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Department of Fire Services



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STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads of Fire Department

FROM: Stephen D. Coan
State Fire Marshal

DATE: September 8, 2015

SUBJECT: Grill Fire Safety

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify questions my office has recently received regarding the use and storage of grills under 527 CMR 1.00, The Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code.

In accordance with 527 CMR 1.00: 10.11.6.1, “For other than a single-family dwelling, no hibachi, grill, or similar devices used for cooking, heating, or any other purpose shall be used or kindled on any balcony, under any overhanging portion, or within 10 ft (3 m) of any structure.” In addition, since electric grills do not have an open flame, they are exempt from the provisions of 527 CMR 1.00: 10.11.6 and **may be** used on balconies and decks of multi-family dwellings.

Recently, the Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (BFPR) interpreted that, for the purposes of 10.11.6.1, a townhouse or duplex **may not** be considered a single family dwelling **unless** the exterior finish on such structure is non-combustible. Essentially, this means that townhouses and duplexes with non-combustible exteriors are considered single family dwellings.

Unless the structure is considered a single family dwelling as described above, there is also a 10 foot restriction for the placement of grills near any structure (see definition in 527 CMR 1.00, 3.3.251). Examples of structures include, but are not limited to: the dwelling, balconies, decks, eaves, fences, etc.

Permanently Installed Grills

The exception to the above described restrictions concern permanently installed grills “Listed equipment permanently installed in accordance with its listing, applicable codes, and manufacturer’s instructions shall be permitted” (527 CMR 1.00: 10.11.6.3). Therefore, if a grill is permanently installed in accordance with its listing, with a gas line installed in accordance with the fuel gas code, it is permitted for use in any occupancy.

Further assistance is always available from the Division of Fire Safety on this and similar issues. If you have further questions, please contact the Code Compliance Help Desk at (978) 567-3375.