



Safety Codes Council

MINUTES OF THE THIRD FIRE SUB-COUNCIL MEETING OF 2019

- DATE:** May 14, 2019
- TIME:** 9:00 a.m. to 2:20 p.m.
- LOCATION:** Safety Codes Council Office, Edmonton
- PRESENT:**
- Sub-Council Members**
Michael Bos, Chair
Allan Blatz
Joe Davis
Mark Heiderich
Hunter Langpap
Gary Mayorchak, Vice Chair North
Grace O'Brien
Jim Robinson
Mark Royer
Stephen Suen
Chris Taylor
- Safety Codes Council**
Allison Karch, Kathryn Derkach
- Alberta Municipal Affairs**
Tina Parker, Cindy Yan, James Orr
- GUEST:** Corey Klimchuk (BSC Liaison), Mike Poehlmann (ABSA)
- REGRETS:** Cameron Bardas; Robbin Foxcroft, Vice Chair South; Cammie Laird;
Mario Poser
- RECORDING SECRETARY:** Sandi Orr
- 2019 MEETINGS:** September 26, 2019, November 14, 2019

1. Meeting Opening

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 9:00 a.m. A round table introduction was held.

1.1. Agenda Adoption

The following item was added to the agenda:

- 4.7 Implications of Ministerial Order Prohibiting Seclusion Rooms at Schools

Gary Mayorchak / Allan Blatz moved to adopt the agenda, as amended, with a flexible order of business; CARRIED

1.2. Adoption of March 28, 2019 Minutes

Marc Royer / Joe Davis moved to adopt the minutes of March 28, 2019, as circulated; CARRIED

2. Matters for Decision

There were no matters for decision brought forward.

3. Review Matters Arising/Action List

	Item	Action	Date	Responsible	Status/Update
1.	Qualified Persons Registry (E.2.06.11)	Communicate status of registry UPDATE: James Orr will look into this further and report back.	Nov 23/16	Orr	No update was available
2.	City of Edmonton High Rise Risk Assessment (Learnings from Grenfell Tower Fire)	Ask whether findings of evaluation of high rises in the City of Edmonton may be shared with the FSC once complete UPDATE: Cameron Bardas will provide a presentation on their risk assessment tool at the next meeting.	Sep 14/17	Bardas	This item was deferred to the next meeting
3.	Escape Rooms	It was suggested that research be conducted to see if anything is anticipated from the national level (NFPA or CSA Standard). UPDATE: AMA hasn't received any calls about escape rooms. NFPA has a Special Amusement Buildings working group. No issues have been identified and the item was considered closed.	Jan 24/19	Parker	This item will be removed from the action list.

4. Matters for Discussion

4.1. Feedback on PESC Refrigeration Systems Recommendation - 9:05 a.m.

Mike Poehlmann, General Manager of the Alberta Boilers Safety Association (ABSA) and the Provincial Administrator of the Pressure Equipment discipline, was welcomed to the meeting and provided an overview of ABSA and their range of responsibilities, including design reviews and registration, inspections, QMS audits, examinations and certification. Alberta is the largest pressure equipment jurisdiction in Canada and is governed primarily by Section VIII of the ASME Boilers and Pressure Equipment Code. ABSA operates province-wide with inspectors located throughout Alberta.

Refrigeration plants are a very small component from the pressure equipment perspective. ABSA's focus is on whether the pressure vessel and piping can handle the pressure it is intended to withstand rather than on the contents of the pressure equipment or where it's located.

One of the greatest challenges on this topic is with regard to CSA B52, because ABSA enforces only a small portion of the standard and several other disciplines, including Gas and Building, are responsible for other parts of the standard. The purpose of CSA B52 is to minimize the risk of personal injury by providing minimum requirements for the design, construction, installation, inspection, and maintenance of the mechanical refrigeration systems.

After the Fernie incident occurred, ABSA went through its database to find out how many of these types of systems are in Alberta. There are approximately 300+ systems and ABSA visited all of them, providing each with a Care and Operations Guidelines and CSA B52 Compliance Checklist. It was explained that the brine side of these systems are outside of ABSA's scope because they are not pressure equipment.

It was reported that there is a cross-ministry working group dealing with existing rinks and refrigeration plants, including representation from Occupational Health & Safety, ABSA, and Alberta Municipal Affairs. OHS have been doing thorough inspections to determine what challenges might exist and to what magnitude.

This led to a discussion regarding the detection systems and heat exchangers. It was clarified that the heat exchanger would have to be built in accordance with the pressure equipment requirements. Although detection equipment requirements would be in accordance with the Alberta Building Code, ongoing maintenance is not part of the Building discipline's responsibilities and it is uncertain where those responsibilities would lie. Concern was also expressed that the requirements for detection devices are not as detailed as those for a fire alarm system.

