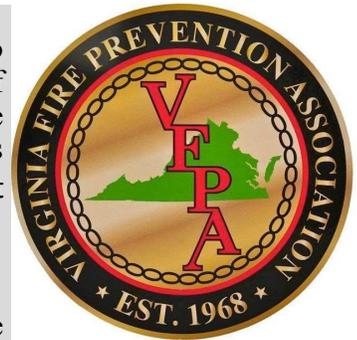




Virginia Fire Prevention Association 2017 Spring Training Conference – Code Change Update

Serving Virginia's Fire Service and Code Enforcement Communities Since 1968

As you are aware there has been an effort underway since October, 2015 to remove unenforceable items from the SFPC. This project had been led by staff of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The process concluded in the summer of 2016 and the first draft of these changes was posted on cdpVA, Tuesday, September 20, 2016 located at <http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov>.



Throughout this process many from the fire service, continued to raise the staunch concern that this process was, and is, continuing to move too fast, and that there will be unintended consequences by the removal of what are enforceable items. Additionally, some of the changes are creating conflicts between other sections of the code and in the scope and purpose of the code. This is not, a remark against those proposing these changes, but rather the speed and isolation of which these changes were made.

November 3, 2016 Secretary Haymore, in consult with the Board of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) and DHCD staff heard these concerns and agreed to provide additional time for in-put and review. This resulted in a 10 month delay in the publication of these regulations to the Final Regulations phase of the process.

Following the direction of then Chairman Clatterbuck of the BHCD, the Fire Services Board's Codes and Standards Committee (FSB CSC), which includes members of the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association (VBCOA) again tackled the project of bringing together members of the fire service and building code enforcement to remove the construction related items from the SFPC. This process has been far slower, more meticulous, inclusive, and driven for positive change as opposed to meeting a deadline. The process is focused on crafting a code that remains enforceable within the purpose and scope of the SFPC and properly correlates with other sections of the code and the referenced standards. When a member of the building code enforcement/VBCOA is unable to attend or must leave, the meeting ends so that full input from all perspectives may be achieved. While extremely grueling and slow, this process is working.

The FSB CSC started this process November 2016 and continues its work today. To date they have nearly completed through chapter 9, of a 47 (20 chapters of the 67 chapter IFC are reserved) chapter document. April 25, 2017 the first six (6) chapters submitted by the FSB CSC were compared and discussed at a full DHCD sponsored fire code edit workgroup, to what had been previously proposed by the DHCD staff. Some of you may have been present at this meeting, and witnessed first-hand the positive results. This process yielded many great discussions and consensus changes; far more than had been previously achieved, and for once we saw a positive through a well vetted process for these consensus changes.

This process of comparing the FSB CSC and the DHCD staff proposals is working, albeit extremely time consuming, and over whelming. It is not physically possible for the FSB CSC to complete the remaining 37 chapters before the deadline of May 26, 2017, so that the changes may be published in the schedule set forth by DHCD.

The grave concern is that the removal of unenforceable items is not an urgent or emergent matter and that the consequences of forcing changes through may cause an emergency with the changes that have not yet been well vetted. Anyone interested in the development, administration, application, enforcement, or safety of the SFPC is encouraged to participate. The following are the scheduled workgroup meetings:

Combined Workgroup:

June 13, 2017 - Combined Workgroups (All except Fire Code edits)-
Virginia Housing Center 4224 Cox Road Glen Allen, VA 23060 Henrico 1 Room (upstairs)

August 23, 2017 - Combined Workgroups (All except Fire Code edits)
Virginia Housing Center 4224 Cox Road Glen Allen, VA 23060 Henrico 1 Room (upstairs)

Fire Code edit only Workgroup:

May 31, 2017 – Henrico Training Center 7701 E Parham Rd, Richmond, VA 23294

June 22, 2017 - Virginia Housing Center 4224 Cox Road Glen Allen, VA 23060

July 19, 2017 - Virginia Housing Center 4224 Cox Road Glen Allen, VA 23060

August 16, 2017 (if needed) - Virginia Housing Center 4224 Cox Road Glen Allen, VA 23060

Sept. 18, 2017 BHCD meeting 4224 Cox Rd. Glen Allen VA. Meets to consider proposals for final regulation for the SFPC, and to consider proposals for final regulations for the USBC, VADR and IBSR.

Oct. 16, 2017 BHCD meeting 4224 Cox Rd Glen Allen VA. Meets to review final regulation for SFPC and to review final regulation for SFPC as recommended by SFPCDC and to review final regulations for USBC, VADR and IBSR. Immediately following Committee meetings, the joint meeting of VFSB and BHCD to consider approval of final regulations for SFPC followed by BHCD to consider approval of final regulations for USBC, VADR and IBSR.

October - November, 2017

Obtain statutory authority letter from Office of Attorney General for final regulations and obtain permission from Secretary of Commerce and Trade and Governor's Office to publish final regulations.

December, 2017 - January, 2018

Final regulations for SFPC, USBC, VADR and IBSR published in Virginia Register.

February - March, 2018

2015 SFPC, USBC, VADR and IBSR become effective (pending any petitions received during the 30-day comment period following the publishing of the final regulations).

The Virginia Fire Prevention Association is encouraging fire and code enforcement officials to remain involved in this process. For more information, please visit www.vfpa.org or contact VFPA Region 7 Representative, Linda Hale—Chief Fire Marshal, Loudoun County, VA at linda.hale@loudoun.gov.

WWW.VFPA.ORG