

Workplace Hazards in Supermarkets

This fact sheet is for students undertaking work experience programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, students must NOT undertake the activity.

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Box cutters	Cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide appropriate cutters ◆ Provide safe storage for cutters ◆ Provide appropriate gloves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Work carefully; follow instructions and training ◆ Use gloves provided
Box crushers	Various body injuries	Students must NOT use box crushers	Students must NOT use box crushers
Knives and deli slicers, powered cutting equipment, chicken rotisseries	Cuts Burns	Students must NOT use powered cutting equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide training and supervision if students will use knives 	Students must NOT use powered cutting equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Work carefully with knives; follow instructions and training
Slippery floors	Slips or falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide floor mats ◆ Provide equipment to clean up spills quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Wear non-slip shoes ◆ Clean up spills quickly
Cleaning products	Skin contact may cause irritation or dermatitis Vapours or fumes may cause headaches and/or respiratory problems Long-term exposure may lead to chronic (ongoing) health effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use the least hazardous product for each job ◆ Ensure good ventilation ◆ Make sure safety information is on label <i>and</i> Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is provided ◆ Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when provided – this could include rubber gloves, eye protection ◆ Read safety information on label <i>and</i> Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)
Contact with public	Abuse, assault, robbery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide adequate security ◆ Provide barriers where money is handled ◆ Provide adequate outside lighting ◆ Schedule at least two people per shift ◆ Arrange customer service <i>and</i> emergency response training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow procedures and instructions regarding security and contact with the public ◆ Report any concerns immediately
Standing for long periods	Back injuries, varicose veins, fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide floor mats ◆ Provide regular breaks ◆ Rotate jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Take breaks when scheduled
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting, repetitive motions, checkout scanners)	Musculoskeletal disorders including sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Re-design checkout stands ◆ Rotate jobs ◆ Provide approved stepladder or step stool for stacking above shoulder height ◆ Schedule regular breaks ◆ Provide mechanical aids ◆ Store heavy items on lower shelves ◆ Train staff in safe manual handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow instructions and training ◆ Use mechanical aids, stepladders where provided ◆ Seek help when you think a team lift is required
Cold temperatures (in cold storage areas, freezers)	Frostbite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Limit time spent in cold areas ◆ Ensure people cannot be locked inside cold rooms ◆ Provide PPE (gloves, coats) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Limit time spent in cold areas ◆ Make sure your supervisor knows if you plan to enter a cold room ◆ Use PPE provided
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establish work place policy ◆ Provide staff briefings or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately