

Safety and health alert

08/05 Deep fat fryer

Incident

A fish and chips shop owner was injured as he attempted to remove/replace cover panels located underneath a four-vat deep fat fryer. As he attempted to do so, he accidentally opened one of the drain cocks also located underneath the fryer, and the contents of one of the vats (hot cooking oil) contacted his shoulder, causing a severe burn. Although it is not known if the shop owner had a copy of the operator's manual for the fryer at the time, he did not follow guidance in the operator's manual that states: "This machine contains no user-serviceable parts. Any and all repairs should be carried out by a qualified person", and "Do not remove any cover panels that may be on the machine."

Factors to consider

- Maintenance work commenced prior to allowing time for the oil to cool.
- The removal/replacement of cover panels was attempted by a non-qualified person.
- The locking mechanism on the drain cock handle was not engaged.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that fryers are installed in accordance with manufacturer's operating instructions. (Depending on the make of fryer there may be specific maintenance requirements associated with installation).
2. Ensure that fryers receive routine maintenance in accordance with manufacturer's 'operating instructions' by a qualified person.
3. Cover panels on the fryer should only ever be removed/replaced by a qualified person.
4. Ensure that the drain cock handle is secured in the locked position using metal locking band until vat is to be emptied.
5. On fryers not equipped with a locking type handle on the drain cock, a safe system of work should be developed to ensure that vats are not drained or emptied while cooking oil is hot.
6. Be aware of working around or over hot surfaces and develop safe work procedures.
7. Ensure regularly maintained and portable fire extinguishers of the appropriate classification and fire blankets are available in case ignition of cooking oil occurs.

Further information

For further information on this summary please contact Inspector Grady Chaney on 9327 8777 or access WorkSafe's web site at www.safetyline.wa.gov.au

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