

LOSS CONTROL

Policyholder Training Series

Policy Training Series (PTS) Important Points:

- * Fryers are common and essential pieces of equipment in commercial restaurants
- * Severe burns can occur from hot oil splashes
- * Carbon monoxide poisoning can result if vent hoods or exhaust systems are not functioning properly
- * Restaurant managers are responsible for providing a safe work environment
- * Employees must heed all warnings and follow safe operating procedures
- * Employers must provide effective administrative and engineering controls

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COMMERCIAL FRYER HAZARDS

Whether preparing traditional items like French fries and fried chicken, or novelty foods like fried ice cream and deep fried spaghetti, commercial fryers are essential pieces of equipment in many restaurants. Though relatively easy to use, fryers can pose a health threat to the kitchen staff if safe operating guidelines are not followed.

Potential Hazards:

All kitchen workers, especially fry cooks, are at risk of the following injuries when working around a commercial fryer:

- ◆ **Burns** — the temperature of fryer oil is usually around 350°F. Anyone that operates or cleans commercial fryers can suffer severe burns from splashing oil.
- ◆ **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**—Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is given off when something is burned. Commercial fryers have special vents to help divert the poisonous gas to the vent hood. But if the vent hood or fryer exhaust is not functioning properly, carbon monoxide can quickly fill up the entire kitchen. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include: headaches, nausea, weakness and dizziness.

What Employees can do to Protect Themselves:

Restaurant managers are responsible for providing a safe work environment, but it is the employees' task to heed all warnings and follow safe operating procedures. Here are some safety tips for employees who work with or are around commercial fryers:

- ◆ **Wear personal protective equipment (PPE).** Oven mitts and pot holders should be used when lifting hot baskets, and steam gloves when filtering or changing the oil.
- ◆ **Don't exceed the oil fill line.** A fryer vat can quickly overflow when food is added.
- ◆ **Let the oil cool down.** When reaching above the fryer, i.e., to remove and clean the vent filters, allow the oil to cool to reduce the risk of burns. Also, let the oil cool before filtering manually. Built-in filtration systems can be used when the oil is still hot.
- ◆ **Don't spill water/ice in the fryer.** Water or ice spilled on hot oil will splash/splatter.
- ◆ **Keep the floor clean and dry.** An oily or wet floor can cause workers to slip and fall onto hot surfaces. Also wear footwear that is closed toe and slip-resistant.
- ◆ **Don't drop fry baskets or food items into the fryer.** These should be lowered slowly into the hot oil. Dropping items in will make the oil splash resulting in burns.

What Employers can do to Protect Employees:

- ◆ **Train employees.** Verify that they know proper operating and cleaning procedures.
- ◆ **Use high quality oil.** Higher quality fryer oil is less likely to splash or splatter.
- ◆ **Use non-slip mats.** Provide non-slip mats, especially around fryers.
- ◆ **Regularly inspect vent hoods.** Vent hoods that are clogged or have cracks in their piping will not operate properly and will cause carbon monoxide to accumulate.
- ◆ **Provide a Class K fire extinguisher.** Class K extinguishers are the only type approved for use in commercial kitchens.
- ◆ **Replace older fryers.** New fryers have many safety features to reduce risk of injury.

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