

# Food and Beverage Manufacturing

These are the most common injuries and hazards for people working in food and beverages manufacturing, as shown by injury claims.

## Psychological System

Work-related stress due to work pressure, bullying, and harassment.

## Shoulder

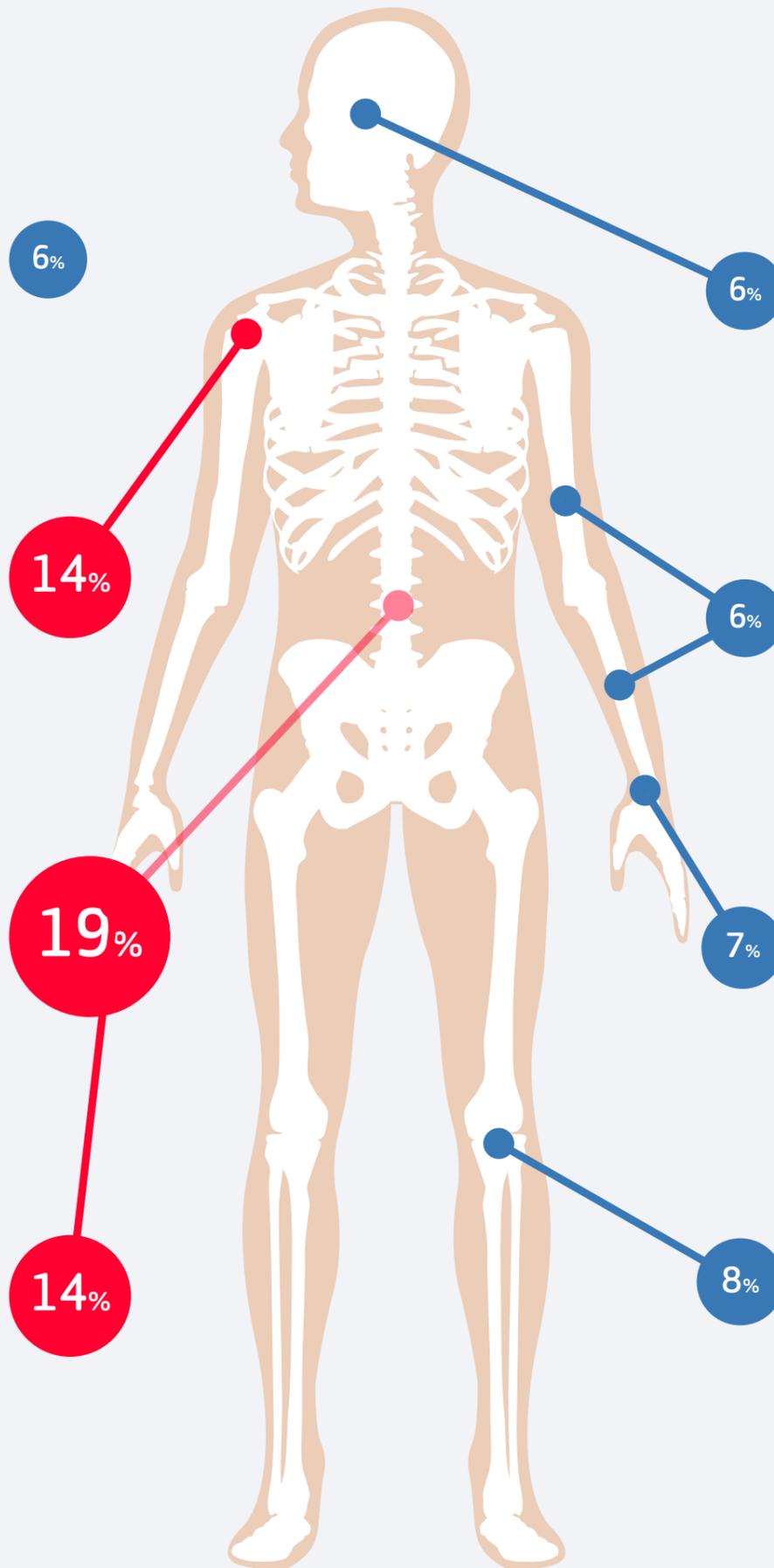
Traumatic joint/muscle injuries and strains from lifting and handling bulk products, animal carcasses, and equipment.

## Back

Muscle strains from heavy lifting and manual handling. Injuries from slips, trips, and falls.

## Hand/Fingers

Open wounds and lacerations from knives and cutlery, or mechanical cutting equipment used during food preparation.



## Ear

Hearing loss due to long term exposure to loud noise.

## Arm

Muscle strains from lifting and handling bulky objects (e.g. crates, cartons, drums, kegs, barrels).

## Forearm/Wrist

Muscle strains from lifting and handling bulky objects (e.g. crates, cartons, drums, kegs, barrels). Nerve injuries as a result of repetitive work.

## Knee

Knee injuries from slips, trips, and falls. Muscle strains from lifting bulky objects (e.g. crates, cartons, drums, kegs, barrels).

