

FIRE IN A FOOD ESTABLISHMENT



Fires are dangerous, even after they are extinguished. The following UW Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) guidance can help retail food establishments protect workers, customers, and the facility from heat, smoke, fumes, chemical, and/or water damage hazards, and assist with reopening after a fire.



AFTER A FIRE

A kitchen fire is an emergency/imminent health hazard (unsafe to prepare or serve food) under the [Washington State Food Code](#).

1. **Contact emergency services and provide first aid** to any personnel injured/impacted by the fire.
2. **Stop all work** in the area. **Block off the affected area** and don't use equipment, utensils, or other items affected by the fire. For a large fire, you may have to close the facility.
3. The person in charge of the food establishment must immediately **contact UW EH&S** (call 206-685-8973 to reach EH&S staff on call after hours) to report the workplace incident and work with the EH&S **Environmental Public Health Team to determine a plan** that includes:
 - Steps to fix the emergency and start safely working in the affected area again; and
 - What work can be done in other areas of the kitchen until everything is back to normal.If UW EH&S **approves** the plan, you can start implementing it. UW EH&S will come to **inspect** the affected area before reopening.
4. A supervisor must **submit an incident report (OARS) to EH&S within 24 hours**. UW Medicine personnel follow UW Medicine accident reporting procedures.

BEFORE REOPENING



- Verify hot and cold **running water** is available for handwashing and dishwashing.
- Have **gas and electrical systems inspected** by certified technicians prior to reactivating any equipment.
- Verify all **equipment works correctly**, including refrigeration, cooking, hot holding, and ventilation equipment.
- **Get approval** from the fire department, UW Facilities teams, UW EH&S and any other assisting campus partners or agencies.
- **Review food safety protocols** with staff to ensure compliance with the food code post-recovery. **Review fire response plans**. Re-train as needed.
- Consider sharing UW [counseling](#) opportunities to **support staff** in managing stress or anxiety related to the fire incident.
- **Restock inventory** from approved suppliers.

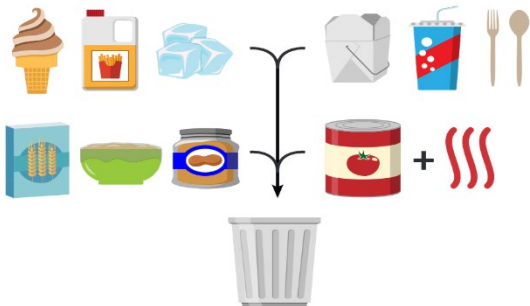
Contact [UW EH&S](#) Environmental Public Health team to schedule a kitchen **pre-opening inspection**. The affected area (or facility for a larger fire) must stay closed until approved to reopen. In some cases, plan review may be required.



ITEMS TO DISCARD

Document inventory discarded because of fire, heat, smoke/fumes damage or contamination by fire suppression chemicals. You may be able to file an insurance claim. Discard:

- Unpackaged foods, opened/unsealed dry food and spices.
- Ice, fryer oil, shake and ice cream mixes.
- Food in refrigerators and freezers that may have been exposed to toxic fumes from burning materials. Equipment seals aren't airtight and fumes can get inside.
- Foods that entered the temperature danger zone for an unknown period of time.
- Food with permeable packaging such as cardboard, plastic wrap, and screw cap jars and bottles.
- Single service items such as cups, to-go containers, napkins and straws.
- Equipment and linens that cannot be repaired or thoroughly cleaned.
- Canned foods exposed to heat. You may be able to save canned food not exposed to heat if you can wash, rinse, and sanitize the cans without affecting the labels.



WASH, RINSE AND SANITIZE

Coordinate cleanup between UW facilities and trained kitchen personnel. Consider hiring a professional cleaning service or fire restoration service to help with cleaning after a large fire or in a large, affected area.

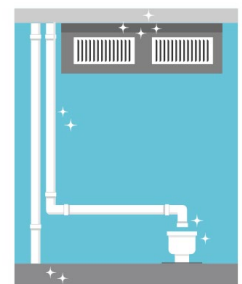
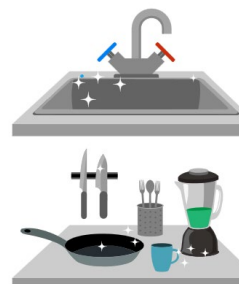
For [fire extinguisher residue cleanup](#), always **follow instructions** on the extinguisher label and chemical [safety data sheet \(SDS\)](#). Different suppression chemicals require different personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning methods.

Food establishment cooking areas have [Class K wet chemical extinguishers](#) for fighting grease and cooking oil fires. Surfaces with extinguisher residue can be sticky or slippery. Wipe up residue with clean damp cloths, towels, or mops, and dispose of used items per local regulations.

A degreaser may be needed to remove residual grease on non-food contact surfaces. **Wash food and non-food contact surfaces with soap and water and rinse. Food contact surfaces undergo an additional sanitizing step** before air drying.

Clean surfaces and equipment where **residue remains and at least a 10 feet radius** from the extinguisher discharge area. Surfaces to address include:

- Utensils, silverware, dishware, pots and pans, food preparation equipment and sinks
- Floors, walls, ceilings, vent hood, exposed pipes, and floor drains
- Dining area tables, chairs, menus, and restrooms



Contact EH&S at 206-616-1623 or phdept@uw.edu for more information.