



UPDATE

WINTER 2007

Alberta Contractors get National Certification

When you make that next call to a petroleum contractor you'll be talking to a tank installer or service technician that has recently become nationally certified. Alberta's petroleum contractor association has joined forces with associations in other parts of Canada to bring a national standard to petroleum training. New to Alberta's certification program is the inclusion of service technicians who repair and test petroleum systems. Individuals that missed the recent qualifying examinations should check the PTMAA website for future opportunities.

Release of Alberta Fire Code Delayed

Alberta Municipal Affairs has recently indicated that the Fire Code which had been expected out in 2006 will not be released until Spring 2007 at the earliest. In this Code cycle the government had a high priority on harmonization with the National Fire Code. If the final look of the Alberta Fire Code is close to the National Fire Code we are not expecting major change from today's rules affecting storage tanks. One area that has been enhanced in the National Fire Code is leak detection. The biggest change will affect single walled tanks and piping the most. Single walled systems will require a precision test every 2 or 5 years. The test would be required every two years on systems that only have inventory reconciliation as their method of detecting leaks. The longer interval is available for operators that also use monitoring wells or subscribe to a Statistical Inventory Reconciliation service. Systems that utilize suction pumps will have 5-year tests if the check valve to maintain prime in the piping is located directly under the pump and not at the tank. Changes in the leak detection section of the 2005 National Fire Code can be a bit difficult to interpret but when the Alberta Fire Code is released the PTMAA will issue a notice to all tank owners and operators explaining the requirements. In the meantime, if you have monitoring wells we would suggest using them at least once a month and recording the results of your test in a log book.

Winter Operator Seminars Scheduled

The PTMAA will be offering tank operators free training seminars in Edson and Fort Saskatchewan this winter. The one-day seminars are meant for underground storage tank managers but would also be of interest to aboveground tank operators that have underground piping. This seminar would be important for operational staff that is responsible for carrying out leak detection and equipment maintenance duties. Store managers may bring key personnel if these duties are shared by staff members. Applications will be mailed to tank operators located within 100 km. of each municipality and will be offered on a first-registered basis.

**Edson – February 26
Fort Saskatchewan – March**

Inventory Control and Leak Detection Still Not a High Priority

PTMAA inspectors have been looking at tank inventory and leak detection records for the past five years and we have not seen a great deal of improvement in these required activities. The *Alberta Fire Code* mandates that your petroleum inventory must be accounted for and that an analysis of the records completed for each day product is added or taken from the tank to give indication of any loss trends. Most managers are dipping the tanks and keeping dip and meter readings in a book but many do not know how to evaluate the records to help determine if the tank or line is leaking.



In the current year of inspections we have found that a startling 56% of managers are not doing a

complete reconciliation analysis. Once you have done a calculation of inventory variance (what's in the tank compared to what should be in the tank) there's a requirement to determine if the tolerance is within 0.5% of throughput (for underground tanks) or 2.0% for aboveground storage tanks. Other critical indicators include 18 loss days in a month or five consecutive days of losses. If these three indicators are not being considered and noted, your inventory control procedure does not meet the *Alberta Fire Code*.

Besides inventory control by manual or electronic practice the Fire Code has a requirement for site leak detection. Typically, this requirement is facilitated by monitoring wells which have been installed in the backfill of the tank nest. Our inspectors have found almost all underground systems include monitoring wells but they continue to report that tank operators are not utilizing this leak detection tool. To date, 51% of tank managers whose site includes monitoring wells are not doing a monthly check of the wells and keeping a log of their findings. Most wells have groundwater so operators should use a clear bailer to draw a water sample from the well. The sample should be examined to see if there's petroleum product on the surface of the water. Finding petroleum could mean that product has leaked from a tank or pipeline and the situation should be looked at immediately.

Inventory control and leak detection will be thoroughly discussed at the training seminars being hosted by the PTMAA.

Draft Cleanup Guidelines

Alberta Environment is updating its policies and guidance documents to more clearly define expectations for contaminated site management. Currently, Alberta uses the, "*Risk Management Guidelines for Petroleum Storage Tank Sites*". It's expected that the current document will be superseded by, "*Alberta Tier 1 Soil and Groundwater Remediation Guidelines*", and "*Development and Application of Tier 2 Remediation Guidelines in Alberta*". A link to these draft guidelines is available on the PTMAA website by clicking on "[Publications](#)". A public comment period is just closing for the two guideline documents. If implemented, Tier 1 guidelines will address most site cleanups while more complicated remediation projects will use the Tier 2 document.

Alberta Environment has made some changes to sign-off reporting of site assessment reports. The Department will no longer issue comfort letters on completed assessments. Environment staff will rank reports based on potential to impact human health and safety and the environment. Riskier projects will continue to involve monitoring by Department staff but routine assessments will be managed and signed off by members of APEGGA (professional engineers).

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Disclaimer:

This newsletter is intended only as a "plain English" guidance to assist storage tank owners, operators, and contractors in understanding and implementing Alberta Fire Code requirements. It is not intended to supplement or replace any regulatory requirements. In the event of any inadvertent conflict between this guidance and Alberta Fire Code regulation, the Fire Code shall control.