

LOSS CONTROL

Policyholder Training Series

Policy Training Series (PTS) Important Points:

- Common chemicals used for cleaning and sanitation can cause harm.
- Use of latex gloves can cause an allergic reaction.
- Cleaning chemicals can cause skin irritations, infections, burns and respiratory problems.
- Employees must take precautionary measures to protect themselves.
- Employers must implement administrative controls to protect employees.

For information about any of FirstComp's Loss Control Services, please call (888) 500-3344 or email losscontrol@firstcomp.com.

Hazardous Chemicals and Restaurant Safety

Chlorine, ammonia and iodine are the three chemicals commonly used in commercial kitchens for cleaning and sanitation practices. Unfortunately, these chemicals can cause serious harm to employees. Chemical burns and skin irritations are the most prevalent adverse reactions to these substances. There are several steps restaurant employees and managers can take to reduce the risks involved when working with hazardous chemicals.

Potential Hazards

Regular cleaning tasks are designed to protect customers from food-borne illnesses. Unfortunately, the chemicals used to clean and sanitize can pose a threat to restaurant workers.

- **Skin irritation** - Soaps and detergents can cause skin irritation.
- **Infections** - Broken skin can be infected or burned from hazardous chemicals.
- **Burns** - Chemicals like oven cleaners, drain openers and grill cleaners can cause burns to the skin and eyes.
- **Respiratory harm** - Chlorine and ammonia can cause respiratory, skin and eye irritation and death, especially if they are mixed together.

Latex Allergies

Latex gloves are often worn to protect the skin from hazardous chemicals. However, some workers may be allergic to latex, so non-latex gloves are recommended to prevent any allergic reactions.

What Employees Can Do to Protect Themselves

- **Use personal protective equipment (PPE)** - Dishwashing gloves or splash aprons should be provided by your employer to protect your body from hazardous chemicals.
- **Mix chemicals to recommended concentrations** - A solution that is too strong can be dangerous and will waste chemicals.
- **Never mix chlorine and ammonia** - Mixing these will create a poisonous gas.
- **Read the labels** - Chemical labels provide proper handling and mixing instructions. Also, familiarize yourself with the product Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
- **Label cleaning bottles** - Indicate what cleaning solution is in the bottle to avoid the risk of accidentally mixing the wrong chemicals together.

What Employers Can Do to Protect Employees

- **Use eco-friendly cleaners** - They are safer for guests, employees and the environment.
- **Use automated chemical dispensers** - Automatic dispensers ensure employee safety and appropriate chemical concentration.
- **Provide PPE** - Common PPE for commercial kitchen employees include goggles, chemical gloves and splash aprons.
- **Store non-compatible chemicals separately** - chemicals, like chlorine and ammonia, can create a poisonous gas if mixed. Store them separately to minimize the chances of them mixing if spilled.
- **Use lower shelves to store chemicals** - Store liquid chemicals on lower shelves to avoid the risk of spills.
- **Train employees** - In the correct use of chemicals and what to do in case of an emergency.

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