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# UPDATE

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**SPRING 2008**

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## **Alberta Fire Code Updated**

On September 2, 2007 the Alberta Fire Code (2006) came into force. You can purchase a copy of the code from Learning Resources Centre, 12360-142 St., Edmonton, phone (780) 427-5775, product code 683179. The price is \$168.30.

The most significant change from the previous Fire Code affecting tank owners is related to leak detection. If you own underground tanks and/or piping which is single-walled and the only type of leak detection performed is inventory reconciliation you are required to perform a precision test on these systems every two years. If you do inventory reconciliation and do monthly monitoring of groundwater or vapour monitoring wells or have inventory records analyzed by a third party SIR service, a precision test is required every five years. If you operate underground single-walled steel lines and you do not perform inventory reconciliation you are required to perform a pipe test every 12 months. If you own aboveground tanks and they do not have secondary containment as an integral part of their construction (double-walled) an API 653 test or tank floor inspection is required every 10 years. These deadlines have a start date of September 2, 2007. You are encouraged to acquire a copy of the Fire Code to ensure compliance with all sections.

## **Permit Regulation Comes Into Force**

On April 1, 2008 the Permit Regulation came into effect. This Regulation impacts all construction applications including tank system installations, removals and alterations. No project may be started without having a permit from the authority having jurisdiction. The PTMAA has been a strong proponent of this legislation as it sees many facilities constructed without proper approval, and sometimes, without compliance to the Fire Code. It is hoped the information provided to a Safety Codes Officer through the permit process will reduce the number of projects started without proper equipment or without services of qualified professionals. Contractors should request to

see the issued permit prior to starting any tank or piping project. It is the PTMAA's hope that all stakeholders, including equipment and petroleum suppliers, will be aware of this new legislation and assist in its being successful in getting consistent compliance throughout the province. The PTMAA permit application is on its website. An internet-based repository is currently under construction which will allow the public to search permits that have been issued anywhere in Alberta. Interested parties can check periodically with the PTMAA website for completion of that public resource.

## **Inspection Program Showing Positive Results**

It is the PTMAA's policy to conduct an inspection of all facilities within its jurisdiction at least every two years. The Association has been doing comprehensive inspections for the past eight years. Early in the inspection program the emphasis was on ensuring underground systems were upgraded in accordance with the Fire Code. As a result of that initiative owners did a great job getting their existing systems to meet equipment requirements for corrosion protection, leak detection and overfill protection. The emphasis for PTMAA inspectors during recent years has been to ensure tank operators are making good use of their leak detection capabilities and maintaining their protection equipment properly. Tank operators can be proud of the progress being made with operational compliance. Inventory control, for example, has shown a 17% improvement in use in recent years. There's room for improvement, however. Owners of single-walled tanks and/or piping are especially at risk if corrosion protection equipment or proper leak detection is not being done. Used long enough, these systems are likely to fail. To avoid an expensive cleanup it's imperative that leaks are detected in early stages. Inventory control and monitoring of groundwater wells are very inexact leak detection methodologies so if that is all the facility is equipped with it's important to get it right.

## Service Station Emergency Plans

An oft-overlooked requirement of a tank operator's duties is emergency planning. The Fire Code and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation both require that proper emergency planning and training is provided. The only way to show compliance to these requirements is to have proper documentation identifying procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. This is especially important for businesses that store and dispense flammable liquids. The safety plan can be very detailed but minimum requirements of the Fire Code include procedures for:

- notifying the fire department
- evacuating people
- confining, controlling and extinguishing the fire
- appointing staff to carry out fire safety duties
- training staff to respond to fire conditions
- maintenance of safety documentation
- inspection and maintenance of equipment to avoid fire or explosion conditions.

As an employer, the OH&S regulation requires that your emergency response plan includes:

- the identification of potential emergencies
- procedures for dealing with emergencies
- emergency training
- fire protection requirements
- alarm and emergency communication requirements
- first aid services.

Proper emergency planning at fuelling facilities should include response to spills and leaks and, of course, fires. Basic elements of a contingency plan should include:

- initial notification procedures
- emergency contact list
- site map
- containment and cleanup procedures
- cleanup contractor information
- disposal options for collected product
- reporting requirements (fire dept., PTMAA, Alberta Environment, for example)

Emergency preparation should include posted signage where employees will become familiar with procedures and know where to get information if an emergency occurs. Posted information should include:

- address of your facility
- 24 hour owner contact number
- location of nearest phone (if necessary)
- fire Department's phone number

- steps to follow in case of a fire, spill at the pumps or over-fill on the tanks
- location of shut-down for dispensers and any product shut-off valves
- location of fire response equipment such as fire extinguishers
- location of spill response equipment including sorbent pads, granular sorbents, etc., to pick up small amounts of spilled product.

If your facility is equipped with an automatic tank gauging system (ATG) this equipment is designed to alert you of a potential environmental release.

To make use of this equipment make certain that:

- the tank gauge console is not blocked from view
- the staff knows who to call if there's an alarm
- there's always a employee on duty that knows what to do if the consol indicates an audible beep or blinking red light

Employees should be trained and procedures documented to:

- supervise the delivery of product to storage tanks
- respond to customer complaint of slow product delivery at the dispenser
- monitor for dangers at the pumps including smoking, running motors, dispensing into containers and equipment while standing off the ground, or vehicles fuelling which might have pilot lights or other sources of ignition
- respond to leaking hoses or nozzles that don't automatically shut off.

## Refer to the PTMAA website

The Association is always striving to provide information to tank operators to help manage flammable and combustible liquids in a safe manner. Please refer often to the PTMAA website for guidance.

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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.