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Hoodz of the Hudson Valley

A great way for exhaust cleaning companies to expand their business is to develop a networking referral relationship with fire suppression companies, restaurant suppliers, hood installers, food distributors, and others associated with the restaurant business. It would seem that the best referrals could or should come from your local AHJ, but politics, fear of collusion, or local government rules, in many cases, impede and often actually prevent this. I have experience in some communities where the AHJ is not even allowed to accept my business card.

The fact is that if the AHJ could give out such a list, it might even improve the quality of exhaust cleaning!

We all know that NFPA 96 is a standard that can only be enforced in communities where the local government has approved regulations for enforcement of some or all parts of the standard. As an example, many communities will adopt the IMC for the fabrication or installation of a hood system, the IFC for suppression, and NFPA 96 chapter 11 for the maintenance and cleaning of the system. It is sad that only after a major fire that has resulted in casualties, often firemen, are some of these regulations formally adopted and the local AHJ given strong authority for their enforcement. These regulations often include some type of testing, screening, and certification of exhaust cleaning companies. In the northeast, Boston initiated such a program, which was later adopted by the state. New York City, Atlantic City, and others across the nation are following this example.

So, say you're an AHJ and you have noticed that some exhaust cleaning companies in your jurisdiction do a great job, some are just okay, and some are simply unacceptable. When doing a fire inspection, you often get asked for recommendations for exhaust cleaning companies, but you feel uncomfortable providing any. Or say you own an exhaust cleaning company that is insured, properly trains its teams, follows procedures, and does a quality job. You're losing business to

companies able to undercut your pricing because they do not have the insurance costs or don't do a quality job. In these examples, neither person has had success in getting a regulation passed to clean up the exhaust cleaning business, but they strongly desire to do so.

The hurricanes and resulting flooding in the Northeast last year gave me the answer to this problem. Local building inspectors had to go into flood-ravaged communities and condemn buildings with flood damage. Understand that different building inspectors had different reasons for condemning buildings based on their own interpretation of various building codes. They were often challenged because they were inconsistent. They were only successful when they could point to a fair, consistent, written policy for determining what buildings could be condemned based on a list of guidelines within the policy.

Does the policy have to be a local community regulation? Absolutely not! And herein lies the solution: The policy is simply a fair, consistent, definable approach that can be implemented easily and without any prejudice.

Any AHJ can write a policy by which it can maintain a list of exhaust cleaning companies that meet the conditions of this policy to hand out to commercial kitchen businesses in their area of authority. The process is simple: If your company meets the guidelines of the written policy, your company's name can be on the list. If it does not, it is not on the list. The list is maintained in alphabetical order and includes company names, addresses, a contact name, phone numbers, and websites and/or e-mail addresses. By writing a fair policy and maintaining such a list, an AHJ can freely give out the list without any fear of reprisals. A well-written policy can raise the bar for exhaust cleaning in the AHJ's jurisdiction.

What should be included in the policy? How do you write one?

A quick search of the web for the Boston Fire Department in Massachusetts or other communities that have developed regulations is a great way to find a list of ideas to include in your policy. Your policy can include the following:

- Proof of a legally formed or chartered business according to your state laws with a valid tax EIN.
- A minimal insurance requirement: \$2 million in general liability is typical.
- A minimal bonding requirement.
- Specific requirements for information on the hood label to be affixed to hoods after cleaning:
  - Date of service
  - Defined frequency of inspection
  - Month of next inspection
  - Indication of NFPA 96 compliance or noncompliance, possibly with different colors to identify such.
- Specific requirements for the exhaust clean after-action report, including how to file a copy of the report.
- Specific reasons that would result in the company being removed from the list and the warning procedure:
  - Insurance expiration
  - Reports not provided per policy
  - AHJ inspector's finding of poor quality in last exhaust clean performed
  - Continued complaints from businesses.
- Other criteria as you desire, as long as they are fair, consistent, and specifically definable.

