

10 Tips to Minimize Kitchen Hazards

The kitchen poses so many risks. Sharp knives could cause injury. Spilled liquid could cause someone to slip and fall. Hot liquid and pots and pans can burn. Expired or improperly prepared food could cause illness.

Here are some ways you can minimize common kitchen hazards:

1. Turn off the coffee pot or toaster oven when finished.

This may seem like a no-brainer, but it is easy to forget. Leaving the coffee pot or toaster on could result in a fire.

2. Don't use extension cords.

It may be tempting to use an extension cord to power a refrigerator or other appliance so that it can fit in a more convenient place, but an extension cord could overheat and catch fire, especially in old buildings, or be easily tripped over.

3. Never leave the stove unattended.

If you have something on a burner, stay put, because it is all too easy for a grease fire to start in a matter of minutes. It might also prevent you from burning your food. If you must leave the area, have someone else watch the stove until you get back.

4. Get both Class BC and K rated fire extinguishers.

If you ever have a fire, having a working extinguisher, and people who know how to use it, can make all the difference. There are different types of extinguishers. BC fire extinguishers put out electrical fires or fires resulting from combustible liquids. K fire extinguishers put out fires started from cooking oils or fats. Make sure that volunteers and employees know where your fire extinguishers are stored and how to use them.

5. Don't take shortcuts when cooking.

Forgot to put the turkey in on time? Do not try to make up for lost time by pumping up the oven temperature. Need to chop a bunch of vegetables at once? Do not try any fancy knife maneuvers you saw on television or YouTube but have not been trained to do.

6. Use protective equipment.

For example, if you need to get a pan out of the oven, use oven mitts, not your sleeve or a dishtowel.

7. Secure knives and store chemicals.

Keep knives secure and in their holder when you are not using them. Unsecured knives could be picked up by children or other individuals who could harm themselves or others. Keep harsh cleaning products and other chemicals stored securely.

8. Clean spills right away.

If you spill something, take the time to clean it up immediately to help prevent slip-and-falls.

9. Wash foods and prepare them in a clean environment.

Wash fresh foods, cook food thoroughly, clean surfaces after they have come in contact with meat or other foods that may cause contamination, and make sure that the food you use is fresh, not past its expiration date.

10. Use proper hygiene when cooking to prevent germs.

Before preparing food, wash your hands with soap and cover any wounds on your hands with bandages. Also wash your hands after handling eggs or raw meat.

These are just a few examples of what you can do to minimize risk in the kitchen, and when cooking, always be mindful of the dangers that can occur when you neglect something, skip a step, or do not pay attention.