



OREGON FIRE CODE

Interpretations and Technical Advisories

A collaborative service by local and state fire professionals, along with our stakeholders, and customers, to provide consistent and concise application of Oregon's fire prevention and life safety regulations.

Date: April 1, 2014

Ruling: Technical Advisory No. 14-02 (Revised #11-02)

Subject: Recycling receptacles near exits or in exit corridors.

Code Reference: 2014 Oregon Fire Code, Sections 304.2, 319.5 and State Interpretation 14-02.

Note: This technical advisory does not apply to healthcare facilities that are subject to CMS inspections.

Content: The issue is inconsistencies in how combustible waste and recycling are regulated in the Oregon Fire Code. Currently the code prohibits any recycling from being stored near exits or in exit corridors. This will only grow over time as sustainability efforts continue to increase.

The increase in sustainability efforts have resulted in more occupancies attempting to promote the separation of “trash” in a manner that promotes recycling. This effort has led to recycling containers being placed in exit and exit corridors in a similar fashion as trash receptacles.

The code currently regulates recycling and combustible waste using two different standards resulting in inconsistent regulation. In the application described above, the containers being utilized to sort what would be trash into recycling receptacles. To classify the separated combustible waste as more hazardous and completely prohibit it (Section 319.5) doesn't make sense. Section 304.2 allows judgment by the inspector in determining whether the storage of combustible waste creates a “nuisance or a hazard.” It is appropriate to grant the same leeway in the case of separated recycled materials.

By taking such steps as limiting the recycling container size and defining what type of construction material is acceptable, the separated recycled materials will not pose any greater nuisance or hazard than combustible waste.

The proposed solution is a code change to the 2014 Oregon Fire Code but to allow this use to continue, until the change is processed, the inspector is allowed discretion to evaluate the recycling configuration in the same manner as allowed for combustible waste.

Factors that the inspector should consider are, fire sprinklers, smoke detection, fire alarms, width of corridor, wall construction and finish, ceiling height, occupancy type, amount and type of recycling, code enforcement history, house keeping, and how often the containers are emptied. All recycling receptacles located near an exit or in an exit corridor should be constructed of non or limited combustible material or be fire resistive. Receptacles in exits or exit corridors shall have lids that restrict the opening size. Consider self closing or hinged lids in higher risk occupancies. Placement of the recycling receptacle(s) shall be in compliance with Oregon Fire Code, Section 1018.2 and in no way encroach upon the required corridor width; and Section 315.3.2 and shall never be stored in an exit component such as vertical exit enclosure and exit passageway.

Other References: