

SAFETY ALERT

Preventing electric shocks when using chafing dishes

The purpose of this alert is to remind employers and workers how to use chafing dishes safely.

Background

This safety alert follows an incident at a hotel involving a worker who received an electric shock from a chafing dish. The chafing dish was a stainless steel bowl that had an electrical element attached to its bottom, which included a cord and a thermostat. The cord was plugged into a power point that was located under a buffet and workers were required to lift the chafing dish off the buffet to adjust its thermostat. When this was done on one occasion, the worker accidentally placed the chafing dish's electrical element on top of a part of the cord, which melted the cord's insulation. When the worker touched the chafing dish again, they received an electric shock.



Action required

Work health and safety laws require employers to eliminate the risks of electric shock and electrocution or, where this is not reasonably practicable, to control them. Control measures must be determined in consultation with employees.

Risk controls

Risk controls can include any of the following.

- Assessing electrical equipment that has a cord, especially in cases where the cord is not easily visible during the equipment's operation.
- Routine checks to ensure that cord insulation is intact and that wires are not exposed.
- Training staff to use equipment correctly, including ensuring that they are aware of the risks of using the equipment incorrectly.
- Testing and tagging electrical equipment.
- Installing residual current devices (RCDs) on electrical sockets and electrical equipment that uses more than 50volts.

Further information

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

Disclaimer

This publication may contain occupational 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.

©WorkCover NSW