

Fact Sheet



Restaurant & Commercial Kitchen Inspection & Cleaning

All commercial cooking food service establishments are subject to a hidden and illusive safety and cost-depleting concern that if not addressed may impact the financial survival of the kitchen and cause economic demise. The awareness stimulated within this fact sheet may engender action and should help to prevent certain burning or distasteful outcomes.

*R*estaurants, commercial cooking establishments, schools, hospitals and correctional facilities are subject to local, state, and federal health, food, safety and fire codes that are in place to protect the dining public and create an environment of safety. This also shields employees and staff from accidents, air-borne toxins, and carbon monoxide. These codes also protect owners and risk managers from high-risk disasters or litigations that could impact the risk manager and place the restaurant owner in jeopardy of losing their franchise to the courts or their business establishment to fire.

The fire service industry faithfully teaches children in their formative years to protect themselves against fire; “Don’t play with lighters or matches”, “Stay low in smoke”, “Stop, Drop, and Roll, etc.” Lives and property have been saved because of this dedicated work. It is just as important to create an environment of awareness for owners and staff of commercial kitchens regarding fuel-loading, fire encroachment, and life safety concerns in the kitchen.

*T*here is one important feature in the kitchen that, if not regularly attended to, can destroy a restaurant or commercial kitchen. It has little to do with regulations or codes, but everything to do with **common sense**. The kitchen-exhaust and fire suppression system maintenance is critical. It is also:

- Required by law? Yes!
- Required every six months? Yes!
- Does the kitchen exhaust system include all aspects surrounding the hood and duct system from floor to roof, including the fire suppression system? A resounding yes!

A simple, *bare metal clean* action plan can dispel any concern or danger regarding this matter completely. The action plan is as follows:

*K*itchen Exhaust System – Inspection, Maintenance and Cleaning

- Upon inspection, if the exhaust system is found to be contaminated with deposits from grease-laden vapors, the contaminated portions of the exhaust system shall be cleaned.
- Inspection and cleaning shall be conducted by a properly trained, qualified and certified company or person(s) acceptable and authorized by the owner and the state and or local fire marshal.
- Duct systems shall have access panels installed not more than 20 feet apart; at changes of direction, no more than 10 feet apart; and or where access is required for proper cleaning of the entire interior ductwork.

- Cleaning shall include floor, backsplash, appliances, hood, plenum, ducts, fans, fan housing and roof discharge areas.
- The industry standard for cleaning is “bare metal clean” throughout the system. Anything less than bare metal clean should not be considered acceptable.
- Exhaust system fans shall be operated whenever cooking equipment is turned on.
- Air velocity within the duct or total air flow shall not be less than 500 feet per minute at discharge.
- Filter equipped exhaust systems shall not be operated with filter gaps, separations or with the filters removed.
- Kitchen exhaust systems full or proportioned ***shall be cleaned when needed*** or at intervals as dictated by volume:
 - Monthly - Systems serving solid fuel cooking operations.
 - Quarterly - Systems serving high-volume cooking operations such as 24 hour Charbroiling, or wok cooking.
 - Semiannually - Systems serving moderate-volume cooking operations.
 - Annually - Systems serving low-volume cooking operations, such as churches, day camps, seasonal businesses, or senior centers.
- Openings provided for replacement air through ventilation equipment shall not be restricted, blocked or shut-down while cooking operations are in progress.
- Exhaust fan housings shall be hinged with flexible power cables for effortless opening.
- Fan housings shall be supplied with a grease drainage and a grease containment system.
- The roof structure shall be free of grease pooling or corrosive contaminants on roof coverings.



Owners, when cleaning is finished expect three items to be placed in your hands and one to be placed on the hood in

a conspicuous location: 1) A Completion or Deficiency report. *(Shall include areas not cleaned or problems with the system)* 2) Before and after photographs showing all aspects of the exhaust system from floor to roof.

3) A detailed invoice clearly showing what has been accomplished and for what price. *(The price should match the agreed-upon amount you contracted with the service company, unless there is a “change order agreement” for the reduced or additional work invoiced.)*

4) A label shall be placed on the hood in a conspicuous location that includes the following information: Service company name, technician signature and certificate number, date of service, type of service and system, and any major deficiencies. (Deficiencies shall be clearly explained on the “Completion or Deficiency report” previously mentioned).

We are all extremely busy, but it will be of great value for the restaurant owner to get to know the owner or service technician of the Fire Protection Company contracted to inspect and clean the exhaust system and to become acquainted with the local fire marshal or inspectors who serve in the area where kitchens are located.

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