

## Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

## Dry cleaning and laundry industry - Boilers

### What can go wrong with a boiler?

Pressurised boilers are used to provide steam and heat for a range of processes at dry cleaners and laundries. Damaged boilers can lead to contents leaking or the boiler rupturing. If a boiler ruptures, the consequences can be catastrophic, resulting in injuries or damage to property.

### How can danger be avoided?

It is essential that effective maintenance and inspection programs are implemented to make sure dangerous situations are avoided or detected early. This program should:

- include procedures for the safe operation, inspection and maintenance of all boilers
- specify the maximum period of time between inspections of the interior and exterior of the boiler and all safety fittings
- include documented safety procedures to be followed for inspection and maintenance
- determine what needs to be done during inspections
- ensure maintenance and inspection records are kept
- ensure all inspections and maintenance are performed by a competent person.

### Clear directions should also be provided on:

- safely starting-up, running and shutting down the boiler
- frequency of water tests and blow downs
- what to do in high and low water conditions
- what to do in an emergency.

### How often should inspections and maintenance be conducted and how should these be done?

Manufacturer's instructions and operating manuals will give guidance for specific boilers, with detailed directions relating to safety checks. There are several Australian standards that also give guidance on when and how inspections and maintenance should be performed on boilers. Some of the items that should be checked regularly include:

- gauges and control equipment (e.g. low water indicator)
- pressure relief valves
- pumps and valves
- water quality and treatment methods
- burner and fuel systems (e.g. automatic fuel cut out on flame failure).

Special care needs to be taken when cleaning fuel oil burners, as soot and scale build up over time, which can contain lead. Both the soot and the lead in the soot are potentially hazardous. Some ways of minimising the likelihood of people being exposed to soot and scale include:

- using vacuum suction to remove loose soot or scale
- dampening adherent soot or scale where possible
- thoroughly hosing the entire boiler to remove any residual soot or scale
- washing all equipment used during cleaning
- not eating, drinking or smoking while in contact with contaminated soot or scale

- removing and washing all work clothes worn during cleaning prior to wearing them again
- putting all disposable items used during cleaning in a sealed plastic bag for disposal
- thoroughly showering, including washing hair and cleaning fingernails when cleaning is finished.

### **Do I need to let anyone know I have a boiler?**

Some boilers must be registered with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. Registering a boiler is based on its volume and pressure.

For more information on boilers and general obligations workplace health and safety issues call 1300 369 915 or visit [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)

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