



VENTURA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU
165 DURLEY AVENUE
CAMARILLO, CALIFORNIA 93010
www.fire.countyofventura.org
(805) 389-9738

STANDARD 14.4.4

REQUEST FOR ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS AND METHODS

The information contained in this standard is provided solely for the convenience of the reader and was being enforced by the Ventura County Fire Protection District at the time of its publication. The District reserves the right to make changes and improvements to this standard as and when required by law, or otherwise, at any time. (The District's current standards will be posted and made available for downloading by the public at the following web site: <http://fire.countyofventura.org>.)

Please note that the District assumes no liability for any damages incurred directly or indirectly as a result of any errors, omissions, or discrepancies between this standard and any applicable law. It is the sole responsibility of the person or persons conducting any work pursuant to this standard to ensure their work complies with any and all applicable codes, ordinances, and regulations.

CHAPTER 1 ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Scope. When a project is unable to meet requirements or standards of applicable codes and ordinances related to fire and life safety, it is possible to propose the use of alternate materials and methods of protection, as provided in the Ventura County Fire Code (VCFC). The use of Alternative Materials and Methods (AM&M) shall be approved by the Fire Chief or the person designated by the Chief.

1.2 Purpose. This standard applies to the direction for submitting requests for use of Alternate Materials and Methods (AM&M) per the Ventura County Fire Code (VCFC).

1.3 Responsibility.

1.3.1 General. It is most common that these types of requests occur during construction, after permits have been issued. However, in the event that a "Request for Alternate Materials and Methods" is submitted during the design stages, prior to accepting plans and issuing permits, the final "accepted" request should be included with the permit drawings, either by reference or by copy directly onto the plans, depending on the actual timeframe.

1.3.2 Applicant. The applicant must completely fill out a Request for Alternative Materials and Methods form (FP13.2.2). The applicant shall be the Design Professional (i.e. architect, engineer, etc.), the owner, a lessee, or a duly authorized representative as required by the Ventura County Fire Protection District.

1.3.3 Fire Marshal. The Fire Marshal shall hold the authority to make the final decision regarding a request for alternate materials or methods. The Fire Marshal, at his/her discretion, may decide that the item be reviewed at a higher level with the Fire Marshal, the Fire Chief and/or the Director of Building and Safety before making a final decision.

1.3.4 Fire District Appeals Board. If a request has been denied, the applicant has the right to request a hearing before the Fire District Appeals Board. The applicant shall notify the Fire Marshal of the request to have a hearing within 30 days of the date of the decision. Appeals should be based on questions of code interpretation or determination of equivalent protection/alternate methods. See current Fee Schedule for fees associated with the Fire District Appeals Board.

CHAPTER 2 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Ventura County Fire Code (VCFC). The specified portions of the California Building Standards Codes known as California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, "California Fire Code (CFC)" as adopted by the State Fire Marshal (SFM and; portions of The International Fire Code (IFC), 2009 Edition referenced by the California Building Standards Code and not adopted or modified by the SFM and; the VCFPD amendments contained in Ordinance 27 to the above-referenced codes.

CHAPTER 3 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 General. Requests for Alternate Materials and Methods shall be submitted to VCFPD, Fire Prevention Bureau as indicated elsewhere in this document.

3.1.1 Obtain approval from the appropriate **Building & Safety Department** for alternate materials and methods when required by VCFPD.

3.2 Specifications of Submittal. At the time of submittal for Alternate Materials and Methods the applicant shall provide all supporting data, technical reports, product data sheets, drawings, sketches, computer modeling, calculations, etc. that substantiate and justify the request.

3.2.1 The information provided shall be "project specific". The fact that an alternate method was approved for one project does not guarantee its acceptance for all projects. Each submittal shall be evaluated on the conditions and merits of the request for the specific project.

3.3 Submittal Requirements. Submit all supporting data that substantiate and justify the request, Request for Alternate Materials and Methods (Form #13.2.2) and the appropriate fees to the Ventura County Fire Prevention Bureau located at 165 Durley Avenue, Camarillo CA 93010. Fire Prevention Counter hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

3.4 Fees. Appropriate fees can be found at <http://fire.countyofventura.org>. Fees can be paid by check/money order, Visa or MasterCard. Fees include only the original review of the request of alternate materials and methods. Please ensure that all supporting data is submitted for review to avoid additional fees. All fees shall be paid at the time of submittal.

