



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FIRE MARSHALS

April 15, 2009

To All Interested Parties:

As announced in the March 17, 2009, update to our list of interested parties, we indicated that upon NASFM Board approval, a Working Group would be appointed by April 15, 2009, from submitted names representing various stakeholders. The Board has approved the formation of this Working Group with the goal of developing a training and education program for use by code enforcement personnel when inspecting the adequacy of fire protection of pallets.

Here is how we intend to proceed. We are appointing a Working Group, to be chaired by Jim Narva of NASFM, to develop a plan for presentation to the NASFM Board at its June 17 meeting. If the Board accepts the plan for the training program the Working Group develops, we then will be in a position to present it to the NASFM membership when our annual conference begins later that week, with the intent to move forward with training after that. The initial Working Group that has been appointed by NASFM is as follows:

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| Jim Narva | National Association of State Fire Marshals |
| TBD | NASFM Model Codes Committee |
| Bruce Scholnick | National Wooden Pallet and Container Association |
| Thomas McCarty | FM Approvals |
| Dan Stepan | Underwriters Laboratories |
| LeRoi Cochran | IFCO Systems N.A., Inc. |
| Rodney McPhee | Canadian Wood Council |
| David Deal | CHEP |
| Robert Davidson | Davidson Code Concepts |
| Loren Caudill | On Board Engineering |
| TBD | Non-wooden pallet representative |
| TBD | Representative of pallet user group |

For this planning phase, NASFM will contribute the services of its code consultant, Robert Davidson, and administrative support to facilitate calls, meetings and document management. This Working Group will be charged with the development of a plan and budget that achieves two deliverables (see below). The Working Group may propose the

formation of whatever committees it deems necessary to carry out the work. NASFM would prefer to see both of these deliverables handled by the same committee, but if that is not possible, we will invite others to participate. All Working Group activities must be self-supporting, and so we will leave it to the group to identify all necessary resources to make this activity self-supporting as well. In addition to the code expertise and administrative support, we have considerable leveraging opportunities here but need all the players to help provide the resources.

Deliverable 1: As discussed before and during the stakeholder meeting held March 12 at UL, our first challenge is to end the confusion about what is and is not covered under the *existing* codes. Therefore, Deliverable One will be a plan and budget to finalize the NASFM Code Application Bulletin and then conduct at least seven regional pallet fire safety workshops for the purpose of educating code enforcement officials, pallet companies and major users about the existing rules. We would expect the Working Group to recommend a curriculum, materials, presenters and locations. A web-based approach may be proposed to augment the workshops, but our experience has shown this would not be effective by itself. While this deliverable is intended primarily to address enforcement issues, we should remain mindful that code officials vote independently on changes to the model codes and standards. The more they know and understand these issues, the more informed they will be if asked to vote on pallet fire safety issues that may emerge in the Model Codes organizations.

Deliverable 2: During the meeting on March 12 at UL, we gave the benefit of the doubt to two statements made by the wood pallet industry. Hopefully, both can be validated easily: the first statement was that the fire performance of all wood pallets does not vary much, and the second statement was that there is no evidence of major fire incidents involving pallets. Here is the second deliverable for the Working Group; data in support of these two statements would be important background information for use in the educational workshops and would really help to clarify any risks. We will leave it to the Working Group to identify possible sources of this information and to fill those gaps that exist, but we all know data is important to good decisions.

NASFM will continue to post regular updates on its website, www.firemarshals.org; interested parties can check there for any new information on this effort.