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*This release and picture can be downloaded from: [www.nextstepmarketing.co.uk/press](http://www.nextstepmarketing.co.uk/press)*

### **BEWARE OF THE KITCHEN DUCTWORK FIRE RISK**

*The HVCA warns that a poorly maintained kitchen extraction ductwork is a huge fire risk but says you cannot be sure your insurance company will pay up if a fire is traced back to grease laden ductwork*

Too many hotels, restaurants and fast food outlets are oblivious to the very real fire risks posed by poorly maintained extract ductwork in their kitchens and cooking areas – until it is too late. In many cases where a fire has been traced back to the kitchen extract system it has never been cleaned since the ductwork was installed. Increasingly, insurance

companies are rejecting fire damage claims and refusing to pay out because having the extraction system cleaned is usually a condition of their policies.

Bob Towse, Head of Technical and Safety at the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA), comments, "Changes to fire regulations introduced in 2005 placed a heavy responsibility on owners, landlords and managing agents to ensure risk assessments have been carried out in their buildings including identification of potential ignition sources; failure to do so can lead to hefty fines and possible prison sentences.

"Not only this, but the HSE take the view that kitchen extract systems are "Local Exhaust Ventilation" (LEV) systems and fall under the requirements which state that such installations must be inspected and recommissioned at intervals no greater than 14 months. In many cases systems are only serviced, maintained and cleaned when they finally break down. This is quite simply unacceptable.

"HVCA member firms are regularly called to testify as expert witnesses in cases where fires have broken out in kitchens and then spread along grease-laden ductwork to other parts of the building.

"Insurance firms are using poor maintenance of ventilation extract systems as grounds for fighting claims because they can assert that warranties have been breached due to lack of proper cleaning regimes.

"Despite the current economic climate, these duties will not go away and building occupiers must not be tempted into cutting corners to save money.

“Adhering to the HVCA’s ‘Guide to Good Practice – Internal Cleanliness of Ventilation Systems’, which is endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive, and carrying out regular inspections and recommissioning at intervals no greater than 14 months is a good way to satisfy insurance companies that the right steps have been taken to properly clean kitchen extraction and ventilation systems, both to minimise fire risk and safeguard the health of employees”.

Copies of the HVCA’s ‘Guide to Good Practice – Internal Cleanliness of Ventilation Systems’ (TR19) is available at a cost of £60 from the HVCA Publications Unit in Penrith on 01768 860405 or via the HVCA website at: [www.hvca.org.uk](http://www.hvca.org.uk).

Ends

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#### Note to Editors

Established in 1904, the HVCA represents the interests of firms active in the design, installation and maintenance of heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigeration systems. Its membership comprises some 1,350 companies with 2,000 offices throughout the UK, a combined turnover of £3bn and a workforce of 50,000. HVCA members are subject to regular, third party inspection and assessment of their technical competence and commercial capability.

Caption for picture at [www.nextstepmarketing.co.uk/press](http://www.nextstepmarketing.co.uk/press):  
***‘Kitchen extract ductwork must be cleaned on a regular basis to minimise fire risk’***