Occupational Health for Butchers

Labour Department
Occupational Safety and Health Branch

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH COUNCIL

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In Hong Kong, a few thousand butchers work every day in wet and small meat stalls for prolonged periods of time, cutting up meat and hanging it in the stalls for sale. They may thus sustain various occupational health problems.

The occupational health problems encountered by butchers can generally be divided into the following three categories:

1. Diseases caused by biological hazards
2. Musculoskeletal disorders
3. Occupational injuries

The objective of this booklet is to increase butchers' awareness of the above health problems and give recommendations on some specific preventive measures.
Symptoms:
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Fever
- Dizziness

Complications:
- Meningitis
- Wound infection/ulceration
- Jaundice
- Hearing loss

2. Infective Dermatitis
- Tinea pedis
- Infective dermatitis of hands
B. Musculoskeletal Disorders

1. Occupational diseases
   - Tenosynovitis of hand or forearm (including tennis elbow)

2. Shoulder and Back pain
   - Shoulder pain
   - Back pain

C. Occupational Injuries

- Electric shock
- Slip and fall
- Injury by sharp object
- Injury by machine
Preventive Measures

1. Personal Hygiene

- Clean and bandage any wound properly and wear gloves when handling raw meat.
- Do not smoke.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, e.g. cut-proof gloves.
- Keep skin clean and dry.

2. Good Housekeeping

- Put knife in knife-rest properly after use.
- Pay attention to electricity safety.
- Keep the floor clean and dry.
3. Good Work Practice

- Use mincing machine correctly
- Regular rest breaks
- Proper use of mechanical aids
- Use of team lifting approach

4. Healthy Lifestyle

- Maintain a balanced diet
- Avoid smoking and alcohol abuse
- Do exercises regularly
- Get adequate sleep
**For** enquiries on this booklet or advice on occupational health and hygiene matters, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department through:

- **Telephone**: 2852 4041
- **Fax**: 2581 2049
- **E-mail**: enquiry@labour.gov.hk

Information on the services offered by the Labour Department and on major labour legislation can also be found by visiting our website [http://www.labour.gov.hk](http://www.labour.gov.hk).

Information on the services offered by the Occupational Safety & Health Council can be obtained through hotline: 2739 9000.

**Occupational Safety and Health Complaint Hotline:**
If you have any complaints about unsafe workplaces and practices, please call the Labour Department’s occupational safety and health complaint hotline at 2542 2172.