Fact Sheet

Commercial Kitchen Grease Fire Can Hurt Your Business
A Guide for Consumers

The risk of a hazardous fire sweeping through a commercial kitchen or restaurant can be a costly and potentially business-ending disaster. It would be most unfortunate for any owner or chef to suffer such a fire in their Restaurant, Bistro, Cafe or Eatery, because, the horrendous problems that they would face once the flames have been extinguished and the water removed would be devastating.


Cosmopolitan in Las Vegas

While hazardous cooking fires account for 57 percent of all restaurant building fires, the owner more than likely has never experienced a similar event before. They certainly would feel upset and distraught and may not even be aware of the concerns now placed before them.

If you own or operate a commercial kitchen or restaurant, you are no doubt familiar with the many areas where a fire might start, however, keeping grease buildup on the hood and filters and flammable grease residue out of the duct must be a priority and your foremost concern to reduce the risk of hazardous fire.

FOUR WAYS A HAZARDOUS KITCHEN GREASE FIRE CAN HARM YOUR BUSINESS.

If you own or operate a commercial kitchen, you are familiar with countless tasks that require your attention. Partnering with a fire protection professional will reduce your work load and remove a priority task from your plate. Frequent inspections of the kitchen exhaust system by a professional allows you to stay in front of this most important and challenging aspect of your business. To keep the exhaust system with its associated fire suppression system clean and serviced at all times reduces the challenge of grease buildup on the exhaust hood and ductwork with their association fire protection elements. Maintaining these systems to industry standards is wise and economical. At all times, *bare-metal clean* is the standard to achieve and maintain. This standard will reduce the risk of fire to a nonentity. With the foods and cooking processes you employ, knowing the heart of your fire protection systems and how often they require service and cleaning is important for you to understand. Talk with your fire protection professional to get to know and trust them and to get a clear and appropriate view of the cleaning frequency for your system. And then just keep up with the inspection and maintenance program that is right for you. The no fire *bare-metal clean* standard removes all hazardous fuels.

The damage from kitchen grease goes far beyond fire damage.

Consider the following:

Property Damage

According to NFPA statistics, there were an estimated 7,670 restaurant fires reported to fire departments nationwide between 1999 and 2002. More recently fires resulted in 2 deaths and 85 civilian injuries with direct annual property damage of $192 million. To discuss property damage from fire we must first discuss OSHA and NFPA standards. These standards require that two fire extinguishers be easily accessible and present in every commercial kitchen. These fire extinguishers must be Class ABC portables to extinguish normal combustible type fuels. A Class K, is required as well, because this type of extinguisher is effective against fats, grease, and oil type fuels that easily catch fire. It is also required that kitchen staff, supervisors and those most likely to use a fire extinguisher be properly trained in their use. Kitchen staff should also be trained on the proper timing and use of the hood fire suppression system, pull-station and evacuation procedures for patrons and staff.

Risk Management

Commercial kitchens are also required to install and maintain wet chemical, listed, automatic fire suppression systems. This system must have the ability to be triggered manually and automatically when temperatures inside the exhaust hood indicate the presence of fire. In addition, NFPA and the International Fire Code require that the automatic fire suppression systems installed in commercial kitchens be UL300 Certified. Fire protection tools help to reduce the risk of smoke and fire damage, however, although 71 percent of restaurant fires remain relatively small, they are no less damaging to the business owner. Loss of revenue and staff, brand-name market share and cost of repairs make bouncing back a debilitating and expensive event.

Lost Revenue / Brand Damage

After almost any kitchen grease fire, you will need to close your kitchen. When your emergency plan is used and knowledgeable kitchen staff appropriately applies fire protection equipment and evacuation techniques, you may only need to shut down in order to reset the automatic fire suppression system with a little cleanup. If however, minimal or extensive smoke or fire damage happens, you may need to close for weeks or months for repairs. Either way, you will be losing revenue, market share, employees and customers every moment closure is required. Damage to your brand image can potentially change consumer appeal and behavior, causing reduced patronage and additional lost revenue in the long term.

Lawsuits

Though injuries are somewhat rare, protection from risk can be finely tuned. Approximately, 75 people per year do get injured in commercial kitchen fires. Trip and falls, smoke inhalation or stress injuries may occur on your property, where you may end up with a lawsuit. Either an employee or customer could allege that you were negligent in your fire prevention activities causing them to suffer an injury. Tracking employee training, documenting; suppression system, cleaning and fire extinguisher service, on-going safety training, can all be helpful during the time of discovery. With this, you could be looking at minimal as opposed to a substantial risk.

Don’t Risk It

With all the risk involved in today’s business environment, there is no need to worry about the risk of a kitchen exhaust system fire hurting you or your business? Exhaust hood scraping and duct steam cleaning are simple and effective fire prevention measures that you can easily reach with a *bare-metal clean* kitchen exhaust system.