

“Assessing Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Contractors”

Commercial Kitchen Exhaust System Cleaning is about more than “Removing Grease”. Most Authorities Having Jurisdiction (Fire Marshals, Fire Inspectors, Health Inspectors, Insurance Companies, etc..) will agree that it’s more about removing the fuel source for dangerous life safety and fire hazards! It’s all about Fire Prevention!

In today’s Restaurant Industry, most fires originate on the kitchen cooking appliances then flare upward into the Hood & Duct Exhaust System. Keeping this in mind, Restaurant Owners and Managers need to hire a Professional KEC Contractor who will clean the entire “System” and just not the Hood. A competent KEC Contractor will clean the entire “Hood System” to bare metal, take before & after pictures of the ENTIRE System, post a Certificate of Performance, and provide a Job Service Report after the job is complete. When using a Contractor, ask them for proof of Workman’s Comp Insurance, Liability Insurance (for Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning), and a Business License. In addition, a Copy of any Certifications they hold will also help you eliminate the “Fly-By-Night” Cleaners you don’t want to use.

Many times, a Restaurant Owner will hire a non-qualified company because they are cheaper, but in the end it may cost the Owner his entire business. Many Insurance Companies are now Investigating Kitchen Exhaust Fires to see if the Restaurant Owner/Manager (the Authority Having Jurisdiction) can be found at fault for hiring a non-qualified Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Company. If this happens, the Fire Damage Claim will be denied! Then the Restaurant Owner has to file on the Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Company and hope that they have the proper insurance to cover the fire.... Many times they DO NOT have the proper coverage!

With rules, Regulations, and Violations coming from every direction, Restaurateurs can’t afford to overlook the quality of service they are receiving. The best means for controlling this situation is to implement an Exhaust Cleaning Program that complies with the NFPA 96 Standard and all applicable Fire Codes.

Here is a simple guide to follow when hiring a Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Contractor:

Entire Cleaning: Most Restaurant Owners & Managers think they are receiving an entire Kitchen Exhaust System Cleaning., only to find out later that they were paying for a “Hood Washing” service. By knowing the type, location and components of your Kitchen Exhaust System, it will be easier for you to know what the Contractor is doing. Always make sure that you receive “In Writing” what the Contractor is going to clean, how they will clean it, and that it will be cleaned in accordance to the NFPA 96 Standard and any local Fire Codes.

Cleaning Frequency: According to the NFPA 96 Standard, there are 4 frequencies; Monthly, Quarterly, Semi-Annual and Annual. Make sure the KEC Contractor has your system on the right Cleaning & Inspection Schedule. The frequency should always be based on the volume of food the restaurant cooks.

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Access Panels: Always ask the Contractor if there are any inaccessible areas in your Kitchen Exhaust System. If there are, the system may need UL Listed Access Panels installed to allow proper access for a thorough cleaning. Make sure that any Access Panel work complies with NFPA 96 and all local Fire & Building Codes.

Fan Access: Fan access is very important. Without proper fan access, the entire system cannot be cleaned properly.

Certificate of Performance: Make sure that the Certificate of Performance has the Date of Cleaning, Due Date for next Cleaning, Cleaning Company Information, Cleaning Technician Name, and any Inaccessible Areas noted on it.

Job Service Report: Make sure the Contractor is willing to provide a “Job Service Report” as many Inspectors are now asking for one when they come by. The report should outline any Access Problems, Inaccessible Areas, System Condition, and any other problems that need to be documented and corrected.

Certification: Is the Contractor Certified? There are currently several Certification Companies and Schools that Train & Certify Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Companies and Individual Technicians. Make sure they are Certified! You can also check to see if they are a Member and are Certified through the Florida Certified Hood Cleaning Association (FCHCA). Go to www.fchca.com to learn more.....

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