BROOKS EQUIPMENT

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Hot Topics

2023

Helping You Protect Lives And Property

Inside

The Recent Evolution of Food Truck Fire Safety

Food trucks are much safer today than ever before. This is partly due to the fire safety codes and standards continually being updated by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and adopted by states. Here is a look at what has transpired in recent years to address the fire safety of mobile and temporary cooking operations, including food trucks.

Today's food trucks contain cooking operations much like restaurant cooking areas. A news report of a food truck fire in October of 2022[1] was attributed to a pot of oil left on a stove top after closing. An employee neglected to turn off the burner before heading home for the evening. The oil eventually ignited, and fire rapidly spread throughout the vehicle. Although the responding fire department quickly extinguished the fire, the food truck was heavily damaged.

This description of a cooking oil fire is very similar to many restaurant fires over the years. The only difference is that the heavy fire damage would have been to a building rather than the vehicle. The same hazards exist in food truck and restaurant cooking areas.

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BROOKS APP
The Virtual Tool Always Within Reach

The Brooks App is a powerful tool allowing technicians and purchasers to streamline their workflows and improve efficiency. The App is designed to provide users with powerful features and tools to help them find the parts they need, reference images and spec sheets, and coordinate with purchasing decision-makers in the office. One of the App's key features that makes this possible is the User Permissions System that is contained in Account Administration which allows administrators to set specific permissions for each user.

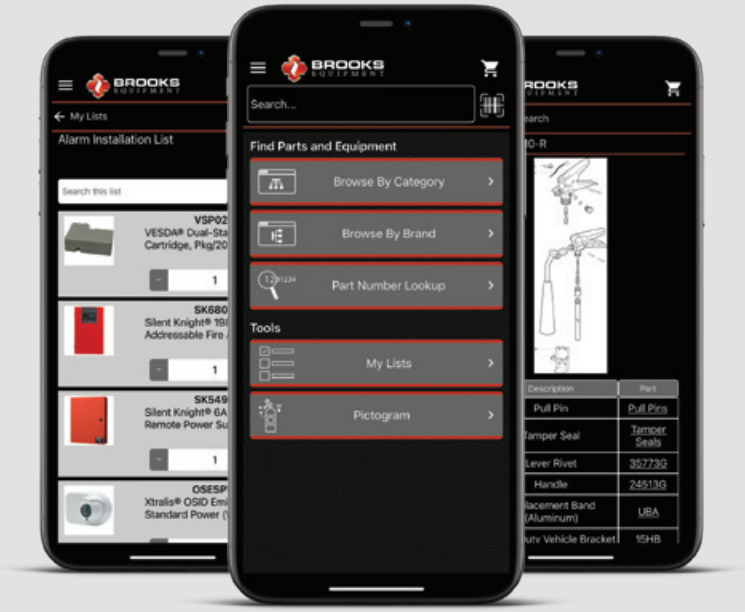
User Permission System

The User Permissions System is an essential feature for businesses that need to manage multiple users and ensure that each user only has access to the information and functionality that they need. With the User Permissions System, administrators can set specific permissions to the information and functionality relevant to each user's role.

For example, a technician might need access to technical specifications or the Fire Extinguisher Parts Pictogram Tool, while a purchaser might need access to pricing and live inventory. By setting specific permissions for each user, the Brooks App ensures that users can access the necessary information and functionality without being overwhelmed by unnecessary features.

Product Lists

The New Product Lists are an essential feature of the Brooks App that links technicians to purchasers. Product Lists allow App users to add products to a list that they can use for future or repetitive orders. It also allows an App user to share the product list with other users under their Brooks Account or email them to a Purchasing Agent. This feature can save significant time by allowing technicians or field



employees to share accurate and up-to-date product lists with anyone.

In summary, the Brooks App is an essential tool for businesses that manage multiple users and order a wide variety of products. With its powerful User Permissions System and detailed Product Lists, the App provides users with the information and functionality needed to complete their work more efficiently and effectively. Whether you are a technician or a purchaser, the Brooks App is the perfect tool to help you streamline your workflow and improve your productivity.

