

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 3, 2018

To: City of Yakima Council Members

From: Fire Code Inspection Division

RE: Proposed Ordinance for Cooking Under Tents

The Fire Code Inspection Division is proposing an ordinance that will amend specific sections of the state adopted 2015 International Fire Code (IFC). Chapter 31 of the IFC addresses tents and other membrane structures. We are looking specifically at cooking operations under tents and canopies. The proposed ordinance would allow cooking under tents and canopies at events that are specific to our city, such as the Farmers Market and the Central Washington State Fair. It would give fire inspectors a standard that can be enforced consistently at these kinds of events.

Currently, the fire code is somewhat vague on the subject of cooking under tents. One section states that some cooking and heating equipment is allowed, while other sections say that open flames are not allowed. This lack of clarity requires a level of subjective interpretation. City of Yakima Fire Inspectors are tasked with applying and enforcing this code on events that differ greatly. One event might have a few hundred people with 1 or 2 cooking tents while another would host an event where thousands of people would walk through and there are 20 different vendors utilizing different cooking operations in tents of all sizes.

Our research has found that many jurisdictions use the local ordinance process to tailor the code to fit the kinds of events specific to their areas. This proposed ordinance would provide a single code that applies to Yakima's events regardless of size or number of food vendors. The items in this ordinance have been composed with fire and life safety as the focus, while offering a level of practicality. This allows the fire inspectors to consistently provide a safe environment for the citizens of Yakima while providing clear, easy to understand criteria for the food vendors and event coordinators.