It was clarified that if there is a failure of pressure equipment, ABSA would be involved to ensure it is fixed properly. If a service company comes across an issue with the pressure equipment, they are required to inform ABSA.

Due to the high specialization, the refrigeration industry believes that a separate permit should be required.

Consensus was reached that there is uncertainty about which discipline is responsible for enforcement of maintenance provisions in CSA B52 and it was requested that this be brought to the inter-department working group. [Orr]

There were no objections to the recommendations presented by the PESC.

4.2. Exiting to a Public Thoroughfare

The definition of means of egress includes several parts. It is defined as continuous path of travel from any point in the building or contained open space to:

- A separate building
- An open public thoroughfare
- An open public space protected from fire exposure from the building and having access to an open public thoroughfare
- Means of egress including exits and access to exits

Photographs were shown on screen of challenges that could occur when trying to exit to a public thoroughfare where landscaping hinders the continuous path of travel.

It is believed the Building and Fire Codes are vague when it comes to this issue. It was suggested that Barrier Free requirements would also need to be taken into consideration.

It was suggested that discussion with OHS may assist in resolving the issues. OHS requires a risk assessment for the evacuation of the workers and has a duty of care for visitors. It is believed that the fire discipline is responsible for ensuring the path of egress is maintained. Even though landscaping may not be interfering as part of the initial design, it is often changed after the building is complete.

It was suggested that the Fire Administrator consider reviewing the matter with the Building Administrator to gain clarity on the definition of clear access to a public thoroughfare. [Parker]

4.3. 'Micro' Breweries / 'Micro' Distilleries Working Group Report

The first meeting was held on April 16, 2019. The working group has 3 industry representatives. The Terms of Reference was reviewed and 2 co-chairs were appointed – Hunter Langpap and Ulrik Seward.

Industry provided some good feedback, including their desire for more consistency across the province and concerns about the appropriateness of High Hazard Industrial Occupancy classification for microdistilleries. There appears to be a lack of awareness of the risks and how they impact concerns about which other occupancy classifications could be included in the same building. It is believed that industry may be asking for a relaxation of the code. There is no definition of “microdistillery” in the codes and there is a great deal of variation among operations.

Another meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2019. More information is being gathered about the processes and issues that would need to be addressed in an alternate solution.

Members were shown the folder in the portal that includes the working group's agendas, minutes and other documentation.

4.4. BSC Liaison Report

Corey Klimchuk reported on the following topics under discussion by the BSC:

- Not a lot of new topics brought forward due to the election
- A joint working group was recommended with Building Sub-Council and Elevators Sub-Council to address the issue of using stopped escalators as stairs
- APEGA presentation on electronic stamps and seals, verifiable through Adobe
- Depressurization is being researched for possible Interpretation STANDATA
- There was nothing to report from the Occupant Load Working Group
- Relative to the Building Code transition period, not everything in the current Alberta Fire Code is applicable if tied to a new requirement in the Alberta Building Code
- Interior Stairways for Roof Access—much different needs between servicing mechanical systems and firefighting access
- Clarification was received from NRC regarding magnetic lock releases

4.5. AMA/Administrator Report

The Director of Codes and Standards—Building, Fire, Energy and Accessibility reported on the following:

- Issues and decisions have been kept to a minimum because of the election and there are still some restrictions in place during the transition of government
- Notices and STANDATA on topics such as the transition period and availability of the codes are being prepared for publication
- The government website has been redesigned and a link is included in the portal to get to the safety codes section.
- There is a new government with a different mandate and likely different priorities
- There is a new Minister, Kaycee Madu, and Deputy Minister, Meryl Whittaker
- The government's focus will be on jobs, strengthening the economy, getting Albertans back to work, removing impediments to economic activity, and standing up for Albertans
- A Minister of Red Tape Reduction has been appointed and there is a goal of a one-third reduction of regulations to reduce the regulatory burden; each department is expected to work toward this
- Examples were provided of barriers and the need to consider alternatives
- Automatic code adoption and harmonization are still strongly supported
- There is now a hiring freeze but the Community and Technical Support Branch (safety codes) department is fully staffed at the present

The floor was opened for questions and the following clarifications were provided:

It was reported that due to the election, staff initially could not commit to attending the conference but approval has since been granted. Technical sessions led by the Administrators will be offered for building, fire, plumbing/gas/private sewage, and electrical on Wednesday morning.

Relative to reducing barriers, the intent is to look at each situation individually, keep an open mind, and explore various solutions to the issue. The importance of communication with members of public and industry was emphasized so that they understand why a rule is in place and what options they may have to meet the intent of the code (for example, through alternative solution).

Energy Codes will remain in place. At the National level, tiered energy codes are being looked at for the next code cycle. Four tiers will be available for each province and territory to determine the level of energy efficiency suitable for their jurisdiction.

