



Mobility Matters

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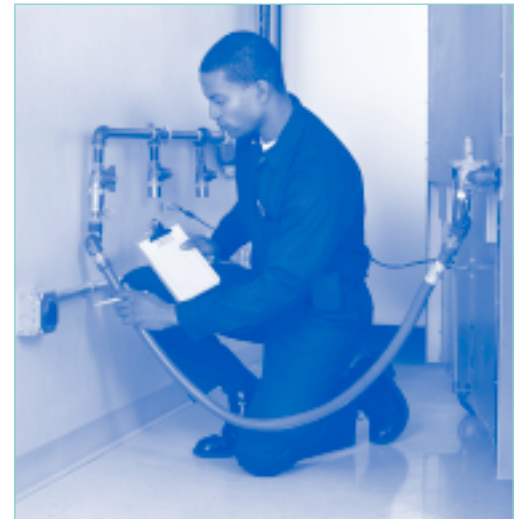


Fire Risks

Fires in commercial kitchens are often tied to grease buildup associated with cooking appliances. New codes requiring commercial-grade moveable gas connectors enable cleaning and help reduce fire risk.

New Standards Require Commercial-Grade Moveable Gas Connectors for Foodservice Establishments

Fire and health inspectors have long advocated regular cleaning behind commercial-grade fryers, grills and other gas powered appliances. Now, the codes are finally catching up. The updated standard (ANSI Standard Z21.69/CSA 6.16) requires the use of commercial-grade moveable gas connectors on gas appliances that are moved for cleaning, sanitation and maintenance. The revised standard (updated in 2005) will promote safety and hygiene in commercial kitchens. It requires gas connections that make it easier for operators to quickly and easily move appliances for cleaning and service.



What the New Code Requires

As a result of the updated standard, residential-grade flexible gas connectors are no longer permitted on any appliance on casters or that can be moved for cleaning or maintenance. The standard specifically requires that commercial-grade moveable gas connectors must be used on all caster-mounted gas appliances, and for all appliances that may be moved on a regular basis. The reality is that all appliances, whether caster-mounted or not, can and should be moved for cleaning and routine maintenance. As a result of the code change, inspectors will be placing more emphasis on ensuring that appliances are connected in accordance with the updated requirements.

Keeping a Commercial Kitchen Clean and Safe

When grease, grime and food collect behind a commercial cooking appliance, there is an increased risk of fire. In fact, fires in commercial kitchens are often tied to grease buildup associated with cooking appliances. According to the October 2004 Restaurant Fires report from the U.S. Fire Administration, grease/oil is the item most likely to ignite first in a commercial kitchen fire. Requiring commercial-grade moveable gas connectors, which make cleaning easier, is one of the best ways to reduce fire risk associated with grease buildup.

A recent survey of restaurant and food service operators revealed that fire safety is among their most important concerns. Even a small fire in the kitchen can be extremely disruptive, at best throwing operations off during a busy dinner or lunch rush, and at worst, shutting down the entire operation for weeks on end for costly restoration. Operators must also consider the safety of their employees who could be injured in a fire.

Mobility Can Impact Your Bottom Line

Gas appliances that are moved (either caster-mounted or on fixed legs) for periodic and thorough cleaning can significantly reduce the amount of time and money involved with cleaning and servicing cooking equipment.



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Code changes like ANSI Z21.69 now require that all foodservice equipment subject to movement for service, positioning or area cleanliness must use commercial-grade moveable gas connectors.



"Component"

Hard-pipe connections make mobility virtually impossible. The inability to easily move gas appliances basically eliminates the possibility of regular cleaning. This will result in grease and dirt buildup. It also makes routine service or repairs time-consuming and expensive because operators must hire service technicians every time to disconnect and reconnect the gas pipes. Hard-pipe also presents significant scheduling issues any time service is required. The repair of an appliance has to be scheduled around a technician's availability. Additional staff costs may be incurred if after-hours service calls are needed.

Residential-Grade Connectors No Longer Acceptable

Residential-grade moveable gas connectors are no longer allowed in commercial applications because they are not designed for the repeated movement a clean commercial kitchen demands. In addition, the corrugated tubing collects dirt and grease, creating hygiene and fire safety risks. Residential-grade flexible gas connectors also are not commonly designed to carry the high BTUs required by commercial gas cooking equipment. These factors were the key reasons why industry professionals supported these important code revisions.

Commercial-grade moveable gas connectors are made of extremely durable materials that can withstand the rigors of the commercial kitchen. These connectors are coated with an industrial grade smooth antimicrobial polymer coating that allows grease and grime to be easily removed. Further, a quick disconnect coupling can also be attached to allow the entire appliance to be disconnected from the gas line in a matter of seconds. As the code updates recognize, mobility and easier connections provide a combination of durability and cleanliness that enhances safety and hygiene at foodservice establishments.

Model Building Codes Also Revised

The ANSI Z21.69/CSA 6.16 Standard for Moveable Gas Connectors is referenced in all of the Model Building Codes. These include the National Fuel Gas Code (ANSI Z223.1/NFPA 54), The International Fuel Gas Code, The Uniform Plumbing Code and the Canadian B149 Natural Gas Installation Code.

These Model Building Codes have also been revised to reflect the importance of the standard. All of these code changes specify that appliances, subject to movement for cleaning or service, shall be connected with a commercial-grade moveable gas connector. In other words, across the board the agencies that establish the standards for commercial gas appliance installations are further recognizing the importance of safety.

What You Can Do

Restaurants and foodservice establishments need to ensure that their gas appliances are connected in accordance with the newly revised standards. You can contact your local equipment distributor or service company for an evaluation of your gas connector requirements.

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