BARBEQUES AND OPEN FLAME COOKING DEVICES ON PATIOS AND BALCONIES

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2007 California Fire Code Section 308

With the adoption of the 2007 California Fire Code (CFC) in January 2008, a new section on open flame cooking became law. Section 308 of the CFC has new requirements for cooking with an open flame on combustible balconies. These requirements apply to any device used for cooking that uses an open flame. This section applies to all occupancies, but exempts one and two family dwellings (single family home or a duplex).

The section reads as follows:

308.3.1 Open-flame cooking devices. Charcoal burners and other open-flame cooking devices shall not be operated on combustible balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction[1].
Exception:

A. One- and two-family dwellings
B. Where buildings, balconies and decks are protected by an automatic sprinkler system.

308.3.1.1 Liquefied-petroleum-gas-fueled cooking devices. LP-gas burners having an LP-gas container with a water capacity greater than 2.5 pounds [nominal 1 pound LP-gas capacity] shall not be located on combustible balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction[1].
Exception: one- and two-family dwellings.

[1]*The CFC definition of Noncombustible is either one of the following:*

A. Material of which no part will ignite and burn when subjected to fire. Any material passing ASTM 136 shall be considered noncombustible.
B. Material having a structural base of noncombustible material as defined in Item 1 above, with a surfacing material not over 1/8 inch thick which has a flame spread index of 50 or less.

This new regulation will in effect prohibit the use of open flame cooking on balconies of existing multi-family structures (more than 3 units), apartments, condos, town homes, except those built as high-rise structures.

The use of Electric Barbeques and LP Gas Barbeques with a supply bottle of 1 pound or less is allowed.

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