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NFPA 1: Proper Use and Location of Grills and Other Cooking Equipment, #FireCodefridays

BY KRISTIN BIGDA

Are you responsible for enforcing apartment buildings where residents want to use grills? Have you been faced with landlords or condo associations who are seeking education on the risk of grills and cooking appliances? Do you see office buildings with grilling/patio areas located too close to the building? Why does a Fire Code care about the occupant use of grills? [NFPA 1](#) provides limitations for the use of grills, hibachi, and similar devices used for cooking and heating to ensure both the safety of occupants and protection of property.

For other than one- and two-family dwellings, no hibachi, grill, or other similar devices used for cooking, heating, or any other purpose is to be used or ignited on any balcony, under any overhanging portion, or within 10 ft (3 m) of any structure. This keeps the ignition source a safe distance from the structure, such as an apartment building or dormitory, and away from exterior areas. In addition, these grills/hibachi cannot be stored on balconies. Where grills are stored on balconies, the probability is high they will be used there as well.

With regard to the application and enforcement of this provision in the Code, a frequently asked question to NFPA staff is whether electric grills are including in this provisions. The answer is yes, they must follow the same rule as other fuel fired grills noted above. In 2006 the Code read as follows:

10.11.7 For other than one- and two-family dwellings, no hibachi, gas-fired grill, charcoal grill, or other similar devices used for cooking, heating, or any other purpose, shall be used or kindled on any balcony or under any overhanging portion or within 10 ft (3 m) of any structure. Listed electric ranges, grills, or similar electrical apparatus shall be permitted.

However, the underlined sentence was removed in the 2009 edition and all subsequent editions. From 2009 on, the requirement as stated in Section 10.11.6 is intended to include electric devices when enforcing this requirement. Listed equipment permanently installed in accordance with its listing, applicable codes and manufacturer's instructions is permitted, however.

We understand the challenges you may face in your role as a fire inspector when enforcing this provision. The inspection of every balcony of every multifamily dwelling is an impractical enforcement task. Compliance through public education is more readily achievable. As an AHJ, you can provide written notification of these requirements to condominium associations, property management agencies, and others who are affected. When the potential danger posed by grills is understood, voluntary compliance is easier to obtain. Landlords can also include this prohibition in leases to ensure that tenants are aware of the restrictions.

NFPA also offers [safe grilling tips and other resources for grilling safety](#). Here you will find a safe grilling tip sheet, grilling statistics infographic, a video with grilling safety tips, and also a video to show how to check your gas grill for leaks. All important information for consumers and enforcers alike. Who says grilling is only for the summer? If you grill year-round you should stay safe year-round.

You can follow me on Twitter for more updates and fire safety news [@KristinB_NFPA](#).

Thanks for reading!

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