

# CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Fire Marshal Division

### Information Bulletin

#### Open-flame Cooking Devices: Grilling



Outdoor cooking is a great way for friends and family to gather and a fun summertime activity. In order to provide safety guidelines during this important activity minimum precautions have been established in the Fire Code. We ask that you please take a few moments to read and understand these requirements. A few simple precautions can improve safety and reduce the chance of injuries or a substantial monetary loss.

The International Fire Code, 2021 Edition, Section 308.1.4 addresses open-flame cooking devices. The code provides the following guidance:

#### **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 (3048 mm) of combustible construction.

##### **Exceptions:**

1. One- and two-family dwellings.
2. Where buildings, balconies and decks are protected by an automatic sprinkler system.
3. LP-gas cooking devices having LP-gas container with a water capacity not greater than 2 1/2 pounds [nominal 1 pound LP-gas capacity].

This code section prohibits the use of open-flame cooking devices on or within 10 feet of combustible structures or balconies. All cooking appliances must be moved off of combustible decks and not less than 10 feet away from the building before use (unless an exception has been provided as noted above). These requirements are very important in multi-family dwellings, such as apartments or similar, as one tenant's mistake may jeopardize numerous families.

The Code of the City of Charleston, Chapter 13, Section 10, provides additional guidance for pit cooking:

#### **13-10(C)(3):** Fires set in a pit for the cooking of food for human consumption if:

- (a) The total fuel area is 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height,
- (b) Kept 25 feet from any structure or combustible material, and
- (c) A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire-extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose, shall be available for immediate utilization.

The City of Charleston Fire Department will typically address violations with the property owners or property managers, however, it is the responsibility of every tenant to be knowledgeable of the code requirements and take the appropriate safety measures.

Please contact the City of Charleston Fire Department – Fire Marshal Division at (843)724-3429 with any questions, comments, or concerns. We look forward to working with you in maintaining a safe environment in our community.