

SAFETY ALERT

Serious burns incidents – Restaurant, kitchen operators and workers beware

Background

Recently, two incidents occurred in Sydney in the space of one week, where kitchen workers suffered serious burns after methylated spirits was mistakenly used near a heat source or flame. In both incidents workers unwittingly used containers thought to contain a different cleaning agent.

The purpose of this safety alert is to remind Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBUs) and workers of the need to correctly store and use hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

Action required

Work health and safety laws require PCBUs to eliminate risks from the use of hazardous chemicals or, where this is not possible, to control those risks as far as reasonably practicable.

Risk controls

- Where possible, use non-flammable water-based chemicals for cleaning.
- Always follow instructions for safe use and handling found in safety data sheets that should be obtained from the chemical supplier. Information should also be available on the chemical container's label.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision to workers on the safe use of hazardous chemicals in the workplace.
- Store and use flammable chemicals away from ignition sources such as heat and flames.
- When using flammable chemicals, make sure you have an appropriate fire extinguisher and fire blanket at the ready and make sure staff know how to use them.
- Always store chemicals in their original container and, if the chemical is poured into another container (such as a spray bottle), make sure that the container is compatible with the chemical and that it is also clearly labelled.
- Do not use food containers to hold hazardous chemicals.

Further information

- Call WorkCover on 13 10 50
- Visit workcover.nsw.gov.au



Flame damage to a container of methylated spirits

Disclaimer

This publication may contain work health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au).

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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WorkCover NSW, 92-100 Donnison Street, Gosford, NSW 2250
Locked Bag 2906, Lisarow, NSW 2252 | WorkCover Assistance Service **13 10 50**
Website workcover.nsw.gov.au

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