Safe Working Procedures and Instruction

Knives – blade less than 18cm

The risk of injury when using this machine is MODERATE

The selection of knives for a particular task, the correct grip, the proper use of the knife blade and the sharpening methods are all-important considerations.

The best way to learn knife-handling techniques is to watch demonstrations and to practice.

Identified Risks and Hazards

General hazards that may arise when using knives:

- incorrect choice of knife for application
- cuts from not using correct grip on food/knife
- not securing chopping board on bench
- not using plastic scraper to remove food from knife blade
- incorrect washing, drying and carrying procedures

The specific hazard that may arise from the use and cleaning of knives is cuts from the sharp blades.

Cuts can also occur from touching metal parts especially when washing up knives in a sink full of soapy water. Use caution when cleaning.

Operational Safety

Knives are only designed for straight-line forces in the vertical plane.

PREVENTING CUTS & ACCIDENTS:

- Keep knives sharp. A sharp knife is safer than a dull one - it requires less pressure and is less likely to slip.
- Use a cutting board - do not cut against an unyielding surface. Eg. Laminex, metal and glass. To keep the cutting board from slipping, place a damp towel or non-slip mat under the board.
- When using a knife or cutting equipment, pay attention to your work.
- Cut away from your body when cutting, peeling, trimming or boning.
- Use protective clothing (e.g., meat aprons and mesh gloves) when trimming meat.
- Use knives only for cutting - do not use for opening containers or for other tasks.
• Don’t try to catch a falling knife. Step back and let it fall.
• Don’t put knives in a sink, under water or any place where they cannot be seen.
• Clean knives carefully, with sharp edge away from you.
• Store knives in a safe place, such as in a rack or knife block, when not in use.
• Carry knives properly.
• Use the correct knife for the job you are doing.

Operating Procedures

The hand grip and blade position

The finger tips grip the food item, and are tucked slightly under the knuckles. The side of the knife blade remains in contact with the knuckle, so that the left hand (for right handed cooks) acts as a guide for the blade. The right hand does not steer the blade (sideways) at all: the left is moved to position the blade for the next cut, and the blade naturally follows the knuckle sideways.

General cutting action

The right hand generates a rolling-sliding motion for the blade (this is more efficient than chopping straight down, particularly for tougher vegetables). The left hand moves to the left at the end of each cutting stroke: the distance it moves will determine the width of the next cut (because the blade is in constant contact with the knuckle, it will follow the knuckle sideways to position for the next cut).

The arc of the blade is important: this is safer and more efficient than the common method of holding the vegetable and chopping straight down, and steering the blade for the next cut with the right hand.

Make a flat surface to avoid the vegetable rolling during the cut (a common source of injuries when the knife slides off the vegetable). This should be the first cut for all rounded vegetables.

Narrow blades require care, because it is more difficult to keep the blade in contact with the knuckles.

Using the correct grip:

• Hold the knife in your right or left hand.
• Place your index finger on the knife blade and your 3 remaining fingers on the knife handle.
• Tighten your grip on the handle and place your thumb on the opposite side of the blade from your index finger.

Holding the knife and food correctly:

• Finger tips should grip the food item and are tucked slightly under the knuckles.
• The side of the knife blade remains in contact with the knuckle so that the left hand (for right-handed cooks) acts as a guide for the blade.

• The right hand does not steer the blade at all - the left is moved to position the blade for the next cut and the blade will naturally follow the knuckle sideways.

**Using efficient and safe methods when cutting:**

• The right hand generates a rolling-sliding motion for the blade. (This is more efficient than chopping straight down, particularly for tougher vegetables).

• The left hand moves to the left at the end of each cutting stroke - the distance it moves will determine the width of the next cut.

**Maintenance and Storage**

**Care & storage of knives.**

1. Knives should be cleaned and dried immediately after use.
2. Use a mild detergent for washing.
3. Rinse under warm water.
4. Dry with a soft cloth, from the back of the blade.
5. Never leave knives in a sink of water.
6. Handle knives carefully. Hold the knife-edge away from the body.
7. When carrying a knife, make sure the blade faces downwards.

Knives need to be stored carefully.

**Don’t let your knives rust.**

The material used in professional knives is very different to sinks, pots and pans, forks and spoons, etc. It is less corrosion resistant, but harder. Simply wash and dry your knives after each use. Don’t leave them wet on the sink, and don’t put them in the dishwasher!

**Handle your knives carefully when cutting.**

There are some simple techniques that make the food preparation process much more pleasant, faster, and safer. One of the keys is the hand grip on the food.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knife</th>
<th>Description &amp; Uses</th>
<th>Picture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utility (Salad) Knife</td>
<td>Narrow, pointed, 18cm long Used for pantry work (cutting &amp; preparing lettuce &amp; fruit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paring Knife</td>
<td>Small pointed blade 10cm Used for trimming &amp; paring vegetables &amp; fruit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandwich Knife</td>
<td>Small pointed blade 15cm Used for trimming &amp; cutting sandwiches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peeler</td>
<td>Sharp, curved - ideal for peeling and preparing all types of fruit and vegetables.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning Knife</td>
<td>Sharp, curved, plain edged blade 10cm - ideal for peeling and preparing all types of fruit and vegetables.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serrated Slicer (Steak Knife)</td>
<td>Like a slicer, but with a serrated edge, rounded tip. Used for cutting breads and cakes</td>
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