

RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

Servicing Kitchen Hood and Fire Suppression Systems

Kitchen fire suppression system inspections are vital to employee safety and property protection. In any size kitchen, the range hood fire suppression systems acquire a grease and grime build-up which becomes combustible at approximately 700 degrees Fahrenheit. This build-up, when not cleaned regularly, will also clog the nozzles meant to disperse wet chemicals over the source of a stove, fryer, or grill fire. This will result in a serious fire in commercial kitchens. You must adequately maintain your restaurant fire suppression systems to ensure the safety of your business.

How often should your kitchen fire suppression system be professionally inspected and serviced to ensure systems remain in good working order and your business stays safe?

The National Fire Protection Association maintains a separate standard for the Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations (NFPA 96). States, counties, and cities (also known as the authority having jurisdiction) adopt these standards as a means to control fires in areas where the general public gathers.

NFPA 96 states you must complete restaurant kitchen hood fire suppression system inspections every six months by a licensed fire protection company. Therefore, twice a year, certified fire safety professionals must ensure if there is a fire in your commercial kitchen, your suppression system will activate, put the fire out, and shut off the gas line or electric running to the equipment.

Restaurant hood cleaning can save you money and potential damage. The minor inconvenience and cost of fire suppression system inspections and service call is far less than the \$60,000 cost of the average uncontained restaurant fire (National Fire Data Center).

How often should the vent hood and suppression system be cleaned by staff?

We recommend your staff clean the kitchen hood, filters, and nozzles frequently – weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly. The fusible links that accept the heat and kick-off the fire suppression system will not work when built up with grease. Do not apply cleaning chemicals on fusible links.



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If your kitchen is high-volume in nature, make hood and nozzle cleaning part of the daily routine. This reduces accumulating grease and the dirt that sticks to it and keeps it from collecting in the flue. These simple restaurant fire suppression system tasks can decrease the likelihood of hood fires, keep your kitchen running safely, and your business in operation.

It is also recommended the restaurant owner or kitchen manager perform a basic visual kitchen hood inspection monthly. Check for:

- ☐ nozzle caps are intact and undamaged
- ☐ extinguishing system is in its proper location (over range, fryer and other cooking equipment)
- ☐ tamper indicators and seals are intact
- ☐ manual actuators are not obstructed
- ☐ maintenance tag or certificate is in place
- ☐ no obvious physical damage exists that might prevent operation
- ☐ pressure gauge(s) (if provided) are in operable range
- ☐ hood, duct and protected cooking appliances have not been replaced, modified or relocated

If upon inspection, the exhaust system is found to be contaminated with grease-laden residue, the exhaust system should be cleaned by a properly trained, qualified, and certified person, acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.