



TO: Apartment Owners & Property Management Companies

FROM: Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal's Office & Charlotte Fire Department's Fire Prevention Bureau

DATE: June 28, 2022

RE: Valet Trash & Recycling Service

As of June 1, 2022, allowances for valet trash and recycling services in R-2 apartment buildings became effective under revisions to section 304.4 of the 2018 N.C. Fire Code.

While this service is in high demand, it is important to remember that combustible refuse in corridors or egress balconies can constitute a serious threat to life safety. Complete compliance with the N.C. Fire Code remains critically important. **Apartment/property managers are responsible for ensuring familiarity and compliance with all applicable fire codes.**

Beginning July 1, 2022, apartment communities can expect to be inspected for valet trash regulations during routine fire inspections including, but not limited to the following:

- Combustible trash or recyclable materials shall not be placed in exits, exit passageways, stairway enclosures, ramps, corridors, elevator lobbies or egress balconies, except as permitted by N.C. Fire Code Section 304.4.2.
- Trash or recyclables awaiting valet collection shall only be placed in corridors or egress balconies within 5 hours of scheduled pickup and shall not obstruct the minimum egress width required by Section 1031.
- Trash and recyclables must fit completely inside containers with a closed lid, and these containers must be compliant with Section 304.4.2.3. Additional trash or recyclables outside of these containers is prohibited.
- Containers for valet trash and recyclables must not exceed a capacity of 2.0 cubic feet (15 gallons), have tight-fitting or self-closing lids, and shall be constructed entirely of noncombustible materials as prescribed in Section 304.4.2.3. Containers shall bear the label of an approved agency that validates compliance with the prescribed specifications.

(continued)

County and city fire code officials may take the following actions in response to violations of fire codes pertaining to valet trash and recycling:

- Excessive Trash
 - The first inspection resulting in findings of trash or recyclables outside the confines of the containers will result in an order of immediate removal of excess trash and recyclables. The area will be re-inspected to ensure the hazard has been removed.
 - Failure to correct this violation upon re-inspection will result in the issuance of a \$50 fine per doorstep up to four units. If more than four doorsteps are found to be in violation, the fine will be \$200 per building.
 - Failure to prevent excess trash from accumulating outside of containers will result in the fire code official ordering the valet trash and recycling service be terminated due to non-compliance.

- Container requirements
 - Non-compliant containers will be cited on the first inspection and ordered replaced with compliant containers no later than January 1, 2023.
 - Failure to provide compliant containers by January 1, 2023, will result in the fire code official ordering the valet trash and recycling service be terminated due to non-compliance.

Thank you for helping us to keep the tenants, staff and visitors in your apartment communities safe by ensuring compliance with the North Carolina Fire Code. Questions can be directed to the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal's office at 980-314-3070 or FireMarshal@mecklenburgcountync.gov, or to the Charlotte Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau at 704-336-2101 or fireprevention@ci.charlotte.nc.us.