

What's your Deep Fryer Test?



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McDonalds' Deep Fryer Training

Earlier in my safety career, I came across a Safety Officer who provided me with an excellent heuristic or rule of thumb when it comes to determining adequacy of training. The Safety Officer, Randy, would often pick me up at my office and tour other worksites as a 'ride along' to provide me with insight on what to be looking for when it comes to worksite inspections from a Regulator.

On one of those occasions, Randy would describe to me his rule of thumb when it comes to the adequacy of training through the Deep Fryer Test. Bewildered, I asked what does a deep fryer have to do with the adequacy of training' Randy would go on to say that, *'As an employer, McDonalds' would take five hours to train their crew members on the use of a deep fryer'* while simultaneously raising his right hand in the air to clearly show his five fingers. I was reluctant to ask the obvious rhetorical question and thought to myself, why would it take five hours to train someone on how to use a deep fryer' Am I missing something' I thought all a worker does is lower a basket filled with frozen fries into cooking oil, remove it once it's cooked and sprinkle some salt. No wonder it takes forever to get my fries'

All jokes aside, I was curious on why the Deep Fryer Test was held so high in Randy's mind.

The 3 'D's of Training

Randy went on to describe that the Deep Fryer Training requires the supervisor to follow the three 'D's of training: **Describe**, **Demonstrate** and **Do**.

- The supervisor would describe how to use the deep fryer to a new employee, keeping in mind of productivity, quality and safety.
- Then the supervisor would demonstrate how to properly use the deep fryer.
- Lastly, the employee would 'Do' the task of using the deep fryer by themselves.

The supervisor would closely observe and correct behavior when needed, then when the supervisor felt comfortable, would distance themselves from the employee and

return less and less frequently to correct unsatisfactory behavior.

Once the supervisor felt completely comfortable leaving the employee to work by themselves with the deep fryer, the supervisor would document that the employee was competent to perform the task.

Randy explained that the supervisor was not only demonstrating, and in some cases, simulating, what the work task would be ninety-five percent of the time, but also how the employee should react when under pressure. The entire choreography of how food was ordered, prepared and served including the performance of the surrounding crew members was taken into consideration on how those other factors can influence the deep fryers ability to perform their work positively or negatively.

Last Token of Wisdom


It was close to the end of my shift and Randy pulled the vehicle into the Atco trailer where my site office was and gave me one last token of wisdom on the Deep Fryer Test before he departed. *'If I am evaluating the adequacy of a company's training program, I will ask the supervisor, what is the Deep Fryer Test for those specific pieces of equipment, tools or machinery' If the supervisor's answer did not provide an adequate response, I would dig deeper.'*

He goes on to say that too often he inspects worksites for companies that give the keys to a half million-dollar piece of machinery to new employees and expects that they can perform their work efficiently and safely. *'What is their Deep Fryer Test on this piece of equipment' If McDonalds' spends 5 hours of training on using a deep fryer, how many hours should they spent on an Articulating Rock Truck''*

Critically Examining Your Training Program

That rule of thumb, which feels like eons ago, is still permanently tattooed in my brain. Now, as a Safety Consultant, I ask my clients on what their Deep Fryer Test is on the multitude of tools, equipment, machinery they have their workers use on a daily basis, not as a means to benchmark or measure their performance, but as a discussion point. This allows clients to take a step back and critically examine their training.

For organizations starting their training programs or for those who have an established training program, take Randy's advice and ask yourselves, what is our Deep Fryer Test'

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