

LOSS CONTROL

Policyholder Training Series

Policy Training Series (PTS) Important Points:

- Fire is a risk in all commercial kitchens.
- Open flames, grease, poor house-keeping practices, electrical hazards and flammable materials are common causes of restaurant fires.
- Employers must implement effective administrative controls to protect employees and the business from the dangers of fire.

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

Restaurant Fire Hazards

Fire is a hazard faced by all commercial kitchens. It only takes a single spark or small gas leak to set a restaurant aflame. Only through properly training employees and following OSHA's fire safety standards can a restaurant owner protect employees and customers from danger.

Potential Hazards:

Electricity and gas are the forms of energy used to power a commercial kitchen. Everywhere that energy is found there is a potential fire hazard. The following list highlights the most common causes of restaurant fires:

Open flames - Loose clothing and hair can easily catch fire if they come into contact with open flames.

Full grease traps - Full grease traps have pieces of food and maybe even stray paper products inside them and can catch fire when more hot grease is added.

Poor housekeeping - Fire can quickly spread in dirty and cluttered walkways and storage areas.

Faulty or frayed electrical cords - Frayed electrical cords or faulty equipment are more likely to spark and cause an electrical fire.

Improper storage of flammable materials - Flammable materials must be stored away from open flames or heat sources so they do not combust.

What Employers Can Do to Protect Employees:

Restaurant owners and managers must provide proper training in order to protect their employees and business from fire. Here are some ways employers can minimize the dangers of a fire in the commercial kitchen:

Train employees on fire extinguisher use - Train employees on each shift how to properly use a fire extinguisher and activate the overhead fire suppression system, so in the event of a fire, someone on the cook line will know what to do.

Make sure employees do not attempt to fight the fire - Employees must first sound the alarm, call the fire department and activate the overhead suppression system before attempting to battle the flames themselves.

Empty grease traps regularly—Overfilled grease traps can catch fire.

Keep aisles uncluttered - Cluttered walkways will hamper employees and customers trying to escape from a fire.

Provide sufficient lighting - The emergency exit route needs to be adequately lit so employees and customers can see where they are going in case of an emergency.

Make sure exit signs are functioning - This allows employees and guests to quickly identify the exit in an emergency.

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