

INTRODUCTION

Dicer machines are used by many in the food industry to dice fruits, vegetables, cheeses, and meats. Dicer machines can range from tabletop to full floor models. While these machines can be easy to use, improper operation or maintenance could expose you to harm. In this lesson we will cover the types of dicing machines, the hazards, the personal protective equipment, and the safe work practices associated with these machines.



TYPES OF DICING MACHINES

There are many different types of dicer machines that may be found in the workplace. These include, but are not limited to:

- Manual dicers
- Semi-automatic dicers
- Fully automatic dicers
- Programmable dicers

HAZARDS

When operating or maintaining a dicer machine, you could be exposed to one or more of the following hazards:

- Electrical shock or electrocution from improperly grounded electrical models
- Pinch points (areas where loose clothing, long hair, jewelry, and extremities can get caught)
- Burns from parts that may be heated while the machine is running
- Cuts from the blades of the machine
- Exposure to high pressure air and water which could cause physical harm
- Exposure to ultraviolet light



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

To help minimize the chances of an accident occurring, you should wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when operating or maintaining a dicer machine. PPE may include:

- Hairnet
- Cut-resistant gloves
- Close-fitting clothing

Inspect all provided PPE for wear or damage before you put it on. Report worn or damaged items to your supervisor. Do NOT wear damaged PPE.



SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Before Operating a Dicer Machine

Before operating a dicer machine, you should do the following:

- Remove all jewelry and tie back long hair.
- Read and become familiar with the manufacturer-provided owner's or operator's manual.
- If applicable, become knowledgeable about the location of all emergency stop buttons on the machine.
- Inspect the dicer for damage and dull blades.
 - Resharpener or replace dull blades as needed.
 - Report damaged units or parts to your supervisor.
 - Do NOT operate a damaged unit.
- Assure that all guards are in place and properly secured.
 - Do NOT modify guards.
 - Report missing or modified guards to your supervisor.
 - Do NOT operate a dicer that has missing or modified guards.
- Make sure that all warning labels are in good condition and are readable.
 - Report damaged or illegible labels to your supervisor.
 - Replace warning labels as needed.

When Operating a Dicer Machine

When operating a dicer machine, you should do the following:

- Only allow trained and authorized employees to operate a dicer machine.
- Operate the machine in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- If you are using a model where dicers can be interchanged or are attachments, make sure that the proper cutting blade has been properly secured to the unit in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- For large quantities of food product, make sure to practice proper ergonomics when lifting product into the machine.
- Do NOT place hands in the feeder area of the machine.
- Keep hands away from the cutting area of the machine.
- If applicable, use food pushers to push the product into feeder tubes.
- If applicable, keep hands away from heated parts of the machine.
- Only use the appropriately sized blade for the food product being diced.
 - Using the wrong sized blade could cause damage to the machine.
- If you are using a semi-automatic, automatic, or programmable model, make sure that you do not exceed the speed limits that are specified or recommended by the manufacturer.
- Only process foods through the dicer that the manufacturer specifies for the machine.
 - Some dicers are not all inclusive and are only designed for certain food products such as vegetables only, meat only, cheese only, and so on.
 - Some dicers can only process certain lengths of a food product.
- Unless permitted by the manufacturer, do NOT attempt to dice frozen food product in the machine.
- Do NOT leave dicer machines unattended.
 - If you must leave the area for any reason, you should power down the machine until all moving parts have come to a complete stop, if applicable.



- When you are finished with the dicer machine, make sure to clean and sanitize the unit in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and your company's policies and procedures.
 - Only use cleaning chemicals that are specified or recommended by the manufacturer.

Maintenance

When performing maintenance on a dicer machine, you should do the following:

- Only allow trained and authorized employees to perform maintenance tasks on dicer machines.
- Assure that all required lockout/tagout procedures for semi-automatic, fully automatic, and programmable units have been completed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and your company's policies and procedures.
- Perform all maintenance tasks in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, dicer machines are used by a variety of businesses in the food industry. Models can range from manual tabletop versions to full-sized floor models. While these products are simple to use, improper operation or maintenance could expose you to injuries such as cuts, burns, exposure to ultraviolet light, and so on. To help minimize the chances of an accident occurring, you should operate and maintain the unit in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and your company's policies and procedures. If you have questions about your dicer machine, please speak with your supervisor.