



PLAYING IT

SAFE

Be safe and healthy on the job at with these helpful tips provided by PL&B Insurance

Food Server Safety Basics

Do's and don'ts for restaurant servers

All jobs have some physical stressors, and waiting tables is no exception. While serving food and beverages, keep the following safe work practices in mind to stay healthy and injury-free.

Physical Hazards

Serving food and bussing tables, especially while assuming awkward postures, may lead to back, neck, and shoulder strains and sprains. Specific potential hazards for servers include the following:

- Balancing or lifting too many plates or glasses while serving or clearing tables
- Balancing or lifting heavy trays above shoulder height
- Lifting large, overfilled containers of dirty dishes
- Repetitive reaching across tables to serve customers or to clear tables
- Moving and lifting tables and chairs to accommodate customers

Safe Work Practices

- Avoid awkward postures when carrying trays, plates or beverages. For example, serving with unsupported elbows and fingers can increase your risk for injury.
- Limit the number of plates or items you carry, realizing that carrying more than a few items puts additional strain on your arms and back, and over time may lead to injury.

- Use both hands to carry items, such as trays or water pitchers, and carry objects with your elbows close to your body.
- When pouring, move the glass or cup to you rather than over-reaching with a heavy coffee pot or pitcher to fill items.
- Carry plates with your elbows close to your body to lessen the strain on your arms and back. Avoid bending at the wrist or extending upward at the fingers. Your shoulder, arms and hands should be in a neutral position rather than bent at the wrist or extended upward at the fingers.
- Balance trays on both your arm and hand.
- Alternate carrying tasks from hand to hand.
- Balance the load evenly, placing heavier items in the centre of the tray.
- Make sure trays are clean and dry, and without defect before using.
- Stand by the person you are serving if possible, rather than reaching across the table and over people. In booths, enlist the people sitting closest to the edge of the booth to assist you in passing the plates along.
- Get help when moving heavy tables and chairs, rather than lifting alone.

Did You Know

Carrying plates with your elbows close to your body will lessen the strain on your arms and back.

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