

Barbecue Regulations for Residents

Background

In 2007, the California Fire Code was amended to provide a prohibition on charcoal burners or other open flame cooking devices operated within ten feet of combustible construction in multi-family buildings. The new regulations, which took effect in 2008, restrict most barbecues used in multi-family housing units. Rental owners and property managers should ensure that their policies and procedures address these new rules.

Updated Regulation

The new regulation enforced by local fire departments reads as follows:

2019 California Fire Code, Section 308.1.4 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.

Exceptions:

1. One- and two-family dwellings.
2. Where buildings, balconies and decks are protected by an automatic sprinkler system.
3. Liquefied-petroleum LP (which includes propane) gas fueled cooking devices having LP gas container with a water capacity not greater than 2.5 pounds (1 pound LP-gas capacity).

The code exempts multi-family buildings where the structure, balcony and deck are protected by an operable automatic sprinkler system. Also, the code allows a resident to use an electric barbecue or one that has a liquefied-petroleum gas container capacity of one pound or less which are similar to those used for camping. Most barbecues sold at major retailers come with a container capacity of five pounds or greater which is prohibited at apartment communities under the regulation.

What are your options?

To enable you to still enjoy the joys of grilling, the new barbecue provisions leave room for alternatives to the traditional barbecue grill. Listed are options that comply with the new guidelines:



Propane tank grills with one pound LP-gas capacity (typical camping stove)

Electric grills



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