

# Safety and health alert

## 14/05 Vegetable oils and animal fats

### Incident

An employee received serious burns to his forearms, upper left arm, neck, chin and upper chest while decanting hot vegetable oil from a deep fryer for the purpose of cleaning it. The employee was not trained appropriately about the safe system of work and therefore had not left the oil to cool long enough before handling it.

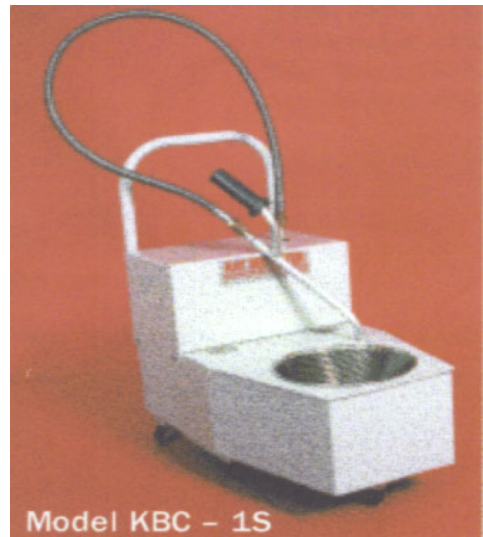
Also, the system of work did not incorporate an oil filtering machine which would have eliminated the need to handle the oil.

### Factors to consider

- Decanting hot oil is a hazardous practice.
- The employee was not adequately trained.
- A safe system of work was not followed.
- An oil filtering machine was not used.

### Recommendations

1. To eliminate the hazard, use an oil-filtering machine.
2. The oil-filtering machine will eliminate the hazard of burns and/or manual handling injuries.
3. If an oil filtering machine is not available to eliminate the hazard, leave vegetable oil to cool overnight.
4. There should be a safe system of work developed and implemented for the handling and disposal of vegetable oil and animal fat.
5. **Vegetable oil** should be decanted at less than 30 C degrees and is fluid at room temperature.
6. **Animal fat** based products solidify when cold, however remain fluid at between 35 C – 40 C degrees.
7. Ensure the safe system of work to guide employees incorporates the correct temperature for the type of oil or fat used, and expected timeframes for the products to reach safe temperatures.
8. Ensure employees are trained appropriately in safe systems of work.



Example of an oil filtering machine

### Further information

For further information on this summary please contact Inspector Angela Stanley on 9327 8777 or access WorkSafe's web site at [www.safetyline.wa.gov.au](http://www.safetyline.wa.gov.au)

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