



Cooking Appliances in Commercial Buildings



What rules pertain to cooking appliances and equipment in commercial buildings?

The 2024 International Fire Code Chapter 6 Section 606 defers to the 2024 International Mechanical Code (covered under the 2024 International Mechanical Code Chapter 5). Both govern the use of commercial cooking appliances and equipment along with the required Type I or Type II commercial kitchen hood and duct systems required.

The code specifically states that Commercial Type I Hood Systems are required above commercial cooking appliances and domestic cooking appliances used for commercial purposes that produce grease vapors.

Typically, grease vapors include cooking/heating cheeses, cooking meats from raw to prepared, cooking any meat that is bone-in (i.e. chicken wings), fryers and similar devices.

What if I don't cook and produce grease-laden vapors?

While the code specifically qualifies cooking that produces grease vapors as needing a Type I Hood, **the 2024 International Mechanical Code also specifically requires Type I hoods over appliances that are classified within the International Mechanical Code as *Medium Duty, Heavy Duty* and *Extra-Heavy Duty* regardless of what the purported or stated use will be.**

Certain appliances that produce steam vapors or cook without emitting grease-laden vapors require a Type II Hood (no automatic extinguishment system).



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Can I buy a hood system with a self-contained extinguishment system?

We only allow a small hood with self-contained extinguishment system for use in small Group R and Group I residential settings with an occupant load under 16 persons that use a residential-style cooking appliance for warming purposes.

Self-contained hood systems and/or residential style cooking appliances are not allowed in any other commercial occupancy.

I've been using a small cooking device in my business for years and no one said anything. Am I grandfathered in?

No. Although certain activities may have gone unnoticed, even for extended periods of time, the fact that they were not code-compliant yet unnoticed does not create an authorization to continue. Certain allowances do exist in the code for things that were code-compliant at the time of occupancy but have since changed due to subsequent code updates and revisions. Those allowances typically continue as long as the occupancy remains unchanged and no work occurs that otherwise would require a Building Permit.

What happens if I have a commercial cooking appliance without the required Type I or Type II hood?

Where non-compliant kitchen cooking equipment and arrangements are discovered in an area new to inspections by District personnel, the non-compliant operations must cease immediately upon notice given during an inspection and the equipment be removed until a compliant hood system is installed under Permit.

Where non-compliant kitchen cooking equipment and arrangements are discovered in an occupancy previously inspected by District personnel, the non-compliant operation will result in immediate suspension of occupancy and closure of the business until the operations cease and are permanently removed from the building or until a compliant hood system is installed under Permit.

Are there local amendments that pertain to kitchen hoods?

Yes. The District requires that any automatic extinguishment system be monitored by a central station fire alarm service that will automatically dispatch a fire response upon the system's activation.



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This means that kitchen hood systems are required to be monitored by a fire alarm system, even if no other requirement for a fire alarm exists for the occupancy or building. The District does NOT enforce this requirement for occupancies that were lawfully operating from their present location with a Type I Hood system in-place and in-service prior to June 2018 until they would perform work requiring a Building Permit, Fire Sprinkler Permit or Fire Alarm Permit from the District. If the occupancy changes, the District may require monitoring as a condition of approval of the new occupancy.

From the ***West County Overarching Building & Fire Code***:

WC3-2.1 Fire Alarm Automatic Notification: Any commercial building with a fire alarm or fire suppression system shall have a monitored fire alarm system that automatically notifies the monitoring service (and 9-1-1 Dispatch via that service) of the activation of the fire alarm, including specific details as to the nature of the alarm. The system shall also feature notification devices in all public areas of the building.

WC3-2.1.1 Qualifying Systems: A fire alarm or fire suppression system shall be defined as any local fire alarm or extinguishment system regulated by the International Fire Code including Type 1 hoods