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Kitchen Exhaust System and Hazards

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In the 60's and early 70's, living standard in Malaysia was very low and most of the people took their meals at home. At that time, economy was slow and most of the ladies and women stayed at home looking after their children and preparing food for their family members. Seldom people having their lunch outside. Nowadays, living standard is very high compares to those days. More and more restaurants can be seen everywhere in shopping malls, shop lots, commercial buildings etc. Women are offered with job. Most people are having their meals outside especially lunch.

In Malaysia, each year, there are more than one hundred cases of fire caused by the greasy kitchen exhaust. Fortunately there is no loss of life. Therefore, kitchen exhaust system need to be monitor all the time and carry out cleaning when it is due. This is to safeguard the safety of the public.

Also, a lot of food poisoning happened in Malaysia. Most of these are not reported except a few cases that are serious. There are many reasons causing food poisoning. One of the reasons is while preparation for food under the vane hood, dirty greasy stuff fall from the vane hood contaminate the food.

A typical kitchen exhaust system in a restaurant is made of three main components: the grease hood, the duct and the exhaust fan. Cooking vapors is exhausted from the hood through the duct and out of the building. Over a period of time, grease will accumulate in the vane hood, interior ducting and will even clog and slow down the efficiency of the exhaust fan. The oil that accumulated at the vane hood is a hazard. It might also falls onto the food under preparation. The accumulated grease inside the ducting has a potential to fire. When the exhaust fan is not working well to remove

the cooking fumes out of the building, the cooking fumes (also contain carbon monoxide) will circulate in the kitchen & dining area. This can adversely affect the health of employer, employee and the customers.

Although our government body BOMBA has a regulation on this issue of kitchen exhaust cleaning, but there is no enforcement carried out. They should have a system to carry out inspection more often to safeguard the life and property of public. They should also propagate this kind of possible hazard to the public. Regular decontamination of kitchen exhaust system depending on its usage is very important. Kitchen exhaust system must be decontaminated at least every year. For heavy usage, cleaning should be carried out every 6 months or even as short as every 4 months intervals.

To ensure restaurant operators clean their kitchen exhaust system regularly, the government should pass a penalty law. Restaurant staff should report to his employer when the exhaust system is due for cleaning. This is to ensure the safety of all the employees, the customers and the public.