opportunities</li> <li>Lack of a structured investigation process for knife-related incidents and contamination events</li> <li>Failure to identify root causes such as inadequate training, poor layout or deficient systems</li> <li>No clear mechanism for tracking completion and effectiveness of corrective actions</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
13. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Uniform Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over-reliance on PPE instead of higher-order controls for knife handling and hygiene</li> </ul>	2M	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent provision and management of cut-resistant gloves, aprons and appropriate footwear</li> <li>PPE not fit-for-purpose for tasks such as grating foods, opening canned goods or cleaning large utensils</li> <li>Inadequate laundering or replacement system for contaminated or damaged uniforms and PPE</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
14. Emergency Preparedness, First Aid and Response for Cuts and Contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of immediate access to suitable first aid supplies and trained first aiders for lacerations and puncture wounds</li> <li>No clear procedure for managing blood contamination of food, equipment or surfaces</li> <li>Uncertainty among staff about when to seek medical attention or report injuries</li> <li>Inadequate arrangements for post-incident counselling and support after severe injuries</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
15. Contractor, Agency Staff and Visitor Management in Kitchen Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contractors, agency staff or visitors entering kitchen areas without understanding knife and hygiene controls</li> <li>External cleaning or maintenance personnel mishandling stored knives and sharp utensils</li> <li>Temporary staff working in high-volume kitchens without verification of competency in safe knife handling and hygiene</li> <li>Lack of clarity regarding responsibility for supervision of non-employees in kitchen spaces</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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SAMPLE

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE – CALL 000 FOR EMERGENCIES**

Ensure to have an Emergency Management Plan in place as well as adequate numbers of trained first aid staff with easy access to fully stocked first aid kits, rescue equipment, material safety data sheets, adequate access to emergency communication equipment and fire-fighting equipment suitable for all classes of fire and ignition sources.

**LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES**

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CODES OF PRACTICE. DELETE THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES FOR ANY STATE THAT ARE NOT APPLICABLE

**Queensland & Australian Capital Territory**

Work Health and Safety Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011  
 Legislation QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/work-health-and-safety-laws>  
 Codes of Practice QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>  
 Legislation ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

**Victoria**

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004  
 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017  
 Legislation VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/compliance-codes-and-codes-practice>

**New South Wales**

Work Health and Safety Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2025  
 Legislation NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/legal-obligations/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/list-codes-of-practice>

**Western Australia**

Work Health and Safety Act 2020  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022  
 Legislation Western Australia: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice WA: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/codes-practice>

**Northern Territory**

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulation 2011  
 Legislation NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-safety-laws>  
 Codes of Practice NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

**Safe Work Australia Links**

Law and Regulation (All States): <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/law-and-regulation>  
 Model Codes of Practice: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources-publications/model-codes-of-practice>

**South Australia**

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)  
 Legislation for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/resources/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/codes-of-practice#COPs>

**Model Codes of Practice**

- Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work
- Confined spaces
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals
- Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace
- Welding processes
- First aid in the workplace
- Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Managing the risk of falls in housing construction
- Managing electrical risks in the workplace
- Demolition work
- Excavation work
- Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination
- Managing the work environment and facilities
- How to manage work health and safety risks
- Managing risks of plant in the workplace
- Construction work

**Tasmania**

Work Health and Safety Act 2012  
 Work Health and Safety (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2012  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012  
 Work Health and Safety (Transitional) Regulations 2012  
 Legislation for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Details of permits, licenses or access required by regulatory bodies (add or delete as required):

- Permits from local council
- Authorisation to commence work
- Any required documents.