

Postal Service Publishes Final Rule for Wall Mounted Mailboxes

(From NAHB's Construction, Codes and Standards Department)

- The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has published its final rule revising the design, manufacture and installation requirements governing wall mounted mailboxes, outgoing mail receptacles and parcel lockers for multifamily buildings.
- A summary of the new requirements is as follows:
 - Individual tenant mailboxes must have a minimum interior dimension of 3”h x 12”w x 15”d and must be oriented horizontally.
 - Parcel lockers will be required if no other means of parcel receiving is planned such as a management office or concierge service. If no alternative means is planned, a minimum of one “Standard” parcel locker with minimum interior dimensions of 15”h x 12” w x 15” d, will be required for every 10 dwelling units in a building.
 - More stringent manufacturing requirements to improve tamper and weather resistance.
 - No mandatory retrofit requirements when mailbox units in existing buildings are replaced unless the building undergoes a substantial renovation that involves structural alterations in the mailbox area that creates an opportunity to accommodate the new design.
 - Requirements for manufacturers become effective October 4, 2004. However, the new mailbox units are not required to be installed in any new construction for which permit documents are submitted to the local jurisdiction prior to September 3, 2006.
 - Cost increases of the mailbox units as a result of the more stringent manufacturing requirements have been estimated by manufacturers to be in the range of 15-30%. However, builders will incur additional costs for parcel lockers in projects where they will be required and the additional space required for parcel lockers could present additional design challenges.
- NAHB has been representing multifamily builders on a consensus committee that drafted the rule and has been successful in: convincing the USPS to not require the retrofit of existing buildings; narrowing triggers for when the mailboxes are required in building renovations; significantly reducing originally proposed requirements for parcel lockers; and, in securing a more reasonable effective date for new construction.
- However, NAHB has maintained concerns with several aspects of the rule, including the authority given local postmasters to determine when the rule applies to building renovations, when parcel lockers are required, and that cost increases could be far greater than currently estimated because of the more stringent manufacturing requirements. No cost benefit analysis has ever been provided. NAHB reflected these concerns in comments submitted in response to the proposed rule published for public comment on April 21, 2004 as reported at Spring Board.
- Despite NAHB’s concerns, the USPS has decided to move forward with the rule. In addition, NAHB declined to sign an agreement stating that a consensus had been reached. That agreement prohibited signers from submitting negative public comments or taking other actions if the new requirements prove to be overly burdensome. NAHB is the only committee member and multifamily representative to do so.
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