



**MINUTES OF THE  
SECOND PRIVATE SEWAGE SUB-COUNCIL MEETING OF 2022**

**DATE:** June 21, 2022

**TIME:** 9:00 a.m. to 2:28 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Safety Codes Council Office

**PRESENT:** *Sub-Council Members*  
Rick Baxter, Chair  
Barry Bohn (virtual)  
David Dallaire  
Arnold Groot  
Daniel Morris, Vice Chair (virtual)  
Kent Watson  
Dennis Horrigan  
Shane Hussey (virtual)  
David Rose  
Steve Neff

*Safety Codes Council*  
Allison Karch, Kathryn Derkach  
Kris Schmaltz, Jennifer Johnson (virtual) (item 4.1)  
Charles Hallett (items 4.2 and 4.3)

*Alberta Municipal Affairs*  
Joe Petryk, Stephen Hirose (virtual), David G. Dobson (virtual)

**GUESTS:** Al Steenbergen (virtual)

**RECORDER:** Kathryn Derkach

**2022 MEETINGS:** October 25

## **1. Meeting Opening**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Members were reminded that their primary duty is to act in the interest of safety in the built environment for the benefit of all Albertans and any real or perceived conflicts of interest must be declared. Videoconference and in-person meeting housekeeping were reviewed.

### **1.1 Agenda Adoption**

The following item was added to the agenda:

- 2.1 Closed Session
- 2.1.1. Matrix Discussion

**Steve Neff / David Rose moved that the agenda be adopted as amended; CARRIED**

### **1.2 Adoption of the February 22, 2022 Minutes**

**Steve Neff / Kent Watson moved to adopt the minutes of the February 22, 2022 meeting, as circulated; CARRIED**

## **2. Matters for Decision**

### **2.1. Closed Session**

**Daniel Morris / David Dallaire moved to enter into closed session; CARRIED**

**Steve Neff / Dennis Horrigan moved to exit closed session; CARRIED**

#### **2.1.1. Matrix Discussion**

**David Rose / Kent Watson moved to recommend the removal of the Academia seat from the Private Sewage Sub-Council matrix; CARRIED**

## **3. Review Matters Arising/Action List**

None identified

## **4. Matters for Discussion**

### **4.1. Code Update Training, Policy Review, and Curriculum Modernization**

The Administrator of Certification gave a presentation on SCO Curriculum Modernization. This is a major long-range initiative that aims to implement several changes to the Council's SCO training and certification program, primarily in the construction disciplines. Using the competency profile for SCOs developed in 2019, a gap analysis was done between the identified competencies and the current SCO training program. A framework to modernize the curriculum was developed, stakeholders were consulted, and now sub-councils are being engaged prior to developing a What We Heard document and moving forward with redesigning the curriculum.

Key priorities of the initiative are:

- Knowledgeable and capable SCOs entering the system

- SCOs can effectively interpret codes and standards
- SCOs have the critical thinking skills to make good decisions in the field (e.g. effectively evaluate alternative solutions; provide effective compliance monitoring)
- Certified SCOs remain up-to-date on emerging technologies, codes, and standards

The key SCO competencies that were identified are:

- Safety codes—interpretation, application, interactions across codes/disciplines
- The safety codes system in Alberta—Safety Codes Act, regulations, policies, QMPs
- SCO practice—roles and responsibilities, the permit lifecycle, variances, investigations
  - This is where the biggest gaps in training are and the Council has begun to address it through webinars, etc.
- SCO communication skills—critical thinking, professionalism, customer service, etc.

Three major curriculum recommendations have been identified. The first is to expand base competency training, which SCOs in all disciplines take, to better address the SCO's role and authorities. This will address feedback the Council has received that a number of SCOs have exited the training program without a practical understanding of how to perform the job of an SCO, such as doing plans reviews, evaluating variances, doing investigations, etc. The second recommendation is to shift the focus of discipline-specific training courses to code interpretation and application rather than memorization. The training will assess whether the student can use the code in the context of their job as SCO rather than simply identify code rules, which will make courses more efficient and improve outcomes for SCOs. The third recommendation is to align with adult education best practices, including dynamic use of media, prioritizing scenarios over memorization, increasing practical and applied learning, and reviewing assessment methods to verify competency.

A roadmap of the initiative was given and it was explained that addressing the base competency training will be the first priority. Partnership is also a key feature—the Council will work with others in the system to provide an SCO training program that meets the needs of the system, which may include leveraging existing training developed by other groups.

