

Information Bulletin No. IB99-003

September 13, 1999

Dear Sir/Madam:

A recent incident in an oil battery involved the rupture of a fired "treater" which was used to separate oil from water and gas. In the same incident, a fatality occurred. The cause of the incident is still under investigation. This letter is to remind you to review your operations to ensure safe operation of pressure equipment in your plants.

We would ask you to review the operation of your plant(s) and in particular to take immediate action to ensure that:

1. all pressure equipment in the plant, including treaters, is subject to periodic inspection to demonstrate good working order and condition and you are to ensure that inspection of all your pressure equipment is up-to-date;
2. pressure relief valves are set at a pressure no higher than allowed by the pressure equipment the valves are intended to protect and these valves are serviced periodically by authorized service companies;
3. the pressure relief valves are properly sized to protect against overpressure, taking into account site-specific operating conditions;
4. automatic emergency shutdown controls are in place to reduce the odds of a system overpressure occurring;
5. proper, current, site-specific operating procedures are maintained so that the pressure equipment can be operated in accordance with the engineering requirements of the processes concerned; and,
6. employees are fully trained and knowledgeable of the operation requirements of the equipment and processes.

For items #1 and #2 above, please contact a Safety Codes Officer of the Alberta Boilers Safety Association office nearest you should there be any questions relative to the periodic inspection/service requirements and frequencies for the pressure equipment in your plant.

Your cooperation is required to ensure a high level of pressure equipment safety in the Province. For your reference, we have highlighted some of the regulatory requirements respecting the responsibilities of the owners and operators of pressure equipment under the provincial legislation.

Sincerely,

K. T. Lau, Ph.D., P.Eng.
Chief Inspector and Administrator
Pressure Equipment
Province of Alberta

Some Regulatory Requirements under the Safety Codes Act respecting the Responsibilities of the Pressure Equipment Owners and Operators

(The list is not all-inclusive, please refer to the Act and regulations for details)

Safety Codes Act

Section 5

Owners, Care and Control

“The owner of any thing, process or activity to which this Act applies shall ensure that it meets the requirements of this Act, that the thing is maintained as required by the regulations and that when the process or activity is undertaken it is done in a safe manner”

Boilers and Pressure Vessels Regulation

Section 6(1)

“No person shall use, operate or place under pressure or cause or permit to be used, operated or placed under pressure a boiler or pressure vessel unless an inspection/certification permit has been issued in respect of it.”

Design, Construction and Installation of Boilers and Pressure Vessels Regulations

Section 41(2)

“An owner or person in charge of a boiler, pressure vessel or pressure piping system shall ensure that it is equipped with pressure-relief valves and other protective devices in accordance with the regulations”

Section 41(4)

“No person shall install, operate or use a boiler, pressure vessel or pressure piping system that has a safety or relief valve set to open at a pressure exceeding the maximum allowable working pressure”

Section 42

“The owner of a boiler, pressure vessel or pressure piping system shall ensure that the safety valves, relief valves or safety relief valves, pressure gauges and regulating or controlling devices thereon are maintained in good working order”

Section 48(1)

“A safety codes officer may request from an owner or person in charge of a boiler, pressure vessel or pressure piping system, a radiographic, ultrasonic, magnetic particle or any other method of nondestructive examination or inspection to be performed during the construction or service life of the boiler, pressure vessel or pressure piping system”