

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Poultry processing

These are the most common injuries to workers in the poultry processing industry based on accepted workers' compensation claims

*The poultry processing industry includes organisations mainly engaged in slaughtering dressing, freezing or packing (except canning) poultry and game birds.

Shoulder

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from lifting, carrying or putting objects down

13%

Eye

Contact with chemicals or poultry waste products

3%

Elbow

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from repetitive use, or handling of poultry products

4%

Arm

Wounds/lacerations from using knives

3%

Back

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from lifting or carrying objects

20%

Wrist

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from repetitive use or handling of knives and/or poultry products

12%

Knee

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from lifting and/or carrying objects or slipping on unsafe floor surfaces

4%

18%

Hand and fingers

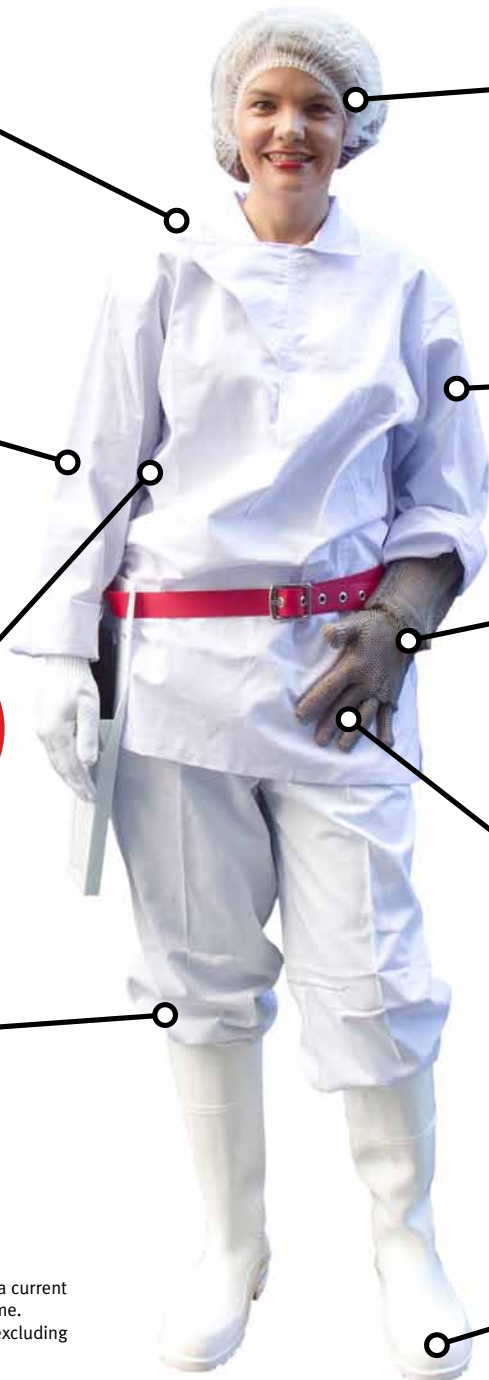
Wounds/lacerations from using knives

Foot and toes

Being hit by moving pallet jacks and/or falling pallets

3%

Source: Queensland Employee Injury Database. Data current as at February 2011 and is subject to change over time. Based on accepted workers' compensation claims, excluding commuting claims, between 2000-01 and 2008-09.



Health and safety tips

Employers should work with their employees and health and safety representatives to identify hazards, assess the risk of injury and determine the most effective solutions to prevent or minimise the risk. Below are some common control measures known to reduce the risk of injury.

Knives	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the correct knife for the task. • Provide mechanical sharpening systems. • Workers should receive competency-based training in selection, use and sharpening of knives. • Provide accessible first aid equipment and trained first aid officers. • Avoid knife handles with ridges and contours, which can increase discomfort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the work to be performed (e.g. cut resistant gloves, chain mesh aprons, arm guard, protective footwear, hearing protection). • Maintain a good working distance between other workers who are using knives.
Manual tasks	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For work that is highly repetitive or done for long periods, consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - partially or fully automated systems such as: bird bagging machines, portion cutting systems, deskinning machines - equipment, lines and conveyors paced with sufficient time to complete tasks - designing jobs so that workers have a variety of tasks which allow use of different postures and muscle groups. If this is not possible consider job rotation to other tasks which use different muscle groups. • Design areas so workers can work in a comfortable upright position, for instance using height adjustable conveyors or tables. • Use tools that produce the least vibration or have vibration-isolated handles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For work involving hard physical effort: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - minimise reaching by reducing the width of the conveyor or using diverter bars to push the product closer to the worker - use mechanical means to lift, lower, carry or empty tubs e.g. tipping chutes or conveyors with angled slides (which prevent lifting of tubs onto conveyors) - use conveyors to remove skin, trimming waste and carcasses - use mechanical aids such as vacuum lifters for packaged products. • Use mechanised wrapping equipment to reduce repetitive handling, such as for wrapping pallets. • Counterbalance heavy equipment to reduce the need to support the weight and sustained holding. • Train workers in the safe use of equipment/devices.
Slips, trips and falls	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate drainage to prevent water pooling. • Ensure floor surfaces are appropriate for the work being done and are non-slip. • Ensure footwear is suitable for the type of work and environment, has a non-slip sole and appropriate tread pattern and is checked regularly to ensure treads are not worn away or clogged with contaminants. • Mark walkways and exclusion zones around work areas and ensure adequate lighting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate location and plumbing of sterilisers and wash basins to reduce water on platforms and floors. • While cleaning, workers should wear PPE. • Keep work areas clean and tidy. • Keep equipment and floor surfaces clean and well maintained. • A 'cleandown' procedure (including the swift removal of blood, fats and residues) should be followed throughout the work, not just at the end of shift. Ensure workers have a good understanding of the procedure.
Hazardous substances	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When cleaning with hot water, wear spats outside gumboots, long PVC aprons that cover past the tops of boots, and waterproof pants. • Make sure hoses used to spray hot water are rated to withstand high temperatures and pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train workers in the safe use of hazardous substances (e.g. sodium hypochlorite and other cleaning agents) and the required PPE. • Conduct written risk assessments with input from employees to identify hazardous substances and control the risks.
Young workers	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that young workers are still physically growing and may lack the understanding, experience and/or confidence in performing their duties safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induct, train and place younger workers with a suitable mentor to demonstrate and reinforce sound and safe work practices.