



**MINUTES OF THE  
SECOND PLUMBING SUB-COUNCIL MEETING OF 2022**

**DATE:** May 31, 2022

**TIME:** 9:04 a.m. to 1:54 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Safety Codes Council Office, Edmonton

**PRESENT:** **Sub-Council Members**  
Paul Fullam, Vice Chair  
Mitch Colwell  
Quenton Kusiek  
Stephen Laurie  
Angus Potskin  
Al Steenbergen  
Shawn Van Velzen

**Safety Codes Council**

Allison Karch, Kathryn Derkach, Jennifer Johnson (virtual, item 4.1), Kris Schmaltz (item 4.1), Catrin Berghoff (item 4.1) and Jamie Quillinan (item 4.1)

**Alberta Municipal Affairs**

Sidney Manning, Claude Valliere, Perry Wager (virtual), Tom Knull (virtual)

**REGRETS:** Mark Harrold, Joe Howdle, Roger Lebeuf

**GUESTS:** David Dallaire (PSSC Liaison - virtual)

**RECORDER:** Kathryn Derkach

**2022 MEETINGS:** September 13, November 22

## 1. Meeting Opening

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. A round table introduction was held and the meeting opening was read.

### 1.1 Agenda Adoption

**Quenton Kusiek / Shaw Van Velzen moved that the agenda be adopted, as circulated; CARRIED**

### 1.2 Adoption of the March 1, 2022 Minutes

**Stephen Laurie / Al Steenbergen moved to adopt the minutes of the March 1, 2022 meeting, as circulated; CARRIED**

## 2. Matters for Decision

*None identified*

## 3. Review Matters Arising/Action List

	Item	Action	Date Initiated	Responsible	Status/Update
1.	Removing Sewer and Water Service Restricted Certification	Assist the Administrators to determine jurisdictions that could be included in an Info Bulletin regarding jurisdictional challenges between plumbing systems and private sewage systems. Review further once the Permit Regulation review is complete.	Dec 3/19	Fullam/ Harrold/ Kusiek/ Manning	Due to insufficient information to move this item forward, the Administrator suggested this item be removed from the action list. This item can come back once the Permit Regulation review is complete and a next step should be available.  Remove item from list.
2.	Cisterns – Scope of Plumbing Code	Work with AMA on drafting a code change request for the NPC 2025.	Sep 18/18	Dallaire/ Harrold / Potskin	Work is ongoing.
3.	Public Health Guidelines for Water Reuse and Stormwater Use	PSC members to provide advice to the Administrator on any next steps, such as any additional information or guidance needed by industry.	Jun 1/20	All	The national plumbing committees have the Alberta public guidelines and the Administrator will bring further feedback from other provinces.  Changes regarding non-potable rainwater use have been published in the 2020 NPC, which has brought up some concerns with how jurisdictions will manage these requirements.

4.	Issues Arising from Plastic Shortages	Shortages are resulting in other materials being used; this situation will be monitored.	Oct 19/21	All	<p>There was general consensus that materials are back in stock and shortages for ABS are no longer common. It was noted that PVC pipe can still be hard to find at times in certain sizing.</p> <p>The Administrator reported that Municipal Affairs was approached about a variance to allow DWV pipe for electrical conduit which could trigger a shortage in the plumbing discipline. Item will be kept on to follow the outcome of this request.</p>
5.	Response to Leduc County Submission regarding Permit Regulation	Send a response to Leduc County after PSSC input has been discussed by PSC.			The PSSC will be discussing at their June meeting, the liaison will bring back information on the discussion and a formal response can be sent at that time.

**4. Matters for Discussion**

**4.1. Curriculum Modernization and SCO Certification Policy Review**

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 was clarified that these changes are not anticipated to increase the amount or the cost of training to SCOs.
- Both Edmonton and Calgary have an internal apprenticeship type program for newly employed SCOs that has proven successful.
- There may be value in reviewing past appeals within the plumbing discipline to see if there are any identifiable trends. Topics of Information Bulletins could also help show where people need further training.
- There was general consensus that a shift towards teaching how to interpret the code, rather than just how to reference the code, would be of great value.
- It could be useful to include information about when engineer involvement is required and what their limitations are.
- At a national level, there's discussion around different levels of plumbers who have different expertise with what's going on inside the pipes. As we move forward with SCO training, we need to keep in mind that the discipline is changing and SCO training will need to adapt as well.
- It was noted that the Council is in discussions with CSA to develop update training for the new edition of the NPC.

#### **4.2. Combination Heating STANDATA**

The technical content of this STANDATA has already been reviewed by the PSC, and it has since gone through a legal, communications, and executive review. No technical information has been changed but the Administrator wanted to ensure the sub-council saw the updated layout before publication.

