Fine Dining Safety Fatality File

An accidental mix of cleaners – acid and bleach – generated toxic fumes that killed the manager of a Buffalo Wild Wings in Massachusetts, authorities said Friday.

The eatery's 32-year-old manager, Ryan Baldera, was killed and 13others were taken to the hospital, according to the Fire Department in Burlington, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb.

The accident occurred shortly after 5:30 p.m. when a worker began cleaning the kitchen floor just before the dinner rush.

But that employee did not know that an acid-based cleaner, Scale Kleen, had been spilled on the floor earlier. So when the worker used chlorine- and bleached-based Super 8 on the floor, the mixture turned green and started to bubble.

After that worker fled the kitchen with burning eyes and breathing issues, the manager grabbed a squeegee and tried to push the bubbling green concoction out of the restaurant and into an outdoor drain before he was unable to continue, according to the chief.

He was quickly overcome … and the squeegeeing led him to a severe medical condition.

Both the Scale Kleen and Super 8 cleaners had clear labels warning not to mix them with other products, according to fire officials.

Baldera died at Lahey Hospital & Medical Center in Burlington.

Memphis-based Auto-Chlor System appears to be the maker of both Scale Kleen and Super 8. But in a company statement, it only referred to Super 8.

"First and foremost, our condolences are with the individual and their family as well as those affected yesterday during the incident. The safety and well-being of our customers are our first

priority, always.”

The statement continued, “At this time, working with OSHA, local authorities, and emergency teams on site, we are doing everything we can to determine all details behind this incident.”

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has opened an investigation at the Buffalo Wild Wings in Burlington “to determine whether or not there were violations of workplace health and safety standards in connection to his incident,” an agency spokesman said on Friday.

“Bleach by itself shouldn’t be deadly,” said Rick Sachleben, a retired organic chemist and member of the American Chemical Society. “However when it’s a mixed with incompatible chemicals, it can generate toxic gasses and that’s probably what happened here.”

“You can put all the labels you want, but there are lots of things we use on a regular basis that are potential dangerous,” said Sachleben.