To learn more about the Brooks App, visit our App Resource page at https://www.brooksequipment.com/BrooksApp/.

- **Lists:** Quickly Create and Share Lists of Commonly Ordered Products
- **Pictograms:** Our Most Used Digital Tool Now at Your Finger Tips
- **Live Inventory:** See Real-Time Inventory Levels at All of Our Warehouse Locations
- **Search Filters:** Robust Filters to Find the Products You Need
- **Improved Search:** Auto Suggestion Pop-Up in the Search Field
- **"You May Also Like":** Menu of Helpful Product Suggestions

Interested in learning about Brooks Central? This free digital web tool connects the Brooks App with a central purchasing agent through an easy-to-use Review and Approval Dashboard. Brooks is accepting Beta users too. If you would like a free 30-minute demo, please email MarketingSupport@BrooksEquipment.com and tell us you want to learn more about Brooks Central. ✦

The Recent Evolution of Food Truck Fire Safety

Although food trucks with extensive cooking areas began to proliferate with the Great Recession (2007-2009), the safety concerns were suddenly highlighted during an incident where a food truck's outdated propane tank exploded in July 2014 in Philadelphia, PA[2], killing a mother and daughter inside the food truck, severely burning three people, and injuring others. The media highlighted this catastrophic event, and suddenly, it seemed everyone was concerned with the safety of food trucks in cities around the country.

But before this tragedy, the International Fire Marshals Association (IFMA) began to push for action. IFMA developed a Mobile Cooking Operations Task Group that met to address safety concerns with mobile and temporary cooking operations with what seemed to be a lack of regulation for the increasing numbers of food trucks proliferating in cities around the country.

At the end of 2014, IFMA submitted new criteria for NFPA 1, *Fire Code*, NFPA 58, *Liquified Petroleum Gas Code*, and NFPA 96, *Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection for Commercial Cooking Operations* to address the safety of mobile and temporary cooking operations. Many pages of proposed text from IFMA addressed portable fire extinguishers, extinguishing systems, separation distances, communication, training, generators, wood-burning appliances, and LP-gas.

Notably, in 2015/2016, the NFPA 96 committee reviewed existing requirements within NFPA 96 as they applied to temporary cooking operations. The requirements relevant to mobile and temporary cooking operations were copied and became a new Annex B of the 2017 edition of NFPA 96. That new annex included requirements for clearances, exhaust hoods, exhaust duct systems, fire-extinguishing equipment, training for employees, solid fuel cooking, egress, communication protocol, fire department access, and procedures for inspection, testing, and maintenance of cooking equipment.

Similarly, the committees responsible for NFPA 1 and 58 reviewed the IFMA submittals for food trucks. They accepted many recommendations and developed new mobile and temporary cooking operations requirements. With the 2017 update of NFPA 58, safety concerns with LP-gas for mobile and temporary cooking operations were added. The 2018 edition

of NPFA 1 included a new section on mobile and temporary cooking operations for fire inspections and enforcement.

For the 2021 edition of NFPA 96, the requirements for mobile and temporary cooking operations were moved from Annex B to the chapters of the standard. Interestingly, most requirements in those chapters applied to both conventional restaurants and food trucks, so there was a need for careful review to address exceptions. Notably, Chapters 10 (buildings) and Chapters 11 and 17 (food trucks) provide specific requirements and exceptions that are not addressed in the other chapters for all cooking operations (buildings and food trucks).

Fast forward to 2022 and the NFPA Standards Council requested a joint task group to coordinate the requirements for LP-gas for food trucks in NFPA 58 and 96. The task group met and developed recommendations for both NFPA 58 and 96 to correlate LP-gas requirements to avoid conflicts for the upcoming 2023 editions of those standards.

The improved safety of food trucks today can be attributed to the hard work of the volunteers in the NFPA standards development process. The evolution of a reasonable level of protection for food trucks continues with the correlation of the requirements in these NFPA documents and the release of the 2023 editions of NFPA 58 and 96 later this year. ✦

[1]https://www.katc.com/news/lafayette-parish/food-truck-burns-after-burner-left-on

[2]https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/07/01/food-truck-explosion-philadelphia/11931639/

Repairing or Replacing Backflow Preventers, Which is Better?

