

SAFETY ALERT

Incident Type: Temperature / Scald injury

Location : North Dining Hall

Date: July 2014

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Incident Description:

A service associate was cleaning one of the food steamer units at north dining hall. The bottom compartment of the steamer was difficult to open and when it did open hot water (approx. 15 gallons) exited the compartment and contacted the service associate and a cook in the nearby area. This resulted in scald injuries to the employees ankles and feet which required medical attention.

Figure 1:

Dining hall steamer units.



Figure 2: broken part on the pushrod linkage led to the steamer not draining when it should have.



Investigation Findings:

- The pushrod linkage was found to have a broken stopper part. This allowed the linkage to get in the wrong position and even though the pushrod was in the “off” position the valve did not open.
- The steamer units contain pressure gauges which are difficult to read due to condensation and are rarely referenced by those who operate the equipment.
- Preventative maintenance for steamer units does occur but focuses on parts that need additional upkeep such as door hinges and door seals.

Root Causes:

A component failure caused an employee to believe a steamer was drained when it wasn't. Turning the handle to release the compartment door was difficult but the employee continued without recognizing the increased resistance from the hot water behind that compartment door and didn't recognize the pressure reading on the pressure gauge. The pushrod was in the “off” position which would normally mean that the valve had opened and any steam and water has drained out the bottom of the unit.

Recommendations to prevent re-occurrence :

1. Inspect similar steamer units on campus to verify the linkage components are in good condition. **complete**
2. Replace the linkage part on the equipment involved in this incident. **Complete**
3. Communicate to employees if there is additional resistance when attempting to open a compartment door, you must stop and notify food service maintenance. **Complete**
4. Replace all steamer pressure gauges at North Dining Hall. **Complete**
5. Include an inspection of pushrod linkage in quarterly steamer preventative maintenance. **Complete**
6. Engineer representing equipment manufacturer inspect the equipment and determine cause of component failure. **Waiting final report.**