



## **King County**

### **Department of Development and Environmental Services**

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## **Commercial Kitchen Operators**

As a result of recent fires in commercial kitchens, it has been discovered that many of the fixed fire protection systems that were installed to protect cooking appliances such as deep fat fryers do not function as intended. Most businesses have switched their cooking media from animal lard to vegetable oil. This was done to satisfy customer demands for healthier foods. Unfortunately, the fire-extinguishing agent used to fight fires involving animal lard is not effective when used on vegetable oil fires.

To resolve the problem, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) has developed a new standard for commercial cooking appliances that uses vegetable oil as a cooking media. The new standard is named "UL300". A new classification of fire extinguishing agent has also been developed for combustible cooking media fires. The new classification is "K", which stands for kitchen fires. Most existing fire extinguishers and fixed fire protection systems used in commercial kitchens have a "BC" classification. The "B" stands for flammable liquids and the "C" stands for electrical fires.

The 2006 International Fire Code 904.11 states that these systems must be installed in accordance with this Code, and tested to this Standard. There are no provisions for "grandfathering" in old systems.

**As of July 1, 2007, the date that the State of Washington adopts the 2006 International Fire Code as the minimum standard for the entire state, all operators of commercial kitchens in unincorporated King County are required to:**

- 1. Meet the UL 300 Standard with their kitchen fire extinguishing system.**
- 2. If their current fire extinguishing system does not meet UL 300, it must be replaced with one that does.**
- 3. Provide the number of Class K fire extinguishers required by IFC 904.11.5.3.**

If you have any questions, please contact the King County Fire Marshal Division at 206-296-6675