

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE - GUIDELINES FOR EXTRACT VENTILATION SYSTEMS FOR COMMERCIAL KITCHENS, JANUARY 2003

1. Wandsworth Council has approved guidelines for ventilation systems for restaurants and other premises involving commercial kitchens and food preparation, in order to minimise the possibility of nuisance to neighbours or harm to amenity. The Unitary Development Plan requires adequate ventilation arrangements to be made for these premises. Important considerations are visual amenity and minimising noise and smells. These factors can determine whether a proposal for food and drink use is acceptable. Satisfactory ventilation arrangements are also important from the health and safety point of view, both of users of the premises and nearby residents.
2. Complaints about food premises arise from inadequate or badly managed ventilation systems. Problems can be avoided where a ventilation system is installed which is adequate for the food operation and which is properly maintained.

Planning and building control

3. The change of use of a shop or other premises to the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises or hot food to take away, comes within the scope of planning control, as do the external physical alterations to a building which often accompany it, such as a new shopfront or the installation of external ventilation ducting. External ducting is also likely to require consent under the temporary structure licensing provisions.
4. Prospective operators should consult the Planning Service for planning advice on the suitability of premises for the purpose intended and any likely constraints on ventilation ducting dictated by the nature of the building and its location. The Building Control Division can advise on temporary structure provisions.

Environmental health control

5. Environmental Services are responsible for the registration of catering premises and for the enforcement of food safety. The enforcement of health and safety legislation is split between the Health and Safety Executive and the Environmental Services Division, depending on the type of business being operated. Environmental Services will provide guidance and advice to new businesses wishing to set up in the Borough. They are also responsible for the prevention of nuisance to neighbouring residents, particularly smell or noise nuisance.
6. Prospective operators should consult the Environmental Services Food Team for general advice on environmental health controls and food safety matters.

Guidelines

7. The following guidelines will be used as a basis for planning and environmental health control:
 - (a) The use of premises for the preparation of hot food will not be appropriate if adequate ventilation arrangements acceptable in planning terms cannot be achieved.
 - (b) Ventilation systems must be suitable for the nature and quantity of the food being prepared. Operators taking over existing food premises should consider whether any additional ventilation equipment is likely to be required. If the planned operation is likely to involve a greater amount of cooking, especially of fried or spicy foods, or if there is a different type of oven, for example wood burning, then expert advice is required. If satisfactory arrangements cannot be made, it may not be feasible to use the premises as intended.
 - (c) Planning applications for change of use to a hot-food use should be accompanied by details of the ventilation systems to be used and adequate plans showing the specifications of any ventilation ducting and its precise location.
 - (d) Where practicable, low-level filter systems are likely to be preferable in terms of visual impact. However, low-level systems venting into enclosed spaces, which might result in nuisance, should be avoided.
 - (e) High level ducting, where required, should terminate at least one metre above eaves height to minimise the nuisance of smells, noise and vibration. "Chinese hat" type discharge terminals should not be used as they direct fumes downwards and may cause re-entry into buildings, and they have a high flow resistance. Ducting should terminate at an open end, comprising a swept, easy bend so that extracted fumes are directed away from the nearest windows or sensitive areas.
 - (f) Exterior ducting, particularly that which is high level, will only be acceptable if adequate steps are taken to minimise its visual impact. The extent of visual impact will depend on the nature of the building, the materials used and the relationship of the building with neighbours in terms of scale and proximity. Prominent positions or those overlooked by many residential neighbours should be avoided.
 - (g) The use of existing chimney flues should be considered where at all possible. In some circumstances enclosing, cladding or painting an external duct may enable its visual impact to be reduced.
 - (h) Any other external equipment or structures (such as air conditioning plant) should also be designed and sited so as to minimise visual impact.

- (i) A concentration of premises with highly visible ducting and other external equipment, such as air conditioning plant and gas flues, is likely to have a greater impact visually, introducing an industrial aspect which may be unacceptably dominant or intrusive in a residential area and have an unacceptable effect on the character of the area. This is especially important in conservation areas and other environmentally sensitive locations. In such locations further high-level ducting may well be unacceptable.
- (j) To avoid nuisance through noise and vibration, fans should be positioned in areas of smooth undisturbed flow; ducting should preferably be circular in cross-section and smooth internally; bends in ducting should be swept, easy bends, not angular; ducting walls should be rigid enough to prevent resonance; ducting should be fixed to the building structure by a minimum of fixing points to minimise structure borne noise and fans should be well maintained on isolation mountings.
- (k) Air conditioning plant should be installed and operated so as not to increase existing background noise levels, and to prevent the transmission of vibration through the structure.
- (l) Ventilation equipment should be designed in accordance with best practice as advocated by the Institute of Environmental Health and relevant professional and trade associations. Further information and detailed advice on the suitability of specific ventilation systems should be sought from manufacturers or appropriate specialist engineering companies.
- (m) The Health and Safety Executive provides further guidance on ventilation rates, the design and performance of canopies, hoods and ducting, and discharge arrangements for catering establishments. HSE information sheet - Catering Sheet number 10 – Ventilation of kitchens in catering establishments – can be viewed at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cais10.pdf
- (n) All systems, but particularly low level systems, must be regularly maintained and renewed in order to prevent nuisance arising.
- (o) Any use approved on the basis of a carbon or other filter system will normally be subject to a condition requiring details of a maintenance contract to be submitted to, and agreed by, the Council before the use is implemented.
- (p) Ducting approved as part of a planning permission will normally be subject to a condition that it should be removed within 2 months of the cessation of the use of the premises for hot-food purposes.

CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

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Environmental Health

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Registration forms can be obtained from 020 8871 6166.

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Health and Safety Executive

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