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Occupations and Workplaces

Food and Beverage Servers

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What does a server do?

The duties of servers, table wait staff, hostesses, bus-boys, and other food and hospitality personnel vary according to the workplace. The following is a general summary of duties these people have in common:

- Greet customers.
 - Take orders and relay them to kitchen and bar staff.
 - Pay attention to customers' special menu and dietary needs or restrictions, when applicable.
 - Carry and serve food or drinks to customers.
 - Determine method of payment, and prepare bills.
 - Work with computers and other electronic devices.
 - Clean up tables or kitchen.
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What are some health and safety issues of servers?

Work environments such as restaurants, hotels and bars, where food and beverages are served, present a unique set of hazards.

The main health and safety issues for servers include:

- Exposure to cleaning products and other chemicals.
- Musculoskeletal injuries from [standing](#) for long hours, working in [awkward positions](#), or performing [repetitive manual tasks](#).
- [Lifting](#) or carrying heavy trays or other objects.
- Risks of burns from dishes, meals or drinks that are hot.
- [Noise](#) exposure.
- [Slips, trips and falls](#).
- [Stress](#).
- Dealing with difficult or potentially [violent](#) customers.
- [Bullying](#)
- Long hours of work or [extended work days](#).
- [Working alone](#), including working alone with [money](#).
- Cuts from handling broken glassware.
- Fire or other emergencies
- [Shift work](#)
- Exposure to common viruses such as [colds](#) and seasonal [influenza](#)

What are some preventive measures for a server?

- Learn safe [lifting](#) techniques.
- Take breaks.
- Establish [good hygiene practices](#).
- [Wash your hands](#) before eating, drinking or smoking, or after going to the toilet, and at the beginning and end of the day.
- Wear appropriate [personal protective equipment](#) and apparel for the task.
- Wear shoes with non-skid soles.
- Learn how to use equipment and tools safely.

- Learn how to deal with [workplace stress](#).
- Maintain good housekeeping practices.
- Learn how to deal with violent customers and other situations.
- Learn and follow the organization's violence and harassment prevention policy and procedures.
- Keep a first-aid kit/box within easy access.

Participate in Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System ([WHMIS](#)) education and training. Follow [labels](#) and read the safety data sheet ([SDS](#)) for any hazardous product you use and follow recommended safety precautions.

What are some good general safe work practices?

- Practice safe [lifting](#) techniques.
 - Follow company safety rules.
 - Know how to [report a hazard](#) and near miss.
 - Follow [good housekeeping](#) procedures.
 - Work safely with chemicals according to recommended practices.
 - Select the correct [personal protective equipment](#). Use, maintain and store it according to manufacturer's recommendations.
 - Keep a mobile phone or other alternative means to contact a designated person when working alone.
 - Use [hand washing](#) to reduce the risks of common infections.
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