



# INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

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## CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL APPLIANCES

The following defines standards regarding back wall protection, construction, and clearances from appliances for commercial kitchens. Code reference: 2007 California Mechanical Code.

### New Back Walls

All new back walls for commercial kitchen cook lines, regardless of construction type, shall be non-combustible construction, i.e. masonry, concrete, steel studs. No wood blocking or other combustible material shall be used within such walls. See below under **Existing Back Wall-Non-Combustible** for wall cover requirements. (Note: It is also recommended that non-combustible wall construction be used for tenant demising walls in retail centers where future restaurant uses may occur.)

### Existing Back Wall-Combustible

The back wall shall be considered combustible unless proven otherwise. In such a case clearances shall be provided as required for combustible construction per the listing of the appliance as shown on the name plate or a listing report from the listing agency; if needed, the installer shall be responsible for providing said report. Manufacturer's installation instructions shall not be accepted in lieu of the listing report. For appliances with cooking tops, a non-combustible protective cover, e.g. stainless steel, shall be provided per 913.5 of the CMC which extends at least two feet above and six inches to either side of the cooking top. (Note this coverage extent is a minimum requirement and will likely be insufficient to meet Health Department requirements.)

Additionally, all combustible blocking shall be removed from any portion of the back wall adjacent to, or within 2 feet measured horizontally from any intended gas burning appliance.

Protective covers provided to satisfy the above or simply to provide a non-combustible, wipeable surface shall not be fastened to combustible framing elements within the "heat zone", see below for a definition of this term. In addition, no shelving or other features shall be attached to the combustible framing within the "heat zone".

Protective covers shall comply with prescriptive requirements of the CMC when used to reduce required clearances, and in all cases, the horizontal and vertical extent shall be fully defined on elevation views of the plans along with construction details that define: a) the extent of the "heat zone" for each appliance, and a note as follows: No plumbing penetrations are permitted within

any heat zone ; b) seam locations and acceptable seam covers; c) connection methods that do not violate the integrity of the protection. For example, metallic fasteners may act as a conductor of heat and shall not be used to connect to the underlying wood frame.

**Heat Zone** For the purposes above, "heat zone" shall be considered the code required clearance area defined for unlisted appliances in CMC Table 3-1 for Ranges-Restaurant-Type, i.e. that area within 48 inches from the top and 18 inches measured from the back or sides of an appliance.

**Existing Back Wall-Non-Combustible.**

When the back wall is considered non-combustible for clearance requirements, this must be verified by the inspector in the field. No wood elements may be contained within the wall, e.g. wood studs or blocking. The wall cover may an approved non-combustible material, e.g. "Hardy Panels" or "Minerit". Use of 5/8" Type X gypsum wall board, classified as "limited combustible", may be used provided it is specified by the design professional of record and covered with a non-combustible, wipeable surface, e.g. stainless steel for a minimum of two feet above the surface of the cook top and six inches to either side. (Note this coverage extent is a minimum requirement and will likely be insufficient to meet Health Department requirements.)