Given changes that are expected in the next version of the National Building Code Alberta Edition, this STANDATA may become redundant once that code is published.

#### **4.3. Permit Regulation Review**

#### **4.3.1. Single Family Dwelling Definition**

The GSC has been discussing possible changes to the definition of single family dwelling in the Permit Regulation and would like to get the opinion of other affected disciplines. The suggested revised definition and notes from GSC discussions were posted in the Portal and reviewed. It was noted that any changes to the wording in the regulation would be done by legislative drafters, and PSC should focus on any issues that are arising because of the current definition and rationale for changes.

The following was discussed:

- This definition may effect the plumbing code relative to requirements for back water valves. One valve can protect only one dwelling unit.
- The term 'Dwelling Unit' is defined within the National Plumbing Code. In the case of secondary suites, if there is a dwelling unit in a basement and a separate dwelling unit upstairs, then two back water valves are required.
- Municipalities handle this definition differently and a joint STANDATA could also be a path for clarification instead of a regulation change.

Members were asked to take this back to their nominating organizations for further feedback to be discussed at the next meeting. [All]

#### **4.3.2. Section 14(2)(a) and (b) – permit exemption for water service and sewer installation**

This section has been discussed at previous meetings, but there has been no clear resolution.

Currently, a permit is not required to install a service connection to a municipal water supply or sewer. This means that you don't have to prove that you're a plumber to do this work because the regulation says you don't need a permit for this. A number of municipalities have had issues with water/sewer installations.

The following was discussed:

- It's unclear why a permit isn't needed for this type of work.
- Large municipalities have the ability to put programs in place to monitor this type of work without inspections, but many feel it should be inspected by an SCO.
- Rural municipalities generally don't want permits required for this work, but some towns have programs to review connections before they're buried. A service connection report is used in Red Deer; an actual inspection is done prior to the pipe being buried and a letter is given to the owner to state that work was done to code. Requiring permits would require inspections at times that may not be convenient for the owner.
- Many may not realize this, but this work has always fallen under the scope of the permit for the rest of the plumbing installation and as such, it is the responsibility of the plumber to ensure this work is done correctly. If the exemption is removed, it will still fall under the plumbing permit. Education is needed so that plumbers are aware that they are responsible for this.
- Municipalities are unclear about where their jurisdiction ends and the home owners' begins, which causes further confusion.
- It was noted that this should be discussed at the PSSC as well.

#### **4.3.3. Section 14(2)(e) – removal of exemption for water treatment devices**

When water treatment devices first came onto the market, there was no certification for these products so the exemption was put in place. An exemption made sense at the time, but as technology evolved and industry has grown to understand the value in equipment certification, the rationale for the exemption is fading. Currently a permit is not required for water treatment devices.

The following was discussed:

- Water treatment devices can be installed by anyone, but when incorrect installation could cause harm to people. If a permit was required, a knowledgeable installer would be used and the risk of harm would be significantly reduced.
- Issues with this are not being seen in plumbing journeyman education. Year 4 students have made comments about directly tying water softeners into the drains.
- Requiring permits means requiring inspections, and this may not be well received by owners.
- While there have been issues, it doesn't seem to be a prevalent problem in industry.
- There are many PSDS implications with water softeners in systems after the initial inspection has been done. It was noted that this should be discussed at the PSSC as well.

It was discussed that there was general consensus for the removal of the exemption but no formal recommendation was made.

#### **4.4. Reference Standards**

##### **4.4.1. NSF**

No update.

##### **4.4.2. ULC**

An update will be provided at the next PSC meeting.

##### **4.4.3. CSA**

CSA is looking for individuals from Alberta to sit as guests on the B184 and B126 committees. Alberta Health is struggling with their role regarding water cisterns and the demarcation point between the inside plumbing system and the outside issues. Angus Potskin volunteered for both.

CSA is also looking for a balloting member for the B805 and B128.3 committees. These are relatively new standards, and it's believed the time commitment will be four 2-hour meetings a year. CSA is working to create a balanced matrix with voices from across the country. Paul Fullam volunteered for the B805 and Shawn van Velzen is already working with the B128.3 committee.

##### **4.4.4. IAPMO**

IAPMO is currently doing work around a standard for water treatment and a definition of grey water. Meetings are occurring every two weeks until work is complete in August.

