



SAFETY ASSESSMENT  
FEDERATION

# Managing the Risks of Café Boilers

## Pressure Systems

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## Pressure Systems

### Introduction

Awareness of the risks associated with the failure of café boilers is an important issue in the workplace. Every year, millions of people come in close proximity to a café boiler without being aware of their existence, or the possible danger they face. On the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2010 a café boiler which was installed at a supermarket café failed catastrophically in service due to over pressurisation, which led to the hospitalization of a number of people, the café boiler itself was propelled from outside the counter area and came to rest within the customer area of the café. Investigation of this failure highlighted areas where legislation and industry guidance had not been followed, which subsequently led to the failure.

### Risk Management

It is imperative that users/owners manage the risk of poor maintenance and operation of Café Boilers by complying with UK law and appropriate guidance, such as SAFed guidance PSG 8.

### Employer/Duty Holder Responsibilities

The user/owner of a pressure system has the primary responsibility for the safety of employees and others in the workplace<sup>1</sup>. The Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016<sup>2</sup> is one such control measure, this deals with the design, manufacture and certification of such boilers/systems, The Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000<sup>3</sup> (PSSR) deal with the taking into service of such equipment and the ongoing requirements, which generally include placing the following duties on the user/owner:-

- The establishment of the Safe Operating Limits (SOL).
- Appointment of a Competent Person to draw up a Written Scheme of Examination (***prior to use***) \* and carry out subsequent examinations as prescribed within that scheme.
- Provide the operators with pertinent operating (and emergency action) instructions, train them to follow those instructions and adequately supervise them in that activity.

- Maintain the system in good repair so as to prevent danger, see PUWER<sup>4</sup>.
- Keep adequate records as specified in the PSSR.
- If the system is leased or hired the requirements of Schedule 2 of PSSR must be clarified.

**\*It is important to point out that the regulations state that a pressure system should not be placed into operation without a WSE being in existence, doing so is a breach of Regulation 8 of PSSR.**

### Examination by a competent person

The examination of the café boiler should be arranged by the user/owner in accordance with the PSSR regulation 9, it is usual for this to be carried out by an independent inspection company, competent to do so.

Competence requirements are addressed in the PSSR Approved Code of Practice<sup>3</sup> (ACoP). There are several routes to competence, and one method acknowledged by the HSE, is through accreditation by UKAS to ISO/IEC17020 (international standard for inspection bodies) for the scope of PSSR inspections. The competent person is responsible for carrying out the examination, which should include a report in accordance with the ACoP and, more importantly to advise the user/owner, of any defects in the system that could lead to danger. Where the report states that the system is in a state which could be dangerous, the user/owner should take immediate steps to remove the system from use until the defects have been rectified. Failure to address this may put the user/owner in breach of legislation and persons in danger.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it is recommended that users/owners of café boilers should review their use of café boilers in light of the current UK legislation and industry guidance to provide a safe working environment for their employee's. In particular they should note the guidance provided above and discharge their responsibilities to comply with the law and reduce the risk to health and safety of their employee's and others.

**Further reading is available at: -**

**HSE - Report number:** ES/2016/11 entitled “Controlling the risks from Small Pressure Vessels – Espresso Machines, Bench top autoclaves and model steam engines”

SAFed (Safety Assessment Federation) <http://www.safed.co.uk/>  
UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) <https://www.ukas.com/>

- <sup>1</sup> Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) s2(2)(e)
- <sup>2</sup> The Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
- <sup>3</sup> The Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 – L122
- <sup>4</sup> Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations Reg 5, 6 etc.

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