During annual testing, you have discovered a backflow preventer that fails. The question now is…do you repair or replace it? The answer is not always so obvious. You will want to make a decision that ensures safety and works well for your customer. Here are the insights you will need to make the best decision that will stand up to scrutiny from your peers.

Your Customer Matters

You might think you will repair the assembly because your truck has all the necessary parts. But think again. The most important person in the equation is your customer. A big part of your job is giving your customer the best value possible with every job. Since almost every business with a water connection needs the backflow prevention assembly tested and serviced, almost every assembly in town is being serviced by either you or your competition. As word gets out, ensure you make the best decisions for your customers.

Also, in today's world, online reviews can be brutal. Next time you repair or replace a backflow preventer, make sure you take a moment to check three important boxes…

- ☑ Safety of the drinking water is ensured
- ☑ You explained the work you performed to your customer
- ☑ You cleaned up the work area

Once you have checked all three boxes, do not hesitate to ask for a positive online review. Today, many business owners regularly check reviews on Google, Yelp, and others. Make sure your reviews are good.

Repair or Replace

There are times when replacement is the only option. On the other hand, many backflow prevention assemblies can be easily and economically repaired. As a backflow technician, it is ultimately up to you to make the best decision to repair or replace based on three basic factors:

- Your training, knowledge, and experience
- Cost of labor
- Cost of materials

Since the ultimate objective is to give your customer the best value, you will need to evaluate each job, exercise good judgment, and make the right call for your customer, ensuring safety.

When Replacement Makes Sense

When it comes to decision-making for smaller backflow prevention devices, it would be best if you had a general policy where you replace the assembly below a certain size. It does not make sense economically to replace parts in assemblies that are one-inch and smaller. If one of those smaller assemblies fails the annual test, you should not attempt to replace parts; swap it out with a new assembly.

That policy works for your customer and you because you do not need to carry smaller assembly parts you will never use. But make sure to carry an assortment of smaller replacement assemblies in your service truck. Also, make sure to inform your customer that it is less expensive for the new replacement assembly than it is to repair the old one.

When Repairing Makes Sense

For larger assemblies, the opposite is most often the case. In other words, repairing and replacing parts is most often the correct decision from an economic standpoint. You will need to compare the cost of replacing the assembly vs. the cost of labor and materials. The best choice is the one that will save your customer money.

Condition of the Assembly

When a larger backflow preventer fails the annual test, the first thing to look at is the overall condition of the assembly. If installed for many years or even decades, it may be very worn, experiencing some cracking or sealing problems that cannot be resolved with the tightening of components or gasket replacement. You will also find that some of the main components become brittle over time. Age-related wear and deterioration cannot be resolved by replacing internal parts.

It is always best to first evaluate the assembly and determine if it is worth fixing or whether it is time to replace it. Repairing parts in an assembly that should have been replaced would be a shame. Remember, you cannot justify the repair time if the invoice says "replacement."

Labor Costs

The time it takes you to replace or repair a backflow preventer assembly translates to billable hours. The labor rate (cost per hour) usually depends on your experience. If you work for a firm that has been in business for many years, your wages are typically based on your education and experience. If you are an apprentice, you are gaining on-the-job training. You will receive a lower hourly rate than the technician doing the actual work. But eventually, you will be sent out on jobs by yourself. Once you begin to work efficiently and get more done for each hour worked, you will likely get a higher hourly rate.

Material Costs

When determining whether to repair or replace, make sure you are comparing apples to apples. In other words, look at the cost of every option. This is where Brooks Equipment can help you. We have knowledgeable, experienced staff to help you match the rebuild to the right parts or to find the best replacement assembly.

Pricing individual parts is often not your best option. Some part kits are often packaged to make your job easier, so you will have the right parts, the correct quantity, and parts intended to work together. Even if you do not use all the components in a kit, it is often the most cost-effective route. For example, if you need 8 out of 10 parts in a kit, the cost is typically cheaper than purchasing individual parts. You will also benefit from getting all the necessary parts, and they will be the right ones for the job. The worst-case scenario is returning to a job site because you had wrong or missing parts. You are less profitable if you visit the same job site multiple times for one repair job!

