Food Production Safety

Food production exposes employees to a variety of unique hazards, including dangerous equipment, slippery surfaces and repetitive or awkward tasks. It is important to recognize and implement the following controls to reduce the risk of injury.

Machine Guarding – production line personnel and sanitation and maintenance crew members can be exposed to machine hazards.

- All machinery and power transmission apparatus in food processing facilities must be guarded, such as nip points between chains/sprockets or belt/pulley systems. Use proper barrier guards to protect point of operation hazards, such as mixer bowls.
- Assure two-hand button controls and emergency stops are available on mixers, presses and other equipment.
- Use push sticks or other hand tools to feed or remove food from grinders, slicers or choppers.
- Inspect equipment regularly.
- Follow the child labor laws which do not permit workers under 18 to operate, set up, adjust, clean, oil or repair power-driven equipment.

Fall Hazards – employees risk falling from heights when working on catwalks, step ladders or other elevated locations.

- Implement a fall protection program.
- Sweep grain dust off production area floors daily.
- Install slip-resistant flooring, if possible. If not, use temporary floor treatments and wear slip-resistant shoes.
- For additional safety measures, refer to our Roof and Skylight Safety handout or written Fall Protection Sample Program.

Musculoskeletal Disorders – repetitive motion, awkward body movements and lifting heavy items can lead to various injuries.

- Identify high-risk tasks (conveyor line, lifting heavy materials, etc.).
- Implement an ergonomics program.
- Apply controls including automation, alternating job tasks and job rotations.

Working in Hot Environments – employees may be constantly exposed to high-temperature workspaces.

- Implement a heat illness prevention program.
- Provide access to potable water and encourage frequent rest and drink breaks.
- Install fans or other means to help cool the work areas.

Confined Spaces – Per Cal-OSHA, a confined space is defined as any space that: *"(1) Is large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work; (2) Has limited or restricted means for entry or exit (for example, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, hoppers, vaults, and pits are spaces that may have limited means of entry; and (3) Is not designed for continuous employee occupancy."*

- Due to the high risk involved, contract outside vendors that specialize in cleaning and maintenance of confined spaces.

The advice presented in this document is intended as general information for employers. Contact your loss control consultant or visit CompWestInsurance.com for more safety tips and information.

CompWestInsurance.com
1-888-266-7937

CompWest

AF Group