

Anti-Tip Brackets for Freestanding Ranges

Anti-tip brackets are metal devices designed to prevent freestanding ranges from tipping. They are normally attached to a rear leg of the range or screwed into the wall behind the range, and are included in all installation kits. A unit that is not equipped with these devices may tip over if enough weight is applied to its open door, such as that from a large Thanksgiving turkey, or even a small child. A falling range can crush, scald, or burn anyone caught beneath.



Bracket Inspection

Inspectors can confirm the presence of anti-tip brackets through the following methods:

- It may be possible to see a wall-mounted bracket by looking over the rear of the range. Floor-mounted brackets are often hidden, although in some models with removable drawers, such as 30" electric ranges made by General Electric, the drawers can be removed and a flashlight can be used to search for the bracket. Inspectors should beware that a visual confirmation does not guarantee that the bracket has been properly installed.
- Inspectors can firmly grip the upper-rear section of the range and tip the unit. If equipped with an anti-tip bracket, the unit will not tip more than several inches before coming to a halt. The range should be turned off, and all items should be removed from the stovetop before this action can be performed. It is usually easier to detect a bracket by tipping the range than through a visual search. This test can be performed on all models and it can confirm the functionality of a bracket.

If no anti-tip bracket is detected, inspectors should recommend that one be installed.

Clients can contact the dealer or builder who installed their range and request that they install a bracket. For clients who wish to install a bracket themselves, the part can be purchased at most hardware stores or ordered from a manufacturer. General Electric will send their customers an anti-tip bracket for free.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), there were 143 incidents caused by range tip-overs from 1980 to 2006. Of the 33 incidents that resulted in death, most of those victims were children. A small child may stand on an open range door in order to see what is cooking on the stovetop and accidentally cause the entire unit to fall on top of him, along with whatever hot items may have been cooking on the stovetop. The elderly, too, may be injured while using the range for support while cleaning. InterNACHI inspectors who inspect ovens should never leave the oven door open while the oven is unattended.

In response to this danger, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) created standards in 1991 that require all ranges manufactured after that year to be capable of remaining stable while supporting 250 pounds of weight on their open doors. Manufacturers' instructions, too, require that anti-tip brackets provided be installed. Despite these warnings, retailer Sears estimated in 1999 that a mere 5% of the gas and electric units they sold were ever equipped with anti-tip brackets. As a result of Sears' failure to comply with safety regulations, they were sued and subsequently required to secure ranges in nearly 4 million homes, a measure that has been speculated to have cost Sears as much as \$500 million.

In summary, ranges are susceptible to tipping if they are not equipped with anti-tip brackets. Inspectors should know how to confirm that these safety devices are present.