

FIRE SAFETY SPECIALISTS

What is UL 300?

On November 21, 1994, a new Underwriters Laboratories test standard entitled *UL 300, Fire Testing of Fire Extinguishing Systems for Protection of Restaurant Cooking Areas*, went into effect. This new standard is the result of two major changes in fire hazards involving commercial cooking equipment.

The two changes in commercial food preparation techniques that have had the most impact on fire protection are the use of vegetable oils and the use of “energy efficient” appliances. Vegetable oils burn at a higher temperature than animal fats and create fires that are more difficult to extinguish. Energy efficient cooking appliances, especially fryers, are highly insulated keeping cooking oils and metal appliances hotter longer and make fire extinguishment more difficult.

UL 300 is the test standard, which tests pre-engineered fire extinguishing systems for protection of restaurant cooking areas including exhaust hoods, plenums, ducts, and cooking appliances. The UL 300 Standard tests fire extinguishing and splashing to ensure that the operation of the extinguishing system will extinguish the fire and will not splash burning grease. Such splashing could result in spreading the fire and/or injuring an operator trying to manually extinguish the fire.

What does this mean to my restaurant?

The current edition of the Florida Fire Prevention Code **does not** require all existing fire suppression systems to be UL 300 compliant. However there are situations when the Fire Code does require upgrade. Generally, it is a decision that rests with the local Fire Official.

Florida Fire Prevention Code 2007 edition 1: 50.4.4.3 states, “New automatic fire extinguishing systems shall comply with *UL 300 standard for Fire Testing of Fire Extinguishing Systems for Protection of Restaurant Cooking Areas.*” **Exception:** Existing installations may remain in place subject to the approval of the fire official.

Florida Fire Prevention Code 2007 edition 1: 50.4.4.3.1 states, “In existing systems where changes in the cooking media, positioning, or replacement of cooking equipment occur, the fire extinguishing system **shall** be made to comply with 50.4.4.3”

UL 300 systems provide the greatest level of protection available. Of course, the local Fire Marshal is the authority who can require your system be upgraded.