



Safety in Butchery Premises

Many of the machines, hand tools and processes used in butchery premises are so familiar that it is easy to forget that they can be dangerous. The following list highlights some of the main risks which may exist and examples of the precautionary and preventive measures which could be taken. It is by no means exhaustive and will vary depending on your own particular business. As a starting point use the blank sheet provided in this pack and carry out your own simple risk assessment.

Main Types of Risk

Falls

Slipping or tripping while carrying a knife or falling against a dangerous machine (e.g. a bandsaw) could result in serious injuries.

Managing the Risk

- Provide slip resistant flooring.
- Introduce measures to ensure spillages and slippery materials are cleared up promptly.
- Display warning signs when floors are wet.
- Keep production areas and passageways clear of obstruction.
- Take steps to prevent the build up of ice on chill room floors.

Use of Knives, Cleavers and Handsaws

De-boning operations are particularly hazardous and have resulted in fatalities due to stabbing injuries. The younger and less experienced staff are at the greatest risk.

- Provide correct tools for the task.
- Train staff in the safe use and care of equipment, including the need to keep knives sharp.
- Provide suitable protective equipment (chain mail apron and glove) for use during hand knife operations.
- Ensure that protective equipment is worn, particularly for activities, such as "boning out".
- Provide a knife rack and instruct staff not to leave knives lying on work surfaces.
- Ensure staff using knives have enough room to work safely.

Use of Machinery

A number of dangerous machines are used in butchery premises - many people have lost fingers when they have come into contact with moving blades. Examples include bandsaws, mincing machines, bowl cutters and slicers.

- Provide adequate space around machines, particularly those with exposed blades.
- Site equipment so that the operator cannot be accidentally bumped/distracted.
- Display warning notices alongside machines to remind operators and others of the dangers they pose.
- Ensure dangerous parts of machinery are adequately guarded, that interlocks are working and that they can be readily isolated.
- Provide training in safe systems of work and adequate supervision, particularly for new employees.
- Provide push sticks where necessary.
- Maintain equipment in good condition.