## Safety solutions

WorkSafe expects employers to have safety solutions in place to protect workers from injury and illness.

Below are some common solutions known to reduce the risk of injury. Employers should work together with their employees to determine the most effective solutions for their workplace.

### Hotspots

### Solution

#### Cuts, lacerations and burns

##### ● Hand/Fingers

- Ensure all machinery (e.g. mincers, graters, slicers) has fixed guards, or interlocked guards where access is required.
- Provide personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves, safety glasses, aprons).
- Ensure employees wear appropriate personal protective clothing (e.g. long pants, boots).
- Train employees in the selection, use and sharpening of knives, and personal protective equipment.

#### Lifting and handling

- Back
- Shoulder
- Forearm/Wrist
- Arm

- Provide appropriate mechanical aids and equipment (e.g. vacuum lifters, automatic tippers, overhead cranes and hoist to eliminate heavy lifting of raw ingredients and finished product, height-adjustable work platforms, conveyors or tables, automated feeding devices such as bulk bags and bagging systems) and ensure they are used properly and maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
- Train employees in the selection and use of any mechanical equipment and aids and safe handling methods (e.g. work is done between shoulder and mid-thigh height and with the elbows close to the body, work upright where possible).
- Ensure employees are not exposed to repetitive work for long periods (e.g. by using job rotation, work variation, providing sit-stand stools and anti-fatigue mats) or work that requires a significant amount of high force.

#### Noise

##### ● Ear

- Ensure employees are not exposed to noise that exceeds the exposure standard.
- Arrange for a noise assessment if employees are exposed to excessive noise (e.g. workers have to raise their voices to communicate over a distance of one metre) and there is uncertainty as to whether employees exposure may have exceeded the noise exposure standard.
- Eliminate or minimise the source of noise (e.g. enclose or isolate noisy machinery, reduce vibration, use barriers to absorb and screens to block the direct path of sound, use silencers on air exhausts, exhaust pneumatics out of the area, buy the quietest tools/machinery available).
- Place warning signs in areas of excessive and continual noise (e.g. where employees exposure is likely to exceed the exposure standard).
- Warn other workers nearby that you will be undertaking noisy work and advise them to move away or wear hearing protection.
- Provide hearing equipment, ensure it is worn at all times, and provide employees with audiometric testing. Employers should provide a choice of different types of hearing protection appropriate to the noise level in the workplace.

## Occupational disease



- Treat all chemicals as potentially dangerous unless material safety data sheet (MSDS) or label state otherwise.
- Arrange for air monitoring to determine employee exposure levels and undertake health surveillance (refer to the relevant MSDS for further information) where required. If you are not sure if there is a problem, get some assistance.
- Consider whether a safer substance or process can be used.
- Design work and the workplace to prevent contact with the hazardous substance (e.g. enclosures, extraction).
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing (e.g. gloves, masks) for employees.
- Train employees how to work safely with hazardous chemicals.
- Identify any non-hazardous substances that may trigger illness (e.g. flour or other dusts can be triggers for occupational asthma) and control appropriately (e.g. air testing and health surveillance).

## Repetitive work

- Back
- Shoulder
- Forearm/Wrist
- Arm

- Use automated systems where possible such as when bottling, canning, labelling, packing, filling, sealing and wrapping products.
- Design work processes to eliminate double handling (e.g. in-line weighing scales) and so employees can maintain upright natural postures as much as possible.

## Slips, trips and falls

- Back
- Knee

- Ensure floor surfaces, stairways and access ways are level, non-slip or slip-resistant and kept dry and clear of clutter and obstructions.
- Provide sufficient lighting for stairs, access ways and any work that involves using ladders.
- Ensure there is edge protection on any access platforms (e.g. gantries and walkways with barriers on or around high machines).
- Clean up spills (e.g. oils, residues) immediately.
- Regularly tidy and remove clutter so it does not accumulate.
- Ensure employees wear appropriate non-slip footwear.

## Work-related stress, bullying and harassment

- Psychological System

- Develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures for workplace bullying and harassment.
- Encourage a positive workplace culture, including reporting of bullying and harassment.
- Ensure all employees understand what bullying and harassment is, and the procedures for reporting incidents (e.g. policies and procedures should be promoted during employee induction and workplace bullying prevention or training).
- Provide access and encourage employees to use employee counselling/support services, where possible.
- Encourage employees to report any workplace stress factors (e.g. work demand, low control, poor support, lack of role clarity, organisational culture) and control appropriately.

Visit [www.injuryhotspots.com.au](http://www.injuryhotspots.com.au)

**WorkSafe Advisory Service** Toll-free 1800 136 089

Your health and safety contact is:

*You must consult with the people who will be affected by changes before any changes affecting their occupational safety or health are put in place. If someone is injured at work, their employer must ensure they receive proper care and support their safe return to work. WorkSafe Victoria is a trading name of the Victorian WorkCover Authority.*