



# Safety alert 04/2012

## 15-year-old worker injured while washing coolroom floor in fast food outlet

The purpose of this safety alert is to highlight the dangers associated with washing floors using an inappropriate bucket and hot water mixed with the chemicals, and to suggest possible control measures to assist industry to manage the risk.

### Background

A worker at a fast food outlet received superficial and partial thickness burns while washing the floor.

The container used was large (21 litres) and was filled to capacity with hot water and a cleaning chemical. The bucket was too heavy for the 15-year-old worker to lift, so the container was dragged along the floor. The container tipped, causing the contents to spill into the worker's shoes, resulting in burns to their feet.

When the accident occurred, the worker was offered an ice pack to put on the injury.

### Contributing factors

- A written safe system of work was not available at the time of the incident.
- The bucket provided was not suitable for the task ie too heavy when full.
- The hot water was not regulated to a safe working temperature.
- There was no personal protective equipment provided to protect the worker from the heat hazard.

### Action required

A risk assessment on all tasks must be done by the employer or person in control of the workplace.

1. Workers must be trained and supervised in using safe work procedures.
2. A bucket must be provided that is designed for the task.
3. Personal protective equipment is provided by the employer and worn by the worker ie rubber boots.
4. Hot water is regulated to a safe working temperature.
5. First aid facilities, including trained personnel, must be available to immediately provide appropriate treatment. Cool, running water has been shown to be the best method for first aid treatment of burn injuries, and ice has been shown to be ineffective or to aggravate the injury.

### Further information

Further information relevant to the fast food industry can be obtained from WorkSafe's website [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au) or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or emailing [safety@commerce.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@commerce.wa.gov.au)

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