



## CASE STUDY

NoDa Brewery | Charlotte, North Carolina

# BILCO Smoke Vents Help Reduce Fire Risk for North Carolina Brewery

NoDa Brewing recently completed a \$4 million, 16,000-square-foot expansion that will allow it to increase production by as much as 40 percent. The business incorporated eight smoke vents from BILCO into the project as part of its fire safety plan.

The expansion increased the footprint of the building by 50 percent and will allow NoDa to produce up to 24,000 barrels per year. The project enabled NoDa to expand its cold storage space, making it easier to distribute products. It also enabled the business to bring cans and dry storage in-house and not rely on having to use off-site locations.

Fires are not uncommon at breweries. Just last year, a neighboring brewery to NoDa saw its business closed for nearly eight months after a two-alarm fire caused nearly \$1 million in damage.

Breweries must store and handle large quantities of grains, which are stored in silos and moved with conveyors and elevators. Storing, transport and milling of the grains are all potential fire hazards. A dust explosion can occur when grain, dust, oxygen, an ignition source and a confined space are present.

Fires can also start due to rupturing of ammonia cylinders or piping ruptures, boiling over of pitch vessels, ruptured steam lines and exploding steam vessels, or overheating malt during drying operations.

"The reality is that every brewery faces fire risk every single day of the year," Richard Beall, principal of Beall Brewer Insurance, said on his company website. "There's hot machinery, power tools, gas-powered vehicles and gas-fed flames, and loads of packaging material and paperwork."

Working with architects from Childrey Robinson Associates, the team at RCS (Roof Curb Systems) assisted Cummings Construction of Charlotte in integrating the BILCO smoke vents on the already installed 13,260 square-foot standing seam roof. The vents – four measured 5 feet x 8 feet and four measured 5 feet x 10 feet – are a key component in a fire protection plan. Automatic smoke vents assist firefighting efforts and promote safe building evacuation by removing smoke, heat and toxic flames from a burning building.

Smoke vents are ideally suited for large expanses of unobstructed space such as factories, warehouses, auditoriums and retail facilities. They are activated upon the melting of a fusible link and are the most economical way to add fire venting in large areas. Preliminary design



plans for NoDa Brewing included sprinkler activation, but fire protection officials mandated the design include the smoke vents.

"The BILCO selection was our choice," Vice President of Business Development for RCS, Clifton Reasor, said. "The metal covering in the non-daylighting style was preferred for this project. We trust them and pay a little bit of a premium because we know it's going to be a quality product. They're also going to service the product, and that was an important consideration."

Cummings Construction, the project's general contractor, selected RCS as the specialty supplier on the roofing project, while Compton Sales distributed the BILCO smoke vents.

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