Preventing Burns and Scalds: Hospitality Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Burns and scalds are a common concern in the hospitality industry. From sizzling grills and steaming coffee to hot plates and boiling water, there are many potential hazards for staff and guests. These injuries can be serious, causing pain, scarring, and even lost work time. Luckily, by implementing precautions, hospitality businesses can significantly reduce the risk of burns and scalds.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Potential hazards and injuries related to burns and scalds are a major concern in the hospitality industry. From sizzling grills and steaming coffee to hot plates and boiling water, there are many potential hazards for staff and guests. These injuries can be serious, causing pain, scarring, and even lost work time. Here are some specific hazards that can lead to burns and scalds in hospitality settings:

- **Hot liquids:** Spills from coffee pots, kettles, soup tureens, and even beverage service can cause scalding injuries.
- **Hot surfaces:** Stoves, ovens, grills, panini presses, waffle irons, and even curling irons can all cause burns if proper care is not taken.
- **Steam:** Opening ovens, lifting pot lids, or being near vents releasing hot steam can all lead to burns.
- **Open flames:** Fireplaces, grills, and even flambéed dishes can cause burns if not handled properly.
- **Hot cooking oil:** Deep fryers and splattering oil on stoves are serious hazards that can cause significant burns.
- **Incorrect use of chemicals:** Certain cleaning products can cause chemical burns if not handled according to the instructions.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

There are steps hospitality businesses can take to mitigate these risks and prevent burns and scalds:

- **Training:** Employers should provide comprehensive training for workers on:
  - Identifying potential hazards (hot liquids, surfaces, steam, open flames, oil).
  - Safe food handling practices (using potholders, turning handles inward, avoiding overcrowding stovetops).
  - Proper use and care of equipment (ovens, grills, fryers, irons).
  - Spill clean-up procedures (avoiding direct contact, using proper tools).
  - Safe lifting techniques (to prevent spills from heavy pots).
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**
  - **Heat-resistant gloves and mitts:** Mandatory for handling hot food items, oven use, and cleaning hot surfaces.
  - **Non-slip shoes:** Reduce the risk of slips and falls near spills or wet floors.
  - **Aprons:** Provide some protection from splashes and spills.
- **Workplace Design and Maintenance:**
  - **Proper ventilation:** Reduce exposure to heat and steam in kitchens.
  - **Regular equipment checks:** Ensure all equipment is functioning properly and doesn’t have faulty parts that could cause burns.
  - **Designated spill clean-up kits:** Easily accessible for quick response to spills.
  - **Clearly marked hot zones:** Areas with hot surfaces, ovens, or open flames should be clearly identified.

What to Do If a Burn Occurs:

- **Minor Burns:**
    - Cool the burn immediately: Run cool (not cold) water over the burn for 10-15 minutes.
    - Remove any clothing or jewelry constricting the burned area.
    - Cover the burn with a sterile bandage or clean cloth.
    - Do not apply ointments, butter, or petroleum jelly.
    - Elevate the burned area if possible.
    - Monitor for signs of infection (redness, pus, fever).
    - Seek medical attention if the burn is larger than 2 inches, blisters, or occurs on the face, hands, feet, or genitals.
- **Serious Burns:**
    - Call emergency services immediately (e.g., dial 911 in the US and Canada).
    - Do not attempt to remove clothing stuck to the burn.
    - Cover the burn loosely with a clean cloth.
    - Keep the person warm and comfortable.
    - Avoid giving the person anything to eat or drink.

FINAL WORD

In the fast-paced hospitality environment, prioritizing burn prevention protects your workers and ensures a smooth operation. By implementing these steps, you can create a safer and healthier workplace for everyone.