Controlling cooking fumes

Engineering control

Workplace and access
- Restaurant kitchen workers, mobile hot food vendors and barbecue operators are most likely to breathe in cooking fumes.
- Restrict access to those people who need to be there.
- Keep the workplace well organised, with clear exit routes.

Design and equipment
- Keep the workplace well ventilated - 5 to 10 air changes per hour with a through draught.
- It may be useful to wire in the ventilation system with the cooking gas supply.
- Fit hoods or canopies over cooking appliances. These should be wider than the appliance on all sides by 25 to 30 cm (12 inches).
- You need an air speed between 0.25 and 0.5 metres per second at the face of the canopy.
- Make sure that cooking fumes discharge into a safe place, away from doors, windows, and away from wet cooling towers.
- Don’t use a cap or deflector plate on discharge ducts.
- If you need to control nuisance odour, you need to fit filtration equipment - seek specialist advice.

Procedures
- Keep the air clear of cooking fumes. Make sure the hood extraction is turned on and working properly.
- Check that the air inlets and insect screens for make-up air are not blocked.

Maintenance
- Follow instructions in maintenance manuals.
- Keep equipment in effective and efficient working order.
- If the equipment is faulty, get it repaired immediately.

Examination and testing
- At least once a week, look for signs of damage.
- If extraction is fitted, you need to
know the extraction design performance to know if it is working properly. The equipment supplier’s manual should give this information.
✓ Get a competent ventilation engineer to examine the system thoroughly and test its performance at least once every 14 months (see HSE publication HSG54).
✓ Keep records of all examinations and tests for at least five years.

Cleaning and housekeeping

✅ Keep the work area clean.
✅ Clean up spills promptly - practise how to do this.
✅ Keep the ventilation and filtration systems clean of residues.
❌ Never clean canopies or filters with the cooking equipment turned on, or with hot fat nearby.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

✅ Wear protective gloves for cleaning. Single-use gloves are acceptable. If you must use latex gloves, use only ‘low-protein, powder-free’ gloves.
✅ Skin creams are important for skin protection and help in washing contamination from the skin. These are not ‘barrier creams’. After work creams help to replace skin oils.

Health advice

✅ Ask your workers to check their skin for dryness or soreness every six months. If these effects appear, check the proper use of skin creams and PPE.
✅ If dermatitis (rashes, itching, skin cracking and peeling) appears seek medical advice. Tell the doctor that work could be a cause.

Training

✅ Show your workers this sheet and check that they understand it.
✅ Make sure everyone knows how to clear up spills promptly and safely.

Further information

- General ventilation in the workplace: Guidance for employers HSG202
  HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 1793 9
- Maintenance, examination and testing of local exhaust ventilation HSG54
- Assessing and managing risks at work from skin exposure to chemical agents: Guidance for employers and health and safety specialists HSG205
  HSE Books 2001 ISBN 0 7176 1826 9
- Preventing dermatitis at work: Advice for employers and employees
  Leaflet INDG233 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 15
  ISBN 0 7176 1246 5)
- Occupational health professionals: details of doctors and nurses can be found in the Yellow Pages under ‘Health and safety consultants’ and ‘Health authorities and services’. Also visit the NHS website at www.nhsplus.nhs.uk