VyRal

A LeakReceipts Field Guide

LeakReceipts for Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning

The Field Guide: where the money leaks, how to prove it, and how to close it

For: Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning — Code Scope

by VyRal Dynasty

LeakReceipts for Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning The Field Guide: where the money leaks, how to prove it, and how to close it

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How every number in this book is labeled.

- **VERIFIED** means the figure comes from a named, dated source, and the source is printed next to it.
- **CALCULATED** means it is arithmetic on verified numbers or on your own numbers, and the math is shown.
- **ESTIMATE** means a reasoned range, and it is always called one.
- **STRUCTURAL** marks a standing rule of the trade (a law, a contract term, how the paperwork works), not a market figure.
- **STILL BEING MEASURED** means VyRal has not verified a figure yet, so no number is printed.

If a number is not labeled, it is a blank for you to fill from your own paper.

What this book is not. This is education, not legal, tax, accounting or financial advice. Where a fix says a professional decides, a professional decides. Nothing here says that any company, customer or person did anything wrong. The fixes show you how to check your own paper and ask in writing.

About how this book was made. This book was assembled with AI from VyRal's sourced research on this trade and checked against those sources. AI can make mistakes. Before you act on a figure, check it against the source printed beside it. Rules and rates change, and every figure carries its date for that reason.

Before you share any document with anyone, Vera included, black out account numbers, Social Security numbers and anything else you would not hand a stranger.

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The short answer for your trade

Fire code requires a commercial kitchen's entire exhaust system — hood, duct, and fan — to be cleaned to bare metal, and requires access panels along the duct so the whole run can actually be reached. In practice, a lot of buildings don't have those panels, and a crew standing on a roof at 2 a.m. facing a duct it can't get into has two easy options: clean what's reachable and certify the whole thing anyway, or walk away from paid work the code actually requires. Both are the wrong move. The honest path — assessing the system, pricing the access retrofit, and certifying exactly what was and wasn't cleaned — isn't scope creep. It's the fire code, and it's backed by the same fire marshal and insurer the building already answers to.

Your leak map

Every leak this book covers, biggest first. The size grade is VyRal's research grade for how much money a leak tends to move in this trade. It is a grade, not a dollar figure. Your own paper sets the dollars.

#	Leak	Size grade	Evidence	Fixes
1	Documentation Requirement — The Certificate Must Name What Wasn't Cleaned	Major	VERIFIED	1
2	Access Panels Are Code-Required, Not Optional Add-Ons	Significant	VERIFIED	1
3	Cleaning Frequency Is Set by Cooking Volume, Enforced Locally	Moderate	VERIFIED	1
4	Fire Marshal and Insurer Enforcement Both Back the Honest Price	Not graded	STRUCTURAL	1
5	Self-Employment Tax (SECA) Boundary	Not graded	STRUCTURAL	1
6	Trucks, Pressure Equipment, and Certification (Pride Economy)	Not graded	STRUCTURAL	1
7	A Missed Access Panel Is a Real, Documented Fire Risk	Major	STILL BEING MEASURED	1
8	NFPA 96 Requires Cleaning to Bare Metal, Hood to Fan	Major	STILL BEING MEASURED	1

Then there are 4 more leaks to check, each with its own fixes, in the chapter called More leaks to check.

What people in your trade say hurts

Before we built a single fix, we went and read what people in this trade say out loud: forums, trade press, regulators' complaint files and court records. These are the pains that kept coming up, the ones with the most sources first. If one of them is yours, you're not imagining it.

After a kitchen fire, the insurer comes after the hood cleaner

Even when the cook started the fire, the restaurant's insurer may sue me to get its money back. Under the code the owner is responsible unless the contract hands that to someone else in writing, so my contract and my report are my defense.

Found in 3 public sources; newest dated 2026-06-17. VERIFIED count from VyRal's public research log; the sources are listed at the back.

Duct the crew couldn't reach gets left off the report, and the license pays for it

If I can't get into part of the duct and I don't write it down and tell the owner, I'm the one on the hook when it burns. One state pulled a cleaner's license for up to two and a half years for exactly that.

Found in 3 public sources; newest dated 2026-06-17. VERIFIED count from VyRal's public research log; the sources are listed at the back.

