

## **SIMPLY SAFE – JUNE 2009**

### **BBQ SEASON**

As the weather heats up in the UK we suddenly realise the joys of outdoor living. It seems everyone is having a barbecue and many of our businesses are no different. With the smell of sausages and burgers wafting out from many a garden or patio area, it is important not to forget some of the important measures that should be in place to safeguard the food, your staff and customers.

Barbecuing and food safety: when planning a barbecue, make sure that you consider what foods you will be serving. Most will require refrigeration to prevent bacteria from multiplying to dangerous levels. The food should be cooked throughout with exceptions made for items such as steak which can be cooked pink! Your barbecuer is still a food handler and must maintain a high level of personal hygiene including wearing over clothing and maintaining clean hands and utensils, so bowls of hot water, soap and disinfectant are a must.

Barbecuing and health and safety: it goes without saying that any item of equipment which can be used to cook on is going to be hot! So, when setting up your barbecue, make sure that persons (especially children) cannot put out a hand and burn themselves whilst you're cooking. Make sure that you check the condition of your barbecue before you use it. Checking its stability and that any connection hoses are fixed [i.e. not leaking] and in good condition takes a few seconds but can prevent serious accidents. If the sun is shining, spare a thought for the barbecuer and make sure that suitable shade and sunscreen are provided. It is important that the barbecue itself is not left unattended so plan breaks and ensure someone can cover inevitable comfort breaks.



### **LPG SAFETY**

With the advent of summer more and more customers will be heading outside to eat and drink. Increased use of barbecues and patio heaters will mean a significant increase in the use of LPG cylinders. With this in mind, it is important to remember a few safety rules for storing cylinders.

- Cylinders should be used and stored in the upright position
- Cylinders should be stored in well ventilated places away from sources of heat, ignition sources and readily ignitable materials.
- Cylinders must not be stored in cellars.
- Cylinders should be stored outdoors, away from entrances and exits and drains.

### **FOOD SAFETY WEEK**

Remember that from 15-21 June is Food Safety Week. Your local authorities may be planning an event which you could get involved in, or use this week as a time to remind your customers of just how much you value food safety and great hygiene standards.

### **A-Z OF FOOD SAFETY**

#### **J is for Judge and ...Jail!**

Of course it's important that food businesses ensure good food hygiene and cleanliness standards to ensure it's a great place to work, producing fantastic food. It's also important to get things right because it's the law! Getting things seriously wrong when you receive a visit from the EHO can result in an appearance in Court. Fines for Regulatory offences carry a fine of £5,000 per offence! If the offence is particularly serious, the offence may result in the trial being committed to the Crown Court where things get even more serious and fines become unlimited! Offences of sections of the Food Safety Act can result in fines of £20,000 and the possibility of up to 2 years in Jail. The answer...? Stay legal and ensure that the food hygiene standards and cleanliness are always given top priority.

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## **GARDENS AND EXTERNAL AREAS**

One of the most significant areas of concern in recent years has been related to civil claims against businesses for accidents and incidents on their premises, many of which are very preventable.

It can all too often be the case that the areas outside of a business are given less priority which can result in broken glass, defective paths and paving and defective equipment giving rise to claims for injury. It is a great idea to prioritise routine checks of external areas to ensure that hazards can be highlighted and removed or reduced before an injury occurs.

Play equipment should be routinely checked to ensure that there are no sharp edges, protrusions or damaged parts which could injure a child. These checks are to be recorded, signed and dated, as they may be required to illustrate the safety controls in place within the business.

Checks of other areas such as patios and grassed areas for changes in level or evidence of broken glass at the start of each day is best. Once again, recording, signing and dating to show when the checks took place provides evidence which you hope will never be needed.

If a defect is reported or an accident or mishap reported, ensure that all staff are fully aware of the process for recording and investigating accidents and incidents. A review of this procedure every few months is a great way of ensuring that everybody treats all incidents in the same manner.

- Make sure ALL reported incidents are treated seriously and are recorded.
- Take as much detail as possible.
- Review the area where an incident is reported to have happened, record what was seen.
- Make safe any area or issue which may have given rise to an accident.
- Report any accident or incident to Perry Scott Nash as soon as possible.



## **RECENT PROSECUTIONS**

### **Broken Leg Leads to Fine**

A Pub Company was fined £9,800 following a fall by an employee whilst work was being carried out which involved the removal of an inspection chamber cover. The employee fell a total of 1.6 metres and as a result broke the tibia and fibula of her left leg. The fines concerned themselves with the fact the Maintenance Company had failed to carry out a suitable risk assessment of their activities. This emphasises the importance of choosing the right contractors and ensuring they work safely when on your property.

### **Hefty Fine for Unsafe Systems of Work**

A Hotel in Bradford was fined after EHO's witnessed staff removing a flag pole (working at height) without the appropriate safety equipment or safe systems of work. The incident was photographed and these were used as evidence in the successful prosecution. The fines received by the Hotel Company totalled £18,000 with a further personal fine being received by the Maintenance Manager.

### **Filthy Failings Lead to Formal Caution**

A National Pub Chain has been issued with a formal caution and agreed to pay costs of £7,700 after one of its pubs was found to have had a filthy kitchen on three separate local authority visits. EHO's discovered adult and larvae insects in the kitchen due to the grimy conditions. In addition, there were deposits of grease, dirt and food debris stuck to the floor and wall surfaces and a microwave oven was found to have deposits of old food inside. The Company agreed to accept a formal caution which means that any further breaches will result in these findings being made known to the Courts should there be the need for any future prosecution.

### **Fines Follow Some of the Worst Standards Seen in Years**

A Hotel chain have recently been fined a total of £38,000 for filthy standards noted during an EHO inspection. Council officers said after the hearing that it was one of the "worst cases we've seen in a long time. We will not tolerate poor food hygiene practices of this nature and will continue to enforce in such cases to protect the community."

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