

# *WORKING IN ABBATTOIRS AND BUTCHERY TRADE*



- ✓ Rigorous cleanliness, sloping and drainage of the floors to prevent accumulation of water

## ❖ Ergonomics

- ✓ Ergonomically designed machines and tools
- ✓ Proper manual handling/correct lifting techniques
- ✓ The use of rails and hooks as means of attaching the carcasses

## ❖ Noise control

- ✓ Enclose noisy machines
- ✓ Regular maintenance of machines
- ✓ Provision of hearing protectors

- ❖ Proper guarding of machines and training in their use to prevent cuts, lacerations and crush injuries e.g. machine-guard to prevent access of the finger to the area of risk

- ❖ Choice and care of knives and training in their use are essential. Handles should be well designed and maintained and blades kept sharp

- ❖ Bench space should be adequate to prevent men working too closely together, especially when knives are in use

- ❖ Keeping hands dry after work and liberal use of skin moisturizers

- ❖ Adequate washing and sanitary facilities

- ❖ Provision of appropriate personal protective equipment e.g. thick leather apron, hand and arm protection such as chain mail, safety footwear with non slip soles

- ❖ Learn first aid and ensure first aid boxes are available

- ❖ Water proof dressings should be applied to any wounds during working hours and replaced by porous dressing at home

- ❖ Good housekeeping

- ❖ Provision of adequate and appropriate safety signs e.g. CAUTION-WET FLOOR

- ❖ Undergo health surveillance programme and appropriate vaccination



**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**

*FACTS ON THE HEALTH  
AND SAFETY RISKS*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Butchery covers the preparation for sale of carcasses from abattoir
- ❖ This includes:
  - cutting up carcasses into suitable joints and pieces
  - carcasses which are boned, tied or stuffed and sometimes wrapped in a plastic material
  - meat which may be minced or mixed with other foodstuffs to make sausages
  - meat which maybe be cooked and thereafter sliced

## 2. HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARDS

### ❖ Physical Hazards

- Noise from machines e.g. meat mincers - loud noise can cause hearing loss which is permanent and has no cure
- Heat stress and heat exhaustion from prolonged exposure to heat and humidity (e.g. in chicken de-feathering area)
- Cold stress when working in walk-in refrigerators or freezers when handling frozen food

### ❖ Biological hazards

- Foods may be contaminated with bacteria e.g. raw chicken meat contaminated with Salmonella and hamburger meat with E. Coli
- There is also a risk of contracting other zoonotic diseases such as erysipeloid and orf

### ❖ Chemical Hazards

- Skin diseases due to chemical irritants and/or allergens
  - Caused by contact with soaps, detergents, cleaning products, meat and poultry.
  - Workers also very frequently develop fungal skin rashes of hands and nails due to constant contact with water or brine

### ❖ Ergonomic Hazards

- Upper limb disorders and back problems e.g. strains, sprains, pain, numbness, in the hands and wrists
- Can be caused by lifting heavy loads, repetitive manual tasks, working in awkward positions or prolonged standing e.g. moving heavy and awkward carcasses

### ❖ Psychosocial Hazards

- Stress and fatigue due to paced work

### ❖ Safety Hazards

- Cuts and lacerations - from cutting knives, food mincer, food slicing or tenderizing machines
- Injuries due to slips, trips and falls e.g. wet floor, poor housekeeping
- Crush injuries from trapped fingers/limbs in moving machinery or from heavy, blunt objects such as weights and trays if dropped on the worker's foot
- Electrical shocks e.g. from inadequate insulation or earthing of machineries

## 3. PREVENTION AND CONTROL

### ❖ General environmental conditions:

- ✓ Good ventilation, adequate illumination and comfortable temperature
- ✓ Floors constructed of non-slip material