The Administrator reported the following:

- A direct link to the AMA webpage is included in the portal
- Some STANDATAs are not yet published
- STANDATAs are being reviewed against the new code for consideration of republishing or retired if now addressed in the code
- A discussion was held regarding the status and relevance of the Fireworks STANDATA
- the new NFC 2019 Alberta Edition is complete and available for download for free from the NRC website
- It was asked that an hour be set aside at the beginning or end of the September meeting for the Code Review Working Group to meet [Council Administration]
- Regional Meetings will be starting back up again shortly
- There will be no STANDATA issued for Mobile Fuel Vending but potentially a safety tip sheet

On behalf of the Office of the Fire Commissioner, the following report was provided:

Statistics were provided of fires and fatalities reported to the OFC up until the end of April 2019, representing slightly higher statistics than the previous year. An in depth discussion was held regarding reporting requirements.

Clarification was requested regarding who is responsible for reporting fires on First Nations and the Administrator will report back with clarification. [Parker]

It was questioned regarding OFC participation at sub-council meetings and clarified that the sub-council has extended an ongoing invitation to participate and OFC staff will attend and answer questions when specific requests are made.

It was reported that OFC has a trailer that was designed to provide SCOs with hands on training with sprinkler systems. However, the OFC does not have the resources to travel around with the trailer to provide this training. It needs a home and a program. It was clarified that there is no

budget available to get the trailer from one location to another. It was suggested that Lethbridge College may be interested however, it is believed that the OFC wishes this to be of benefit to the whole province. It was suggested that the OFC could approach the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association or industry itself.

It was suggested that Mark Royer speak to the Fire Commissioner directly on his suggestion.

[Royer]

There was nothing new to present from the OFC regarding inspection sheets.

A request was made by the Administrator and supported by the FSC that the Council provide a list of all variances that have been issued throughout the province for review and consideration for potential code change requests. Specifically, the code reference and how it was varied was requested. It was suggested that this should be applicable to all variances issued to the 2014 AFC. Further information could be requested if there are questions about a specific variance. This led to further discussion regarding the entire variance process and the level of comfort from the SCO's perspective to accept a variance.

The Council will look into what can be provided to the sub-council relative to variances.

[Council Administration/Thomas]

4.6. Council Updates

The following was reported:

- Starting in the Fall, the agenda will be posted 2 weeks in advance of the meeting; all requests for additions need to be submitted to the Chair at least 3 weeks in advance

4.7. Implications of Ministerial Order Prohibiting Seclusion Rooms at Schools

Information was sought regarding the Ministerial Order to prohibit seclusion rooms at schools in Alberta effective September 1, 2019, in preparation for discussion at the Fire Marshals' meeting next week.

It was clarified that, from a fire code perspective, schools are currently not permitted to involuntarily confine students unless they have a permit for detention occupancy. It is recognized that the room will still exist but the locks may need to be removed if found.

5. Meeting Finalization

5.1. Meeting and Agenda Feedback

The following items were brought forward by members as information:

- Escalator barricades
- Alberta Fire Fighters Association meeting was last week and election held
- Insurance trends – being cautious relative to cannabis; there have been a few big losses relative to rag storage in automotive, restaurants and spas
- Relative to red tape reduction, there is a need to ensure balance

- Lethbridge is under transition with the Fire Chief retiring, the city is growing rapidly and wants to encourage residential sprinklers
- A brief update was provided on the recent Fire Prevention Officer's Association of BC meeting
- Fireworks bylaws
- Upcoming NFPA meeting regarding Community Risk Reduction, addresses more than just the fire discipline
- The Alberta Association of Architects expressed appreciation of the free downloadable fire and building codes

5.2. Next Meeting

The next meeting was reconfirmed for Thursday, September 26, 2019 at the Council office.

5.2.1. 2019 Conference and AGM

Members were reminded of the conference from May 29-31 at the Rimrock Hotel in Banff.

5.3 Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 2:20 p.m.

--- NEW ACTION ITEMS ---

4.1. Feedback on PESC Refrigeration Systems Recommendation - 9:05 a.m.

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4.2. Exiting to a Public Thoroughfare

It was suggested that the Fire Administrator consider reviewing the matter with the Building Administrator to gain clarity on the definition of clear access to a public thoroughfare. [Parker]

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Clarification was requested regarding who is responsible for reporting fires on First Nations and the Administrator will report back with clarification. [Parker]

It was suggested that Mark Royer speak to the Fire Commissioner directly on his suggestion. [Royer]

The Council will look into what can be provided to the sub-council relative to variances. [Council Administration/Thomas]

--- MOTIONS ---

1.1. Agenda Adoption

Gary Mayorchak / Allan Blatz moved to adopt the agenda, as amended, with a flexible order of business; CARRIED

1.2. Adoption of January 24, 2019 Minutes

Mark Royer / Joe Davis moved to adopt the minutes of March 28, 2019, as circulated; CARRIED