



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FIRE MARSHALS

Position Statement

Valet Trash
F182-18

ISSUE: Valet trash is a full-service trash collection service amenity provided by privately-owned companies that collect and remove the trash from the doorsteps of residents of multi-family communities such as apartments and condominiums. Providers of this service are now requesting that this service be allowed in the fire and building codes. This proposal goes against the core principals of fire and life safety built into the code, with one of those core principals being free and clear egress paths in a building.

VOTE: NASFM recommends **support** for the Virginia Fire Services Board Public Comment on F182-18. This public comment calls for disapproval of the committee action to allow valet trash collection within the International Fire Code. **Do not take the option to vote to support the committee action as that would give a negative vote to this public comment on FS182-18.**

NASFM also recommends a vote to **approve** (positive) Committee proposal F186-18 which will require an operational permit for providers of valet trash collection service in a Group R-2 Occupancies.

BACKGROUND: The Virginia Fire Services Board opposes Committee Proposal F182-18. This proposal will result in unsafe conditions for building occupants and firefighters. The premise of “valet trash” violates several sections of the current Fire Code, including:

- 304.1: Combustible waste material creating a fire hazard shall not be allowed to accumulate in buildings or structures or upon premises.
- 304.2: Storage of combustible rubbish shall not produce conditions that will create a nuisance or a hazard to the public health, safety or welfare.
- 1031.2: Required exit accesses, exits and exit discharges shall be continuously maintained free from obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency where the building area served by the means of egress is occupied.
- 1031.1: A means of egress shall be free from obstructions that would prevent its use, including the accumulation of snow and ice.
- 1031.6: ... Furnishings, decorations or other objects shall not be placed so as to obstruct exits, access thereto, egress therefrom, or visibility thereof...

The above requirements are longstanding fundamentals of protecting the means of egress and providing for fire safety in buildings. However, because one or more businesses have undertaken business practices that violate current code requirements, the answer is to weaken the requirements, potentially putting occupants and firefighters at risk.

The proposal states that “trash or recyclable materials awaiting valet trash collection shall only be placed in a corridor or on an egress balcony within 18 hours of scheduled pickup and shall not obstruct the minimum egress width required by Section 1020.2”. What happens if the scheduled pickup does not occur? Is the trash or recyclable material allowed to remain in the corridor until the next scheduled pickup? How does the tenant placing their trash or recyclable material in the corridor know what the minimum egress width is? How do you enforce this? Who is responsible for compliance? The valet trash service provider? The building owner? The building manager? The tenant?

The proposal specifies the size and type of container that must be used and that they must be provided with tight-fitting or self-closing lids. However, the proposal does not require the lid to be used. What if the occupant has more trash than will fit in the container? Leave the lid off? Put it next to the container?

There are no restrictions on the type of materials that can be put out. During the Committee Action Hearings, the one service provider that was represented stated that their policies prohibited hazardous materials, flammable liquids, etc. What about the other service providers?

In limited visibility, firefighters follow the wall to find their way. We teach the general public to follow the wall to find their way out in smoke. This proposal allows the introduction of obstructions that will require firefighters and occupants that are attempting to follow the wall to lose contact with the wall.

This proposal fails to address a number of important factors, and presents a multitude of enforcement issues, and thus should be disapproved.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Vote to disapprove (negative) Committee proposal F182-18, **and**
2. Support (positive) the Virginia Fire Services Board Public Comment during the ICC Public Comment Hearings (PCH) October 24-31 in Richmond, Virginia.
3. Vote to approve (positive) Committee proposal F186-18 which will, at a minimum, require an operational permit for providers of valet trash collection service in a Group R-2 Occupancies.
4. It is recommended to follow this guidance during the ICC electronic voting under cdpACCESS should the committee action pass during the Public Comment Hearing.

Note: If you vote at the PCH you do not need to follow up with an electronic vote in cdpACCESS. Votes at the hearing are carried forward.

Who Are State Fire Marshals?

State Fire Marshals are the senior fire officials in the United States. State Fire Marshals' responsibilities vary from state to state, but they are primarily responsible for fire safety code adoption and enforcement, fire and arson investigation, fire incident data reporting and analysis, public education, and advising Governors and State Legislatures on fire protection policy issues. Some State Fire Marshals are responsible for fire fighter training, hazardous materials incident responses, wildland fire response and the regulation of natural gas and other pipelines.