



CAMPUS FIRE SAFETY CODE TALK

Campus Fire Safety e-NewZone

What's Cookin'? Fire Safety Regulations for Food Trucks

When most of us think about food trucks, we tend to have an image of an old greasy “roach coach” as we use to call them, burned in the back of our minds. However, the resurgence of food trucks in recent years is replacing that outdated image with a new picture that illustrates the trend of gourmet food trucks that provide healthy alternatives and fresh fusion cuisine at affordable prices. As the popularity of food trucks continues to grow, jurisdictions all over the globe are asking themselves how to regulate these kitchens on wheels. While most jurisdictions conduct the typical health inspections and issue vendor permits or business licenses, very few address the potential fire hazards on these vehicles. However, all of this changed on July 2, 2014, when a nearby surveillance camera captured the La Parrillada Chapina food truck explosion in the Feltonville neighborhood Philadelphia. Food Truck operators Olga Galdamez, 42, and her daughter, Jaylin Landaverry-Galdamez, 17, suffered third-degree burns and died three weeks later. The explosion injured ten others, some critically.

Unfortunately this is not the only food truck explosion. The Philadelphia food truck explosion made national news because it was the only food truck explosion that was captured by a nearby surveillance camera, revealing the impact a propane explosion could have. This tragedy initiated a discussion and provoked questions around the cause of this incident, how often these incidents occur, and what NFPA codes/standards provide information to address the fire hazards associated with mobile cooking operations.

Many of us are familiar with the National Fire Incident Report System, also known as NFIRS, but for those who are not: NFIRS is the reporting standard for fire departments to uniformly record and report their range of activities. After responding to an incident, a fire department will complete the appropriate form. The NFIRS software program collects a common set of information for various incidents and codes different types of fires. Fire departments forward this data to the state agency responsible for NFIRS data, which gathers information from all participating departments, and reports the compiled data to the U.S. Fire Administration. The NFIRS database comprises of 70% of all reported fires that occur annually. However,



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NFIRS does not code food truck fires. These incidents are either coded as restaurant fires or vehicle fires and therefore, if you are looking for data to support that food truck fires/explosions are occurring, you are not going to find the data. However, if you spend some time searching food truck fires or food truck explosions on the internet, unfortunately you will find too many.

Shortly after the Philadelphia Food Truck Explosion, the International Fire Marshals Association (IFMA) developed a task group to review mobile and temporary cooking operations. This task group recognized there is no code or standard that addresses this issue holistically. Although NFPA 1, *Fire Code*, NFPA 58, *Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code*, NFPA 96, *Ventilation Control and Fire Protection for Commercial Cooking Operations* and NFPA 1192, *Standard for Recreational Vehicles*, all contain requirements that could contribute to addressing the fire safety hazards associated with food trucks, there are other safety concerns that are not currently addressed in the existing documents. Therefore the IFMA task group developed a 16-page document to submit as a new chapter for NFPA 1 and NFPA 96. This document included requirements for permits, portable fire extinguishers, training, internal combustion power supplies, Liquid-Propane Gas Systems and solid fuel cooking (i.e. charcoal/wood burning).

The NFPA 1 Technical Committee created a First Revision at the First Draft Meeting to incorporate the language IFMA submitted into NFPA 1. The Technical Committee responsible for NFPA 96 developed a Task Group to review the public input submitted by IFMA between the First and Second Draft Meetings. At the Second Draft Meeting, which took place in April 2016, the NFPA 96 Technical Committee decided by a simple majority to create a normative annex chapter in NFPA 96. A normative annex chapter is written in mandatory language and is not intended to be enforced or applied unless specifically adopted by a jurisdiction. The letter ballot will be sent out to the Technical Committee members for official voting in early June of 2016. Visit www.nfpa.org/96 to stay up to date on the Technical Committee's progress.

NFPA 1 is currently open for public comment until May 16, 2016. To submit a public comment for the Technical Committee review, visit www.nfpa.org/1 then click on the "Next Edition" tab, and click on the "Submit Public Comment Online" link.



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Not sure what to do until a code or standard addresses this subject? Wondering what all the proposed requirements are in that 16 page document IFMA submitted? Visit www.nfpa.org/foodtrucksafety for more information and download NFPA's Fire Safety Tip Sheet for Mobile Cooking Operations. Also, learn how the City of Chicago, City of San Antonio, and the City of Rochester, NY are taking action into their own hand to address this issue.

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