SCHULTE & ASSOCIATES
Building Code Consultants
880D Forest Avenue
Evanston, IL 60202
fpeschulte@aol.com
847/866-7479

"TERRORIST-RESISTANT" TRASH CONTAINERS

By Richard Schulte

In the wake of 9/11, the director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Dr. Arden Bement, promised the Congressional Science Committee that NIST's investigation into the collapse of the World Trade Center towers would result in developing the means and methodologies for making buildings "terrorist-resistant". While neither the NIST investigation report on the collapse of the World Trade Center towers (issued in the fall of 2005), nor the WTC 7 Building (issued in the fall of 2008) contain recommendations on how to make buildings "terrorist-resistant", NIST recently announced progress on making trash containers "terrorist-resistant".

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The following are excerpts from NIST's press release dated June 23, 2010:

> "*Whether you travel by plane, train or bus, you're bound to pass a familiar container that makes for an attractive spot to stash a bomb: a trash can. Not only does a trash receptacle present an easy place for a terrorist to hide an explosive device before making a quiet getaway, but the metal from a bin can rupture into shrapnel that flies outward in all directions, increasing the risk to passersby*."
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> "*While industry has been producing blast-resistant trash receptacles for years, there were no widely-accepted specifications for judging a manufacturer's particular claims of product safety. The Science and Technology Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and several manufacturers began working with NIST in 2007 to address the lack of standards for blast resistance among trash receptacles. The results of the DHS-funded work now have been published by the standards development organization ASTM International.*"

"*A trash receptacle has met the standard if it is capable of directing a blast upward, rather than outward, at a given level of force. While any receptacle will fail to direct the blast upward at some level of force, these two standards will allow a buyer to determine that level with confidence.*"

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One has to wonder how much it will cost to replace all of the trash containers in our airports, train stations and bus terminals with the new and improved "terrorist-resistant" containers. Of course, it also makes sense to replace the trash containers in other venues which could be subject to bombing, such as schools, hospitals, shopping centers, department stores, government buildings and public parks. The list of locations where trash containers should be replaced with the "*new and improved*" containers seems almost endless.

Simply mandating that existing trash containers throughout America be replaced with the "terrorist-resistant" ones could lift the US economy out of the recession.

"*Those silly Americans-what will they think of next? It's going to be easier to bankrupt America that I thought, thanks to NIST.*" OBL

What's next? "Terrorist-resistant" luggage and handbags-luggage and handbags that you can see through so that they don't need to be opened in order to inspect the contents. Another brilliant idea!

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