



Introduction

The initiative to look into the safety of hot water dispenser at patient care area was started to ensure a safer environment for patients and visitors using hot water dispenser.

Methodology

Observation of hot water dispensers was made during workplace safety surveys conducted at the patient care areas in the hospital. The data gathered was used to generate a list of desired features for hot water dispenser.



Thermal Hazard

Faulty safety catch:

The spring-actuated hot water tap did not return to a safe position when the tap was not in use. Hot water can be dispensed when depressed in one motion instead of two.



Thermal Hazard

Hot water tap without safety catch:

Hot water can be dispensed when depressed in one motion instead of two.



Falling Hazard

No drip tray:

Any spillage will fall unimpeded onto the floor, creating a slippery area.



Thermal Hazard

Unsuitable disposal cups:

Filling hot water in paper conical cup might lead to scalding injury and the cup cannot be put down.



Thermal Hazard

Lack of warning:

No hot water caution sign to warn of hot water.

Result

A set of guidelines that can be used as reference when choosing the desired features of hot water dispenser for a patient care setting.

Conclusion

The development of a set of guidelines for the project teams to select the right hot water dispenser to create a safer environment for patients and visitors during the planning stage of new construction and renovation of existing establishment.

Guidelines as reference for desired feature of a hot water dispenser

Provide suitable cups

- For example, Styrofoam/ thick cardboard to prevent scalding.
- Thin paper cups or conical cups are not suitable.

Location of water dispenser

- The ideal location should be away from common pedestrian corridor.
- The table top water dispenser should be positioned as far back from the edge of the counter.



Design of hot water tap

- Hot water tap must be red. This is the universal color for "hot" and "danger".
- Hot water activation must be a 2-step motion.
- "Duck-bill" design is more durable than the spring actuated safety catch.

Warning sign display

- "Caution – hot water" sticker must be displayed near the hot water latch.

Drip tray

- Drip tray must be in place and drained when full.