

Older fire suppression systems for restaurants may no longer be enough to extinguish restaurant fires today. That is because of new cooking media and newer cooking methodologies that can generate higher temperatures and lower flash points. This 2 part series will look at the new UL300 standards and help you understand what you have now and what you may want in the future.

So what is UL300? UL 300 is the standard for testing of fire extinguishing systems for protection of restaurant cooking areas. [Underwriters Laboratories, Inc](#), referred to as UL, is an independent, not for profit product safety testing and certification organization. How do you know if your current system is UL 300? According to Underwriters Laboratories, the only way to know is to check that the model number on your fire suppression system is UL 300 compliant. If so, then you must verify that all components have been installed as specified by the manufacturer's manual.

The best place to start is to look for the UL300 label on the systems extinguishing chemical tank. Another indicator is the type of discharge nozzle located over each cooking surface. All UL 300 compliant systems use a wet extinguishing agent. Discharge nozzles for the older, dry chemical systems are fairly large, usually around 2 inches in diameter. Wet system nozzles are narrow, typically $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to 1 inch in diameter and are typically covered with red, orange or yellow plastic caps to keep them clean.

You may have to ask the fire protection company that is offering the ongoing service and inspections on your system. You can identify them by finding the service record tag. This tag is normally attached to the manual pull box for the system.

Here are some red flag indicators that your system is not UL 300 compliant:

Installed prior to 11/21/1994.

No UL label on the cylinder.

Dry chemical extinguishing media.

Dry chemical discharge nozzles – large size – 2 inches in diameter

System uses water spray to protect appliances.

System uses a single nozzle to protect multiple appliances or multiple cooking surfaces.

So what if your current system is not UL 300 compliant? In that case I would recommend that you replace it with a UL 300 system. In part 2 of this 2 part series I will show you how to go about that and how to get someone else to pay for it.

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