The following was discussed:

- It would be beneficial to have some type of forum for newer SCOs to find support from more experienced SCOs. AMOS is working on improving their systems of support, but industry engagement is an issue.
- Mentorships and workshops for SCOs would provide further education and support.
- The installer training program doesn't go in depth as much as it needs to.
- There is a need for practical/field training as well as classroom training.

The Administrator will continue to engage the sub-council as this initiative progresses.

#### **4.2. Soil Profile Logs in Permit Applications**

The Director of the Alberta Safety Codes Authority (ASCA) reported that there have been permit applications in which the soil profile doesn't correspond to the type of soil based treatment system identified in the application. He asked for feedback from the sub-council to see if this is a widespread industry issue and if there is a way to accept an alternative soil log. ASCA is looking at developing guidelines for soil logs so that there is a consistent approach to address issues with soil logs.

The following was discussed:

- AJHs could require a new soil review/test pit. Some municipalities also offer support as applications are being created.
- There are issues around training and equipping people with knowledge about how to fill out the application correctly.
- It also indicates that more industry training may be needed to improve competency in assessing soils.
- AOWMA has a number of soil log forms in their manual, but different information is required for different forms, so it may be helpful to have a more standardized form so people are used to filling out the information.
- It was asked if there was any way to regulate changes to the forms so that once it's submitted, changes can't be made without proper inspections.
- It's possible that Section 7 of the SOP could be updated to include more information on how to fill out the form and more guidance on which form to use.
- While having these tools may help improve soil logs in permit applications, it all comes down to the SCO making the determination whether it's accepted or not.

#### **4.3. ASCA's Permit Application Checklist**

The Director of ASCA asked the sub-council for feedback on the Permit Application Document Checklist. It is hoped that this checklist will help streamline the application process by making it clear which documents need to be included with the application form.

ASCA is working with SCOs to help them understand that they can refuse incomplete applications. However, there have been situations when homeowners leave one agency and go to another when applications are refused. ASCA has been monitoring this and corresponding with agencies in the area when applications are refused.

Members were asked to submit any feedback to Council staff who will forward it to ASCA. [All]

#### **4.4. Permit Regulation Review**

##### **4.4.1. Submission from Leduc County**

A submission was made to the Plumbing Sub-Council in June 2021 by Leduc County with a request to change the Permit Regulation. A change was made to the Permit Regulation in 2008 to exempt the requirement for plumbing permits for water, sewer and storm service installation which has resulted in inconsistencies in the application and administration for the Safety Codes Act and the National Plumbing Code (NPC) in Alberta.

The NPC and Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice (SOP) have specific and prescriptive requirements for the installation of water, sewer and storm services, which are regulated by the Act. Municipal Affairs have issued STANDATAs to help clarify requirements but must remain within the confines of the Permit Regulation exemption.

It was requested that the Plumbing Sub-Council consider supporting an amendment to the Permit Regulation to remove the exemption for permits for water, sewer and storm services and to clarify the qualification needed to obtain a plumbing permit for these installations.

The Plumbing Sub-Council requested that this information be reviewed by the Private Sewage Sub-Council so that any possible effects on the private sewage discipline can be considered.

The following was discussed:

- There have been issues with the R Ticket, but the STANDATA speaks to requirements on who can pull a permit.
- This seems to be an area of confusion in industry. There's no permit required, but it's believed that compliance monitoring is required. With no permit being required, there's no way to verify that someone qualified has done the work.
- The private sewage portion is downstream from the tank, and the portion of the system upstream of the tank is under the plumbing discipline. This issue applies upstream from the tank so it is thought to be a plumbing issue rather than private sewage.
- NPC governs the plumbing system inside property lines except the private sewage system, and the Private Sewage SOP governs piping 6 feet from the tank. However, it may not be well understood by industry that the NPC applies to all plumbing system elements within property lines; some may believe that the NPC applies only to piping 1 meter outside the building.
- According to the 2021 PSDS SOP, the definition of 'building sewer' speaks to how it needs to be built to the NPC.
- The person pulling the permit is responsible for the work, regardless of who has done it.

It was noted by PSSC members that this issue doesn't have a strong connection to private sewage, but the PSSC supports the PSC in their review of this topic.

#### **4.4.2. Use of the word 'Equipment' in Permit Regulation**

While the Permit Regulation is not scheduled for revision, it may be beneficial for the sub-council to review the regulation and discuss any industry issues that arise from it. One item for review is the use of the word 'equipment'. The interpretation of the word is leading industry to believe they do not require a permit for a septic tank because they consider it a piece of equipment when it is actually a certified system that does need a permit.