3.5 Case Number. The Fire Department has instituted the use of a "**Case Number**" for tracking all projects submitted for review. To provide faster customer service, please refer to your Case Number when contacting this Department.

CHAPTER 4 SUBMITTAL SPECIFICATIONS

4.1 General. To determine if the alternate materials and methods are sufficient, the applicant shall provide the information indicated below, in writing, with those plans necessary to evaluate the project. *An AM&M is not a waiver to relive a project from compliance with code requirements. It must offer an alternative that is equivalent to or better than the standard code in terms of quality, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability or safety.*

4.2 Size and Scale. Plans shall be drawn on a minimum of 24" x 36" paper and shall be drawn to an indicated scale.

4.3 Specifications. The following items shall be included in all requests for alternate materials and methods.

- (1) Scope of work for the project.
- (2) Name of owner and/or occupant.
- (3) Location of project, including parcel #, street, number and city.
- (4) Applicable codes and standards used for the design.
- (5) Conditions that necessitate the AM&M request and why compliance with the standard requirements is not possible, feasible, or desirable.
- (6) The code requirement(s), the proposed alternate(s), and the justification for the request.
- (7) All applicable plans.
- (8) All supporting data, technical reports, product data sheets, drawings, sketches, computer modeling, calculations, etc that substantiate and justify the request.

4.4 Engineering Evaluation. If the fire code official deems an engineering evaluation necessary, it shall be performed and reported by a firm or individual that has been approved by the VCFPD. The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with the preparation of the AM&M or associated analysis.

4.5 Review. Once the Fire Prevention Bureau receives a request for alternate materials or methods, a fire code official will review it for completeness. All requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

4.6 Rejection of Application. Applications that are not thoroughly completed and applications that have not been submitted with the required fee will be rejected without review. Additionally, applications that do not include sufficient documentation or necessary plans or analyses that substantiate claims of equivalence and compliance with the code intent will also be rejected.

4.7 Approval. If the AM&M proposal provides an equivalent level of protection considering all aspects pertaining to the project, the request will be approved. Such approval may be conditional upon implementation of additional requirements listed in the AM&M comments that were not part of the original AM&M proposal. Approval of the request is based upon several factors, including, but not limited to, the level of equivalency achieved, the effect of the AM&M on fire and emergency response, and site conditions. All evaluations will be performed in the context of the specific project being reviewed.

4.8 Denial. In the event that the AM&M proposed does not provide an equivalent level of protection, the request will be denied. Should the applicant submit a different AM&M request for the same project, or choose to revise and resubmit the previously denied request, additional fees shall apply.

4.9 Notification of Determination. The applicant will be notified upon final determination of proposed AM&M. This notification may include additional requirements or comments related to the determination.



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REQUEST FOR ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS AND METHODS

Date: _____	Case #: <u>FPLN</u>
Applicant name: _____	Phone: _____
Applicant address: _____	
Project address: _____	Parcel #: _____
Job Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary <input type="checkbox"/> In Plan Check <input type="checkbox"/> Under Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Building	
Code Section(s) for which the modification is requested: _____	

REQUEST

Clearly define all alternative offered in lieu of the prescribed code requirements and identify relevant code section(s). Submit additional information if necessary.	Plans submitted with request?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

JUSTIFICATION

State how the alternate(s) proposed are at least as equivalent to the prescribed requirements(s). Attach supporting documentation, drawings and reports.	Documents attached?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

I certify that I am the owner or owner's agent and have the authority to request the above stated alternate materials, methods of construction, or modification in fire code requirements. I understand that this request is subject to review and may be approved or denied in part or in whole.

Printed name of applicant

Signature of applicant

Date

OFFICE USE ONLY

Final Determination: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied			
_____ Fire Marshal Signature	_____ Date	_____ (Not Required) Building Official	_____ Date

1.3.1 Applicant Note: If a request has been denied, the applicant has the right to request a hearing before the Fire District Appeals Board. The applicant shall notify the Fire Marshal of the request to have a hearing within 30 days of the date of the decision. Appeals should be based on questions of code interpretation or determination of equivalent protection/alternate methods. See current Fee Schedule for fees associated with the Fire District Appeals Board.