PRESS RELEASES

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Ecolab Recognizes National Fire Prevention Week: Foodservice Operators Reminded of Dangers of Unmanaged Grease

ST. PAUL, Minn., Sep 20, 2002 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Every 18 seconds, emergency personnel somewhere in the nation respond to a fire, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Thousands of these blazes occur in restaurants and other eating establishments. The culprit? Grease.

In recognition of the Oct. 6-12 observance of Fire Prevention Week, industry organizations such as the International Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Association (IKECA) are reminding foodservice operators that grease is a natural, highly flammable and ultimately unavoidable byproduct of the food preparation process - and, when not properly managed, can be very dangerous.

"A fire may start on a cooking line, but it will really accelerate if there's grease built up in the hood and exhaust system," said Rod Getz, president of IKECA, a nonprofit trade organization that promotes standards for kitchen exhaust cleaning. "Grease builds up as part of the cooking process, providing fuel for the fire to exist inside the duct work. Every kitchen exhaust system should be cleaned on a regular basis."

The frequency of the cleaning depends on the type of cooking and the volume cooked. IKECA strongly recommends not only just cleaning the hood, but the entire exhaust system.

"That can be more difficult and in-depth than cleaning just the hood," Getz added. But if it's not completely clean, it doesn't provide any fire protection - it just looks nice." Getz, who also serves on several NFPA fire safety standards committees, said some businesses will try to save money by choosing not to clean or repair kitchen exhaust systems.

"In one instance, a restaurant was located in a condominium unit," he said, "and the fire got into the duct work and caused $30 million in damages to the building."

The economic impact from a fire can be devastating for any business, but steps can be taken to make kitchens safer by removing grease on a regular basis. Through its Facilitec business, Ecolab helps restaurants nationwide manage grease-related problems by utilizing its kitchen exhaust cleaning services and rooftop grease containment products.

"Services like those we provide are a significant piece of an overall risk management program having to do with fire and fire safety," said Mike Gustafson, Ecolab's general manager for Facilitec.

An average restaurant would need kitchen exhaust cleaning on a quarterly basis, but a high-volume or solid fuel cooking facility should be receiving service bi-monthly or even monthly, according to Gustafson.

"The longer you wait to clean the ducts, the more your risk goes up," Gustafson explained. "At some point, if you don't clean it at all, you're likely to have a fire - and you could burn your building down."

Facilitec removes all the grease, from the hood and duct work to the roof and fan.

"Our grease management program is designed to manage grease from 'cooktop to rooftop,'" Gustafson said. "And our program has the industry's only 'Grease-free Guarantee.'"

Ecolab's Facilitec business is a longtime, certified member of IKECA, which has established stringent Standards & Practices for contractors engaged in kitchen exhaust cleaning, conducted a variety of educational programs, and worked with influential code setting bodies such as NFPA to improve existing codes and regulations. Further information about IKECA is available on www.ikeca.org.

With sales exceeding $3 billion, Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing, pest elimination, maintenance and repair products and services for the hospitality, institutional and industrial markets. Ecolab shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the Pacific Exchange under the symbol ECL.

For more information about Facilitec and the services it provides, call 1-800-284-8273.

Ecolab news releases and other investor information are available on the Internet at www.ecolab.com and by telephone at 1-800-FACT-ECL.

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