This issue will be added to the ongoing matters arising/action list.

[Council Staff]

### **4.5. 2021 SOP Content Issues**

#### **4.5.1. Issues regarding Part 7 Site Evaluation**

A document outlining issues with the 2021 SOP identified by the member representing Education and Training was posted in the member portal and reviewed.

There are errors in Part 7, sentence 3. There is confusion with the reference to the Field Book for Describing and Sampling Soils as this book is from the United States and the rest of the SOP uses a Canadian System of Soil Classification. The link used in the SOP is incorrect and should be <https://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/>. If someone searches 'Soil Survey Manual' as referenced, it will bring up a US Soil Survey manual, which is also causing confusion. Searching for the 'Alberta Private Sewage Soils Description Manual' leads people to the SOP.

Part 7, 3) a) Soil Horizons definition states the “soil horizon shall be measured and the distinctness and topography of the horizon boundaries described,” but there is no record of these being described and it doesn’t appear to be enforced.

Part 7, 3) d) Structure definition contains an error that was also in the 2015 SOP. Size and class are synonymous terms and refer to the size of the peds and not to the shape or kind.

There are other items that need to be reviewed for the next edition of the SOP. If there are any urgent issues that need correction, an errata could be recommended by the sub-council. It was noted that errata are to be used to correct errors rather than items that the sub-council would like to change.

The process for involving subject matter experts in the review of the SOP and including their names in the document needs to be reviewed. It was noted that, going forward, the PSSC is responsible for the development of the PSDS SOP.

#### **4.5.2. Other Identified Issues**

A document will be created to capture any issues that the sub-council needs to review in preparation for the next edition of the SOP. As members find issues, they are asked to report them during sub-council meetings or by email to Council staff so they can be properly documented and addressed accordingly. [All Members]

It was noted that A1E1 loading rates on page 141 should be reviewed.

#### **4.6. Combined Treatment and Disposal Systems**

A new technology for combined treatment and disposal systems was presented to the PSC a few years ago, but the expertise was not at the table to move this item forward. Manufacturers have asked for this product to be acceptable for use in Alberta and have developed an Alberta guide, but some vetting needs to be done to ensure they are acceptable treatment systems.

The Administrator would like the PSSC to revisit the submissions and give their recommendations.

**Steve Neff / David Rose moved to form a working group to review the combined treatment and disposal systems documents to determine if they meet the intent of the PSDS SOP; CARRIED**

**Dennis Horrigan / Arnold Groot moved to have a final working group report presented at the January 2023 PSSC meeting; CARRIED**

**Kent Watson / David Rose moved to have the following members on the working group: Barry Bohn (chair), Daniel Morris, Rick Baxter, Arnold Groot with support from Municipal Affairs and industry members as required; CARRIED**

Council staff will create a working group folder and move the documents from the PSC meeting. [Council Administration]

#### **4.7. Complex Systems**

During previous SOP discussions, the topic of complex systems was put on hold due to the complexity of the issue.

Discussion was held about applying requirements for complex systems. The SOP renamed Part 7.11.3 to Complex Systems, but after further discussion some felt that 'volume' should have been referenced in the section title as well.

Some complex systems items fall under the Administrative Items Regulation, and there is confusion among SCOs about whether a complex system falls under the Regulation. It was discussed that it may be helpful to include clarification in the SOP to help SCOs understand the definition of a Complex System.

This topic will be added to a future agenda.

[Council Administration]

#### **4.8. Cisterns – Scope of the Plumbing Code**

It was brought forward that in the NPC, cisterns are referenced for non-potable water and not for potable water. It was noted that installers of cisterns are generally private sewage installers but industry has a number of questions around permits and installation of these systems for potable water because that's not within the NPC.

David Dallaire will prepare more on this issue for a future meeting.

[Dallaire]

#### **4.9. Public Health Guidelines for Water Reuse and Stormwater Use**

The Public Health Guidelines for Water Reuse and Stormwater Use was posted in the member portal for awareness.

It was asked if this document supersedes the reclaimed water use STANDATA. The Administrator will investigate further and report back.

[Petryk]

#### **4.10. Reference Standards**

Members were asked if they participate on any standard development committees. This will become a standing item on the agenda for members to give updates on these committees.

##### **4.10.1. NSF**

No member involvement noted.

##### **4.10.2. ULC**

No member involvement noted.

