Kitchen safety at your resort

There's no better way to top off a day of skiing than to head to the lodge for a nice meal or refreshment. Ski resorts are known for their cuisine, so on a busy day that means that the kitchen is ablaze cooking up culinary masterpieces. Just as important as the finer touches on that special dish is the need to maintain a safe kitchen. Most resorts have commercial cooking operations. A commercial kitchen is simply defined as a kitchen that prepares food for sale to the public. Commercial kitchens may range from a simple stove or food warmer to a bank of grills, broilers, and fryers. Unlike residential kitchens, commercial kitchens are required to meet state and local regulations as well as comply with fire codes. OSHA or your state worker safety administration sets forth the safe working conditions required for kitchen staff. The local health department will dictate what food safety conditions the kitchen operates under and if you need any permits or inspections. The local fire marshal and code compliance officer will dictate what fire code standards you are required to follow. Your insurance provider will also chime in with some industry requirements that they deem necessary.

As much as we are tempted to talk about our favorite dishes, this article will focus on the basic safety practices you need in your commercial kitchen.

Worker safety

The most common injuries in a kitchen include back injuries, cuts, and burns. These injuries can be reduced by cleaning spills immediately, wearing slip-resistant shoes, avoiding back strain while lifting or standing, using safe cutting practices, and using protective gear when handling hot utensils or equipment. Some commercial equipment such as meat slicers, food processors, commercial mixers, pressure cookers, and fryers can cause severe injuries if used improperly. Only trained personnel should be allowed to operate such equipment and safety practices must be followed at all times.

Food safety

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that nearly 48 million people experience food poisoning annually.1 Many of these reported cases are traced back to dining out. Everyone working in a commercial kitchen is required to obtain a food handler's permit. This is issued by the local health department after the worker attends a training class and passes a test. Essentials of food safety include observing expiration dates on items, maintaining perishable food at appropriate temperatures, washing hands, maintaining clean food prep areas, separating hot and cold food prep, proper cooking of meat, and proper cleaning of cooking equipment, utensils, and surfaces.

In the next issue we will discuss fire safety as it relates to your commercial kitchen operations.

For more information regarding this topic, contact your Safehold Special Risk sales executive.