



MECKLENBURG COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



Grills and Portable Heaters in Apartment and Condominium Buildings

This document is intended to help determine where cooking grills and portable fuel fired heaters can or cannot be used in apartment or condominium occupancies.

Grills:

Q: I live on the second floor or above in my apartment or condominium building, can I have a grill on my balcony or deck?

A: Yes, but only under the following conditions:

1. It is not prohibited in the lease, policies, or other governing rules of your apartment community or association. (The fire code official cannot enforce these rules.)

AND

2. The grill is an electric appliance listed for outdoor use and is used properly without violating other parts of the code, such as the use of extension cords.

OR

3. The building, balconies and/or decks are protected by an automatic sprinkler system.

OR

4. The grill is a Liquefied Petroleum gas cooking device having an LP-gas container with a water capacity not greater than 2 ½ pounds (approximately 1 pound of LP-gas). *The small propane cylinders that are used in lanterns and small tabletop camp grills are examples of this type of container.

Q: I live on the first floor of my building, or there is only one floor, where can I use my gas or charcoal grill?

A: Gas or charcoal grills, when not otherwise allowed on a balcony or deck by the conditions above, shall not be used within 10 feet of combustible construction, this includes flooring or decks underneath the unit, walls and supports around the unit, and ceilings, decks, balconies, or overhangs above the unit.

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Heaters:

Q: I live in an apartment or condominium building; can I have or use a portable fuel-fired (using energy other than electricity) heater on my patio or balcony?

A: No, the use or storage of portable fuel-fired heating appliances is not allowed in apartment or condominium buildings or on the exterior balconies. Also, the storage of fuel gas containers for portable outdoor heating appliances is not allowed inside of buildings.

Q: What about first floor units or patio areas?

A: If the use of portable fuel-fired outdoor heaters is not prohibited by the lease, policies, or governing rules of the community or association, these units must be located at least 5 feet from any buildings, exits, decorations, decks, balconies, awnings or overhangs, or any other combustible materials.

References: 2012 and 2018 versions of the North Carolina Fire Code and Mechanical Code

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