Make sure to do a little research and compare kits. Choose the most appropriate repair kit for the rebuild. For example, buy the rubber repair parts kit instead of the complete internal parts kit if you only need a rubber kit.

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Parts Availability

Before diving into a repair and parts replacement job, check the parts' availability. If you run into an old assembly, some parts may be obsolete, and there could be no compatible parts that can be used. Only begin a project after properly evaluating the availability of the parts you will need. This is a four-part process:

1. Determine which parts need replacement.
2. Check availability of parts.
3. If parts are obsolete, check for other compatible parts.
4. Proceed only when you have completed your parts evaluation.

Consider Employing Newer Technologies

One of the most critical considerations is the age of the backflow preventer that failed testing. Older assemblies employed older technologies. Our industry has evolved, and many new technologies used in newer assemblies work better, last longer, and are easier to work on. You will likely enjoy working on the newer assemblies, which often take less time to repair, saving your customers money. When you replace an old assembly with a new one, inform your customer of the upgrade to a modern model that works more efficiently and repair/replacement costs over the lifetime of the new one.

Brooks Has Your Back!

Repair parts are available from Brooks for repair and replacement for virtually every backflow prevention assembly. That means we have the necessary parts in stock and can get them to every area of the country with next-day shipping. We stock parts for all manufacturers' products in the sizes and materials you need. This allows you to access the parts they need on time, without the cost and space required to store them locally. Brooks is not only your service partner and parts supplier; we provide expert repair advice.

Technician Knowledge and Resources

You've obviously received some training as a backflow technician, but you can always get a refresher. Look into the course offered by the FED Learning Center (https://fedlearningcenter.com). The course teaches the fundamentals of backflow, including manufacturer's products, components, cross-connections, prevention devices, testing, and equipment. But classroom teaching can only go so far.

You will need to take the knowledge you have gained and apply it in the field. Do not be afraid to take on a job you have never done before. You will eventually need to attempt a repair you have never done. There will be a learning curve that equates to more time on that first job but look on the bright side; you will improve your skills through experience. Gaining invaluable experience only comes with doing the work and sometimes performing challenging tasks.

Ask The Experts

As a Brooks customer, you have access to the backflow prevention experts on staff. You can ask questions, including which replacement parts you will need on which devices, and obtain information on them. Experienced technicians are here to help you do the job right the first time.

Always remember to evaluate each job and exercise good judgment. That way, you will make the right call for your customer, ensuring safety. ✦

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Update: US Coast Guard Extinguisher Replacement Regulations

On April 20, 2022, the US Coast Guard (USCG) issued new fire extinguisher regulations (33CFR, Part 175) for recreational boats. The changes impose a new expiration date on non-rechargeable extinguishers that are typically found on recreational boats. Since most boat owners are safety conscious, they will want to check their extinguishers and change out their non-compliant units with extinguishers that will keep them safe and in compliance with the new regulations. Here is information that you can share with your boat-owner friends and customers.

Recreational boats typically have one or more non-rechargeable fire extinguishers. That is not only because non-rechargeables are provided on new boats by the manufacturers, but they are generally the ones that are readily available as replacements (e. g. marine supply stores).

The new USCG regulations align with NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers*. Both organizations now have the same criteria that non-rechargeable extinguishers must be removed from service at a maximum of 12 years from the date of manufacture. The new USCG regulation is based on a requirement in NFPA 10, which reads as follows:

NFPA 10, 7.3.6.3
Non-rechargeable fire extinguishers shall not be required to have a 6-year internal examination and shall not be hydrostatically tested but shall be removed from service at a maximum interval of 12 years from the date of manufacture.

Here is a summary of the requirements for the two types of extinguishers, with references to the criteria in NFPA 10:

- Rechargeable extinguishers are permitted to remain in service beyond 12 years from the date of manufacture, provided the 12-year hydrostatic test is performed (NFPA 10, 8.3.1).

