

KSFM 2025 - 002 - KSFM Prevention Information Release

To: Kansas Fire Departments and Facilities with a Kitchen Hood System

Date: January 22, 2025

Subject: Hood Suppression System Maintenance

Kitchen hood suppression systems are a crucial part of any commercial kitchen. Their purpose is to quickly detect and extinguish fires that may occur as a result of grease buildup combined with heat. These systems prevent cooking fires from spreading and minimize damages to the kitchen, which allows kitchens to resume operations more quickly. Because these suppression systems are so important, it is imperative that they be properly maintained to ensure that they will properly function when needed.

NFPA 96 Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations outlines the requirements for installation of hoods and suppression systems, along with their maintenance requirements. Suppression systems are required to be inspected by a licensed fire protection company on a semi-annual basis. Professional cleaning is required at intervals to avoid grease build up on the hood and ductwork. This is typically every 6 months but could be more or less frequent based on the extent of your cooking operations. Cooking equipment and the floors and walls surrounding them must also be regularly cleaned to prevent grease build up.

When vendors complete their semi-annual hood suppression inspection, they are checking to make sure that your system is fully functional and complies with the requirements set forth in NFPA 96. Upon completion, they will attach a tag to your system and provide an inspection report. Any identified deficiencies must be corrected promptly. If the vendor finds that the suppression system is inoperable or significantly impaired, they will attach a red tag to the system. A red tagged system requires immediate repair and will not function properly to suppress a fire.

When a vendor red tags a system, they will notify KSFM. A complaint inspection will be initiated, and an inspector will conduct an inspection. Any kitchen with a red tagged hood suppression system will be issued a Stop Cooking Order (SCO) and be required to stop any cooking operations until the system is repaired and certified compliant by the fire protection company. The business will work with KSFM enforcement staff to provide a plan of correction and proper documentation to lift the SCO. This same process will be followed if an inspector finds a red tagged system during a regular inspection as well.

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During a routine fire safety inspection, KSFM inspectors will occasionally find facilities with significant grease buildup on floors, walls, cooking equipment, and hoods. Because this buildup, when combined with open flames and hot cooking equipment increases the risk of a fire breaking out, a SCO will be issued until everything has been properly cleaned and documentation has been submitted to KSFM enforcement staff.

The importance properly maintaining a hood suppression system can't be stressed enough. Even when following all the best safety practices and having a strict cleaning schedule in place, kitchen fires can happen. A properly functioning hood suppression system will ensure that your staff and customers are safe, and minimize property damage, protecting your business from significant disruptions and repair costs.

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