##### **4.10.3. CSA**

- Barry is on CSA B66 which was republished in October with minor changes. The Administrator reported that one impact of these changes involves the safety devices in a manhole—there are now additional measures in place to stop someone from falling in.
- The Administrator also sits on B65.
- David Dobson works closely with BNQ which is working on updating standards now that are going out for public consultation shortly.

#### **4.11. Administrator/AMA Report**

The Administrator reported:

- ASCA is taking a lead in dealing with competency issues with installers and SCOs.

- There are approximately two dozen files that are at various stages of consideration and review with installers. It was noted that installers who continue to repeatedly fail to meet code requirements will be addressed through the powers of the Administrator.
- SOP update training is ongoing. The SOP will be in force November 1, 2022. There are two organizations offering training; Alberta Onsite Wastewater Management Association (AWOMA) and Canadian Onsite Wastewater Training Institute (COWTI).
- There are currently 900 people who need to take code update training to maintain their certification. The Administrator will look into stats around the progress of training for the next meeting. [Petryk]

#### **4.12. Council Updates**

A written report was included in the portal and updates were provided on the following:

- The Council office has reopened and all meetings that have been identified as tentatively in-person remain so. While flexibility is still needed and there is always the option for members to participate in in-person meetings virtually, members are strongly encouraged to attend in person if they are able.
- The Council AGM and volunteer appreciation event is being planned for the fall, likely in person.
- Dr. Sauer Award nominations are open and nomination forms can be found in the Member Portal.
- The Council is initiating another award program and is looking for each sub-council to nominate an outstanding member.
- Council Member Training—save the date for courses offered in the fall:
  - Appeals Training: November 15 & 16, 2022.
  - Effective Meetings: October 31 & November 1, 2022.

### **5. Meeting Finalization**

#### **5.1. Round Table**

The following was discussed:

- A document to track items to review for the next edition of the SOP will be created and put into the member portal for members to track their comments/changes in. [Hirose/Karch]
- Clarification was requested on ways to do electrical conductivity tests with a presentation at a future PSSC meeting.

#### **5.2. Next Meeting**

The next meeting was reconfirmed for October 25, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. via videoconference.

#### **5.3. Meeting Adjournment**

**David Rose / Arnold Groot moved to adjourn the meeting; CARRIED**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:28 p.m.



– NEW ACTION ITEMS –

**4.3. ASCA’s Permit Application Checklist**

Members were asked to submit any feedback to Council staff who will forward it to ASCA. [All]

**4.4.2. Use of the word ‘Equipment’ in Permit Regulation**

This issue will be added to the ongoing matters arising/action list. [Council Administration]

**4.5.2. Other Identified Issues**

As members find issues, they are asked to report them during sub-council meetings or by email to Council staff so they can be properly documented and addressed accordingly. [All Members]

**4.6. Combined Treatment and Disposal Systems**

Council staff will create a working group folder and move the documents from the PSC meeting. [Council Staff]

**4.7. Complex Systems**

This topic will be added to a future agenda. [Council Administration]

**4.8. Cisterns – Scope of the Plumbing Code**

David Dallaire will prepare more on this issue for a future meeting. [Dallaire]

**4.9. Public Health Guidelines for Water Reuse and Stormwater Use**

It was asked if this document supersedes the reclaimed water use STANDATA. The Administrator will investigate further and report back. [Petryk]

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**5.1. Round Table**

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**– MOTIONS –**

**1.1 Agenda Adoption**

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**1.2 Adoption of the February 22, 2022 Minutes**

**Steve Neff / Kent Watson moved to adopt the minutes of the February 22, 2022 meeting, as circulated; CARRIED**

**2.1. Closed Session**

**Daniel Morris / David Dallaire moved to enter into closed session; CARRIED**

**Steve Neff / Dennis Horrigan moved to exit closed session; CARRIED**

**2.1.1. Matrix Discussion**

**David Rose / Kent Watson moved to recommend the removal of the Academia seat from the Private Sewage Sub-Council matrix; CARRIED**

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**Kent Watson / David Rose moved to have the following members on the working group: Barry Bohn (chair), Daniel Morris, Rick Baxter, Arnold Groot with support from Municipal Affairs and industry members as required; CARRIED**

**5.3. Meeting Adjournment**

**David Rose / Arnold Groot moved to adjourn the meeting; CARRIED**

**– WORKING GROUP MEMBER LISTS –**

<b>WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>WORKING GROUP MEMBERS (<u>Chair</u>)</b>
Combined Treatment and Disposal Systems	<b><u>Barry Bohn</u></b> Daniel Morris, Rick Baxter, Arnold Groot Municipal Affairs and industry members