

## **Food Preparation Workers (Commercial food Prep)**

Food preparation workers perform many routine tasks under the direction of cooks, chefs, or food service managers. Food preparation workers prepare cold foods, slice meat, peel and cut vegetables, brew coffee or tea, and perform many other food service tasks.

### **Work Environment**

Food preparation workers are employed in restaurants, hotels, and other places where food is served, such as grocery stores, schools, hospitals, and cafeterias. The work is often strenuous and tiring. Food preparation workers may stand or walk for hours at a time while cleaning or preparing ingredients. Some may be required to lift and carry heavy pots or unload heavy food supplies. Food preparation areas in kitchens are often dangerous, containing hot ovens and slippery floors. As a result, food preparation workers have a higher rate of injuries and illnesses than the national average. The most common hazards include slips, falls, cuts, and burns, but these injuries are seldom serious. To reduce risks, workers often wear protective clothing, such as gloves, aprons, and non-slip shoes.

### **How to Get Qualified**

Most food preparation workers learn their skills through short-term on-the-job training, which usually lasts several weeks. Trainees typically start by working under the supervision of an experienced worker, who teaches them basic kitchen duties. Training may also include basic sanitation and workplace safety regulations, as well as instructions on how to handle and prepare food. Formal skills training and certification is becoming more and more critical for these workers.

### **Job Outlook**

Employment of food preparation workers is projected to grow 4 percent from 2012 to 2022, slower than the average for all occupations.