



A Restaurant Owner's Guide to Exhaust Hood Cleaning

Exhaust hood systems play an important role in the restaurant kitchen, pulling heat, smoke, and odor away from cooking surfaces. This is for the protection of both employees and the restaurant facility itself, but over time, the greasy buildup inside hoods and ductwork can become a safety hazard of its own.

Protecting against this hazard requires regular and thorough cleaning of the exhaust hood, exhaust hood filters, and ductwork. Grease buildup inside the hood duct system is among the leading causes of restaurant fires, and proper maintenance and cleaning can drastically reduce this risk.

The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) requires professional exhaust hood cleaning for all commercial kitchens. Failure to meet these requirements not only increases the risk of fire, but also can put a restaurant at risk for hefty fines and mandatory closure.

Exhaust hood cleaning requirements and best practices are outlined in NFPA 96, including the frequency of cleaning for various types of kitchens:

Monthly - Systems serving solid fuel cooking operations

Quarterly - Systems serving high-volume operations, such as 24-hour cooking, charbroiling, wok cooking, etc.

Semi-Annually- Systems serving moderate volume cooking operations

Annually- Systems serving low volume cooking operations, such as day camps, churches, seasonal businesses, etc.

While restaurant employees are expected to clean the exterior surfaces of exhaust hoods as part of their normal hood cleaning procedures, the thorough cleaning outlined in NFPA 96 is to be carried out by trained, certified kitchen exhaust cleaning professionals.



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The scope of this work should include:

- ✓ Disassembly, cleaning, and degreasing hoods, including hood filter tracts, grease troughs, and removable grease cups.
- ✓ Removal of roof and/or wall mounted fans from ductwork to degrease the base, shroud, and blades.
- ✓ Inspecting exhaust fans for loose or worn out fan belts.
- ✓ Cleaning and degreasing all hood filters, hood parts and accessories, and replacing if necessary.
- ✓ Cleaning all accessible parts of ductwork from exhaust fans to each individual hood.
- ✓ Applying food-safe polish to stainless steel ductwork.
- ✓ Thoroughly cleaning all affected areas (remove plastic, mop, remove any debris, etc.).
- ✓ Providing a complete, detailed written report of all work performed, and deficiencies in the exhaust system, and recommendations for addressing any problems.
- ✓ Attaching a certificate showing company name, person performing the work, and date of cleaning to each hood cleaned.

Duct access doors will allow professional hood cleaners to perform a thorough "top to bottom" cleaning of the exhaust systems. Professional hood cleaning services will also have a strong understanding of NFPA 96 requirements, and should be able to help restaurant owners and managers make sure their equipment is up to date, functioning properly, and meeting standards for compliance.

Certified professional hood cleaning is a necessity for any commercial cooking operation, both to reduce the risk of fire and avoid noncompliance. Most reputable hood cleaning services will be happy to walk you through their procedures, provide "before and after" photos, and work with restaurant management to ensure safety and compliance.

To ensure the safety of staff and patrons against dangerous building fires, make sure to have all hoods properly cleaned on a regular basis.