Missing access panels get installed free, or the duct behind them gets skipped

The code wants panels along the duct so the whole run can be cleaned. A lot of buildings don't have them. If I don't price the panels up front, I either put them in for free or leave that stretch dirty.

Found in 3 public sources; newest dated 2026-06-17. VERIFIED count from VyRal's public research log; the sources are listed at the back.

Restaurant customers are closing, and recurring accounts vanish with them

All my accounts are restaurants, and a lot of them are hurting. When one closes, I lose that quarterly clean for good, and sometimes the last invoice too. I have to keep finding new kitchens just to stand still.

Found in 3 public sources; newest dated 2026-10-18. VERIFIED count from VyRal's public research log; the sources are listed at the back.

Get your paper together

Every fix in this book starts with paper, not memory. Memory rounds in the other side's favor. Paper doesn't.

Pull the last 90 days. Put it all in one folder, paper or phone, and label each piece with its date. Black out account numbers and Social Security numbers before you share anything with anyone.

The paper that proves each leak:

- Your contracts, invoices, statements, pay records and the messages around them.

My folder checklist

Last 90 days of statements or pay records _____

Every contract or agreement I work under _____

Every invoice, ticket or settlement for the same 90 days _____

The messages that changed a price, a scope or a date _____

Leak 1: Documentation Requirement — The Certificate Must Name What Wasn't Cleaned

Size grade: Major · Evidence: VERIFIED

What it is. NFPA 96 requires a dated certificate and cleaning sticker documenting who cleaned the system, when, and specifically which areas were inaccessible or not cleaned.

Why it leaks. This cuts both ways and is the honest path through the code-vs-building-access gap: an honest, complete certificate is simultaneously the operator's legal protection after a loss and the documented case for pricing an access retrofit and return visit — while a false 'fully cleaned' certificate on a system that wasn't is a fire hazard and a provable liability after any loss.

The number to hold it against. NFPA 96 requires a certificate and a dated sticker documenting each cleaning, including which areas were inaccessible or not cleaned. Source: NFPA 96, 2024 edition.

VERIFIED · Primary — the organisation's own figure

> **Ask yourself:** If your last certificate said the system was fully cleaned, was every part of it actually reached — and if not, did the certificate say so honestly?

1. Certificate says 'fully cleaned' when parts weren't reached

Fix approved · leak evidence: Verified

Fix 1 — Do it yourself (free).

1. After every job, list every section you couldn't reach or didn't clean in the written report to the owner.
2. Keep a copy with your photos.
3. Use those listed sections to quote the retrofit and return visit.
4. Never sign a 'fully cleaned' certificate for a system you didn't fully reach.
5. Check whether your local fire authority wants copies of reports sent to them.

Fix 2 — The words to send, under your own name. Fill in the brackets, keep a copy, and send it from your own email or by mail. Nobody sends it for you.

Report line to owner (on every job report):

Service date: [DATE] | Location: [ADDRESS]
Cleaned: [List of sections]
NOT cleaned / inaccessible: [List of sections and why]
Recommended: [ACCESS PANELS / RETURN VISIT], quote attached.
Technician: [NAME] | Company: [COMPANY]

Fix 3 — Done for you. LeakReceipts

WE DO: give you a report template with a required 'not cleaned' section, store each report with photos, and turn the not-cleaned list into a quote. YOU DO: fill it out on site and sign it.

Keep it closed. Make 'not cleaned / inaccessible' a required field on every report.

What this fix can't decide for you. Section numbering may differ in NFPA 96-2024; we cite the requirement, not the number.

My receipt for this leak			
Owed by my paper	Paid or billed	Gap (CALCULATED: owed − paid)	Fix 2 sent · answer

FREE FIRST CHAPTER

That's Leak 1 of 8.

The full Field Guide for Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning walks through every leak on the map you just read: why it happens, the paper that proves it, and three fixes for each one — one you do yourself for free, the words to send under your own name, and what LeakReceipts can do for you while the decision stays yours.

Get the full guide:
leakreceipts.com/ebooks/kitchen-exhaust-cleaning

Run it on your own numbers:
leakreceipts.com

WE WALK BY FAITH NOT BY SIGHT — 2 Corinthians 5:7