Nowhere in the above suggestions is there any mention of any type of certification requirements. Requiring any type of certification implies some type of training, testing, and intensive record-keeping on companies or even individuals within companies. Most AHJs do not have the manpower to develop, implement, and maintain such a certification program, so don't even try. Remember that the purpose of developing

## AHJ Corner (continued)

a policy is to define requirements for any exhaust cleaning company to be placed on a list that the AHJ could hand out if it is requested by a kitchen representative. The list simply eliminates those fly-by-night individuals who are not insured, not bonded, and possibly not even a legal company.

The fact is that, per NFPA 96, with the exception of seasonal businesses, all kitchens should have their exhaust systems inspected at least twice a year. If com-

mercial kitchens are abiding by this standard, most communities have enough of them to support a few kitchen exhaust cleaning businesses. Simply said, there is enough work to go around! As an AHJ, if you have a policy and if you have a list of those companies that meet the requirements of your policy, you are helping your community. The contacts on your list can be said to be great exhaust cleaning companies offering good service, performance, and quality at competitive rates because the rules are the same for all.

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### Future Meeting Dates

Mark your calendars now for IKECA's future meetings!

**2013**

**Annual Membership Meeting**  
April 17-20 at the Hilton Naples in Naples, FL

**Fall Technical Seminar & Expo**

October 9-12 at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix in Phoenix, AZ

**2014**

**2014 Annual Meeting (Celebrating 25 Years!)**  
April 23-26 at the The Golden Nugget  
Las Vegas, NV

# CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE



## CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

**CECT = 20 hours (2 CEUs) every 24 months**

**CECS = 20 hours (2 CEUs) every 12 months**

**CESI = 40 hours (4 CEUs) every 24 months**

Proof of appropriate number of CEUs completed must accompany your IKECA Certification Renewal  
*Payment of the renewal fee alone is not sufficient to renew your certification.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you rely on attending IKECA meetings or conferences to obtain the required CEUs, attendance is tracked, and certificates of attendance issued based on actual attendance.

\*Acceptable organization conferences include: NADCA, ASHRAE, NAFA, NFPA, NAFED, RFMA, NASFM. For all others, please contact IKECA to confirm eligibility. Continuing Education is valued at 0.1 CEU per one hour of content.

\*\*Acceptable in-house training includes: OSHA Safety Training; OSHA 8 hour and 10 hour training; Manufacturer-specific training; Red Cross. For all others, please contact IKECA to confirm eligibility. Continuing Education is valued at 0.1 CEU per one hour of content.

• Attendance at the IKECA Annual Meeting or Fall Technical Seminar <i>Approximately 20 hours of content per meeting</i>	<b>2.0 CEU</b>	• Attendance at in-house training seminar, or one at another facility ** <i>0.1 CEU per one hour of content training seminar</i>	<b>0.1 CEU</b>
• Presenting at the IKECA Annual Meeting or Fall Technical Seminar <i>Approximately 5 hours of content development and presentation</i>	<b>0.5 CEU</b>	• Online educational training programs <i>0.1 CEU per one hour of content training seminar</i>	<b>0.1 CEU</b>
• Submission of a technical article for The IKECA Journal <i>Approximately 3 hours of content per article</i>	<b>0.3 CEU</b>	• Develop online assessment content <i>Approximately 5 hours of content development</i>	<b>0.5 CEU</b>
• Attendance or Presenter at an industry-related conference, meeting or seminar * <i>Approximately 5 hours of related content training seminar</i>	<b>0.5 CEU</b>	• Technical Code Committee Work (NFPA, ASHRAE, ANSI Consensus Body)	<b>1.0 CEU</b>
		• Active Participation in an IKECA Committee	<b>0.5 CEU</b>
		• Successfully passing jurisdictional exam: NYC, Boston, Mass, etc.	<b>1.0 CEU</b>

