

Part-Time Fast Food Employee Suffers a Chemical Burn – “It was just so much pain”

Industry: Food Service

Task: Cleaning grill

A part-time fast food employee suffered a chemical burn while cleaning the restaurant’s grill when the chemical cleaner splashed out of a bucket and onto her hand. She was not wearing gloves and the cleaning product caused a second-degree burn with severe pain and blistering on her hand. “It was really painful; it was just so much pain that I just left for the hospital”. She was rushed to the emergency room by a co-worker.

Cleaning the grill was not part of her typical work duties, but she agreed to the task to help out a co-worker. Full-time employees received training on how to use this particular product, but as a part-time employee she received no training. She was not informed that the product was hazardous and that the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (like natural, nitrile, or butyl rubber gloves) likely would have prevented her injuries.



Always read the label on cleaning products

Facts

- In Washington State, hospitality and food services are the most common employer among injured youth.
- Burns are one of the most common injuries among teens in restaurants.

Resources

- Protect Yourself: Cleaning Chemicals and Your Health (poster):
www.osha.gov/Publications/3511-CleanChemPoster.pdf
- Scald Burns in Restaurant Workers (burn injury fact sheet):
www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Files/RestaurantScaldBurns.pdf
- Chemical Hazard Communication (information booklet):
www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3084.html
- Youth Worker Safety in Restaurants: Clean-up/Hazardous chemicals (OSHA eTool):
www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/restaurant/cleanup_haz.html

Recommendations for Workers

- Read the product label before using it.
- Talk to your supervisor if you do not feel safe using any of the tools at work.
- You have the right to read Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) for any chemicals you use.
- You may file a formal complaint when you believe a safety or health hazard exists in the workplace:

www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Basics/Complaint/default.asp

- Contact LNI about your workplace rights at 360-902-6041 or TeenSafety@Lni.wa.gov

Employer Requirements

- Inform and train employees about the hazards of chemicals they may be exposed to, provide training to employees about working in the presence of hazardous chemicals, keep the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) and make sure labels on containers are in place and easy to read. See [WAC 296-800-170](http://wac.wa.gov/WAC%20296-800-170)
- Employers need to provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves for employees. See [29 CFR. 1910.132](http://www.ecfr.gov/29CFR1910.132)

Need more information?

Contact SHARP at 1-888-66-SHARP (toll-free)
or email SHARP@Lni.wa.gov