



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

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Ventilation and Fire Protection Systems (Hood System) Inspection and Maintenance

All cooking equipment producing smoke or grease laden vapors must have a ventilation and fire protection system. Many restaurant fires originate in the cooking appliances then quickly flare into the exhaust (hood) system and in many cases, involve the entire building. Failure to clean the hood system, systems having mechanical deficiencies and misused /unattended hood systems are leading factors contributing to the ignition of fires. Adequately maintained commercial hood systems have an excellent record of extinguishing appliance fires and may very well be an owner's most important investment.

A. Operating Procedures

1. Ventilation Systems shall be operated whenever cooking equipment is used.
2. Filter equipped systems shall not be operated with filters removed or with gaps between filters.
3. Exhausting of air through ventilation system shall not be restricted by covers, dampers, shelving or any other means.
4. Instructions for manually operating the fire extinguishing system shall be posted conspicuously in the kitchen and shall be reviewed with employees.
5. Cooking equipment shall not be operated while the fire extinguishing system or ventilation system is non-operational or impaired.
6. Cooking appliances shall only be used in the area providing extinguishing protection.
7. The manual activation pull station shall be accessible and un-obstructed at all times.
8. Activation of the fire extinguishing system shall activate:
 - a. an audible or visual indicator.
 - b. the building's fire alarm system when equipped.

B. Inspection of Fire Extinguishing System

1. An inspection and servicing of the fire extinguishing system and ventilation (hood) system shall be made every six months by a person or company licensed by the Office of State Fire Marshal.
2. All deficiencies noted on inspection report must be corrected.
3. A copy of the inspection report shall be kept on the premises and the system must be tagged.

C. Inspection and cleaning of hood system

1. Inspection of the hood, plenum, filters, and duct system for accumulation of grease shall be as follows:
 - a. Systems using solid cooking fuel (charcoal, hardwood, mesquite, briquettes, etc.). **MONTHLY.**
 - b. Systems serving high volume cooking operations such as 24-hour cooking, charbroiling, frying, or wok cooking. **QUARTERLY.**
 - c. Systems serving moderate volume cooking operations. **SEMI-ANNUALLY**

- d. Systems serving low volume cooking operations, such as churches, day camps, seasonal businesses, or senior centers. **ANNUALLY.**

**YOUR ACCUMULATION OF GREASE MAY REQUIRE MORE FREQUENT
INSPECTING AND CLEANING**

Note: An employee can inspect for signs of grease buildup. Records shall be kept.

- 2. **Whenever there are visible deposits of grease, the entire system shall be cleaned.**
 - a. All components shall be cleaned to bare metal.
 - c. Flammable solvents or flammable cleaning aids shall not be used.
 - d. It is recommended that a commercial cleaning company be used and the system be cleaned just prior to the semi-annual service and maintenance
 - e. Cleaning and maintenance records shall be available for the life safety inspector's review.

D. Fire Extinguishing Equipment

- 1. A Class K extinguisher shall be located within 30 feet of cooking equipment and marked "For use on grease and appliance fires. Fire extinguishing system must be operated prior to use". This shall be reviewed with all employees.
- 2. Automatic fire extinguishing systems shall comply with UL 300 or other equivalent standards.

**Cooking equipment used in fixed, mobile, or temporary concessions,
such as trucks, pavilions, tents, and roof enclosures, shall comply with
the same standards as outlined above.**

Feel free to contact the Office of the Fire Marshal at 410-313-6040 with any questions.