- Non-rechargeable extinguishers are not permitted to be hydrostatically tested but must be removed from service at a maximum of 12 years from the date of manufacture (NFPA 10, 7.3.6.3).

The new US Coast Guard (USCG) requirements for recreational boats went into effect on April 20, 2022. That means if a boat is boarded by the Coast Guard and a non-rechargeable extinguisher(s) (installed for compliance with USCG regulations) is older than 12 years the boat owner could be cited for a violation and subject to a fine.

From a safety standpoint, it makes the most sense for boat owners to have rechargeable extinguishers installed by a local extinguisher service company in a USCG-required bracket. That bracket will keep the extinguisher securely in its designated place and readily available for use during a fire emergency. Once installed, the USCG-approved rechargeable extinguisher needs to be serviced annually, by a trained technician, as required by USCG regulation 33CFR, Part 175 and NFPA 10. ✦

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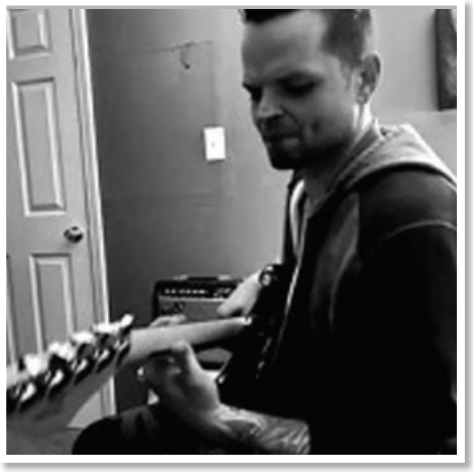
Meet Evan Toney, Account Manager



Starting with Brooks in 2021, Evan has over a decade of experience as a line cook, bringing unique skills to his current role as an Account Manager. Covering primarily the mid-west region, Evan manages accounts throughout the country. He enjoys the flexibility of working from home or reporting to the office, creating a hybrid work environment, and the opportunity to "change the scenery."

Although successful in his role, Evan's passion is music. If he weren't an account manager, he would have pursued a career in music production/engineering. His ultimate dream job would be being a rock star on tour! He also loves coffee and doughnuts—from QT.

Evan's philosophy is to live life one day at a time and enjoy life's fruits. His favorite place in the world is at home, where he can disconnect from the world and unwind after a long day. Evan has a profound belief that one should enjoy what they do because success comes naturally when you love what you do. "One day at a time" and "life is a garden, so dig it," says Evan.

When Evan is not at work, he spends most of his time in his home studio, making music and learning to produce professionally. He also spends quality time with his fiancé, Teresa, and their two beloved dogs, Cuddles and Ringo.

A fun fact about Evan is that he is a self-taught multi-instrumentalist musician. He can play guitar, bass, drums, keyboard, and sing. If you are looking for an account manager with experience, passion, and a unique perspective, Evan will be music to your ears. ✦

Legislation & Code

Brooks Tracks Legislation and Fire Code Adoptions

New York

Legislation has been filed in the Assembly and the Senate for New York state, which could restrict the ability of qualified technicians to work on fire protection systems, including pre-engineered kitchen systems, unless they are licensed sprinkler fitters. The Fire Equipment Manufacturers Association (FEMA) is working to educate sponsors of the legislation and committee members on the potential dangers of the bill and the importance that technicians only work on systems with training and experience.

Virginia

FEMA is working to make the Virginia Fire Code safer in the next code adoption cycle by embracing portable fire extinguishers. Virginia is one of only a handful of states that deviate from the national model fire codes and limit extinguisher placement to only hazardous areas instead of throughout buildings. Virginia is expected to begin its latest code adoption cycle later this year. FEMA is working to educate Virginia building and code officials on the importance of adopting national model codes and the value and effectiveness of portable fire extinguishers. ✦

Brooks Has A Huge Selection of Fire Alarm Products In Stock!

Here at Brooks, we have a wide selection of Fire Alarm products that are in stock nationwide. We also have a knowledgeable Alarm Team that is well versed in the Detection and Notification field to help you find what you need, when you need it. We have live inventory online, 24/7 order processing, and same-day shipping or pickup.

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