



MONARCH FIRE AND EMS

SERVING WEST. ST. LOUIS COUNTY SINCE 1925

BBQ Grills in Multi-Family Buildings



Can I have a BBQ grill at my apartment or condominium?

The answer depends on whether or not the grill is on a balcony or ground level. On a balcony it is allowed only if it is an electric powered grill. Propane, charcoal, or other fuels are strictly prohibited.

If the grill is stored on a ground level surface and used only when located more than 10 feet from combustible buildings, it can be fueled by propane, charcoal or other fuels.

Propane, charcoal or other fuel powered grills may never be stored on a combustible balcony nor inside of a building including the storage area.



At no time may a propane cylinder be brought inside of the building for any reason.

When did the rules change?

The use of propane grills, gas grills, and charcoal grills on combustible balconies is strictly prohibited by the International Fire Code and has been a part of that code since the 2003 edition. Additionally, such a prohibition has typically been banned by jurisdictions for many years. Prior to that, unfortunately, these rules were not being adhered to by property management firms and were not being enforced by the municipality or county.

Where Specifically is the prohibition written?

The currently applicable code is listed under the **International Fire Code, 2024 Edition Section 4104.2 Open-Flame Cooking Devices:**

4104.2 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 lbs [nominal 1 pound (0.454 kg) LP-gas capacity].



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Why are grills prohibited? Isn't barbecuing part of summer?

Cooking fires account for roughly half of the fires nationwide in multifamily buildings (apartments and condominiums), and of those, over one-quarter were caused by BBQ grills on the patio or balcony. The improper or careless use of any open-flame cooking device in a multifamily building can have disastrous consequences to multiple families. When fires occur as a result of improper or careless grilling, they typically happen when grills are left unattended while cooking or when embers from a fire fall down and ignite combustible surfaces, sometimes hours after the cooking is done. Unattended fire spreads rapidly, placing property and lives in peril.



I live in a single-family home. Can I have a BBQ grill or gas grill?

Yes. The code does not apply to one and two family dwellings (homes and villas).

I was told that the fire department just passed this rule prohibiting all grills. Is that true?

No. The Monarch Fire Protection District, along with thousands of other agencies across the world, have had a long-standing code prohibiting the use of propane grills, gas grills, and charcoal grills on combustible porches or within 10 feet of any combustible building.

I was told that the fire department will confiscate my grill. Is that true?

No. The enforcement mechanism on the prohibition of certain grills is against the owner or firm that manages any multifamily building where an open-flame grill is located on a combustible balcony.

The fire district does not confiscate private property.



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I was told that the fire department will fine me if they find me using a grill.

Is that true?

No. The enforcement mechanism on the prohibition of certain grills is against the owner or firm that manages any multifamily building where an open-flame grill is located on a combustible balcony. The District does not fine individuals when a grill is found.