#### **4.5. Working Group Reports**

##### **4.5.1. NPC 2020**

The NPC 2020 was published and the in-force date is April 2023. The working group was tasked with reviewing the published code before any recommendations are brought forward to the sub-council at the next PSC meeting. [NPC 2020 Working Group Members]

#### **4.6 Identify need for SCO Code Update Training**

Municipal Affairs has traditionally created a 3 column document with the major changes to the codes. The Administrator will work with the Council to determine what training and updates will be provided.

It was noted that section 2.7 Non-Potable Water Systems has introduced significant changes from the previously code and will require SCO training.

#### **4.7 STANDATA Review for alignment with NPC 2020**

With the new NPC now published, the next step is to review all STANDATA to ensure they are in alignment with the new code. This is an opportunity for the sub-council to review and make recommendations around STANDATA that need changes or can be removed. There are 15 STANDATAs to review. It was requested that members review prior to the next PSC and come prepared with comments. [All]

The Administrator will work with Council staff to ensure documents are in the member portal shortly. [Manning/Council Administration]

#### **4.8. AMOS Report**

AMOS held its first face to face meeting in two years which was well received with good engagement from members. CleanO2 gave a presentation on their technology which pays individuals to mine carbon which is then used to create other products.

#### **4.9. Administrator/AMA Report**

The Administrator review the written report in the member portal:

- The 2020 NPC adoption has been the focus of work at Municipal Affairs. Now staff are reviewing STANDATA for updates.
- [Certification informs](#) now contain a first for the plumbing discipline compared to being traditionally based on prescriptive requirements. They are starting to label items that are energy efficient and result and more efficient use of water. Products are certified to plumbing standards but may also include an additional Energy Efficiency Verification (EEV) label which could be confusing for industry as the code does not require the second label.
- NRC is already working on the NPC 2025 with updated terminology to harmonize with the National Building Code. Terms like 'water closet', 'bathroom', 'toilet room' etc. have been replaced with the term 'washroom'. Around 100 terms have been updated.
- NRC is also reviewing condensate drainage from high efficiency appliances and expanding the code to include it.
- As a follow up from the report at the last PSC meeting, discussion with Passive House Alberta regarding whole house air admittance valves is ongoing but no further action has been taken.

- A video was shown of the aftermath of a toilet that was struck by lightning.

#### **4.10. Council Updates**

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

- The Council office has reopened.
  - Staff may continue to work from home on some days.
  - All meetings that have been identified as tentatively in-person remain so.
  - There is always the option for members to participate in in-person meetings virtually instead; however, we encourage all members to attend in person if possible. Please let Council staff know if you must attend an in-person meeting virtually.
- Council AGM and volunteer appreciation event is being planned for the fall.
  - There will not be a spring Council Conference in Banff.
  - The Dr. Sauer award will be handed out at the volunteer appreciation event and nomination forms can be found on the member portal home page.
- 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.
  - Contact gerry.letendre@safetycodes.ab.ca to register.

### **5. Meeting Finalization**

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

- It was noted that a standard for oil interceptors isn't currently referenced in the NPC 2020. It's expected there will be a standard referenced in the NPC 2025. In the meantime oil interceptors can be built onsite as long as they meet all of the prescriptive requirements identified in the current code.

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

The next meeting was reconfirmed for September 13, 2022 at the Council office at 9:00 a.m.

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

**Al Steenbergen / Stephen Laurie moved to adjourn the meeting; CARRIED**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.



– NEW ACTION ITEMS –

**4.3.1. Single Family Dwelling Definition**

Members were asked to take this back to their nominating organizations for further feedback to be discussed at the next meeting. [All]

**4.5.1. NPC 2020**

The working group was tasked with reviewing the published code before bringing any recommendations are brought forward to the sub-council at the next PSC meeting.

[NPC 2020 Working Group Members]

**4.7 STANDATA Review for alignment with NPC 2020**

It was requested that members review prior to the next PSC and come prepared with comments.

[All]

The Administrator will work with Council staff to ensure documents are in the member portal shortly.

[Manning/Council Administration]

**– MOTIONS –**

**1.1 Agenda Adoption**

**Quenton Kusiek / Shaw Van Velzen moved that the agenda be adopted, as circulated; CARRIED**

**1.2 Adoption of the March 1 Minutes**

**Stephen Laurie / Al Steenbergen moved to adopt the minutes of the March 1, 2022 meeting, as circulated; CARRIED**

**5.3. Meeting Adjournment**

**Al Steenbergen / Stephen Laurie moved to adjourn the meeting; CARRIED**

**– WORKING GROUP MEMBER LISTS –**

<b>WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>WORKING GROUP MEMBERS (Chair)</b>
NPC 2020	<u><b>Quenton Kusiek</b></u> Mark Harrold, Al Steenbergen, Shawn van Velzen, Paul Fullam