

Arena Focused Inspections Program

2017 / 2018

Ministry of Labour, Government of Alberta

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Background..... | 4 |
| Objective | 4 |
| Program | 5 |
| Report Summary..... | 6 |
| Full Report | 7 |
| Conclusion | 7 |

Introduction

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) identified arenas as a key area for focused inspections in the 2017/18 fiscal year after an event in Fernie, British Columbia, where three workers were fatally injured as a result of an ammonia leak. This proactive focused inspections program ran from December 8, 2017 to February 28, 2018.

In June 2018, significant amendments were made to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Background

OHS conducted a historical data review on inspection activities related to this industry and the results indicated 37 inspection based activities occurred in 6.5 years. The data analysis was collected based on the following Worker's Compensation Board (WCB) Industry Codes:

- 85919 Arenas/Stadiums; and
- 85901 Skating Curling Rinks/Community Associations.

The purpose of the Arena Focused Inspection Program was to:

1. Educate arena operators as to their responsibilities as prime contractor or contractor in ensuring that employers working at their site comply with the OHS Act, Regulation and Code.
2. Facilitate employers' awareness and education regarding their responsibility to protect the health and safety of their workers by identifying and controlling known hazards including, but not limited to, potential chemical exposure (ammonia and carbon monoxide) in arenas and to ensure compliance with the OHS Act, Regulation and Code.
3. Educate and enhance workers awareness of their responsibilities and rights under the OHS Act, Regulation and Code.

OHS collaborated with the following industry associations and interest groups:

1. Alberta Boiler Safety Association
2. Alberta Municipal Affairs

The Alberta Boiler Safety Association (ABSA) provided supporting documentation regarding current codes with respect to mechanical refrigeration for officer distribution.

Objective

The objective of the Arena Focused Inspection Program was to:

- Conduct inspections of approximately 150 arenas throughout the province, specifically to address compliance with OHS legislation.
- Promote and enforce compliance to enhance the safety of Albertans.
- Ensure basic leading indicators were identified with the employer including leadership, training, internal communication, hazard assessment, control of chemical hazards, emergency response planning and working alone.
- Educate prime contractors, contractors and employers, on their responsibilities regarding OHS legislation, specifically in regards to hazard assessment and control, chemical exposure, ventilation, following manufacturer's specifications, emergency response planning, confined space, working alone, worker training requirements, investigation of imminent danger situations, and incident reporting.
- Educate arena workers, including contracted personnel, on their responsibilities regarding OHS legislation, specifically in regards to their rights and obligations, the requirements to report unsafe conditions, participation in required training, hazard reporting and incident reporting.

Program

Arena focused Inspections were conducted from December 8, 2017 through February 28, 2018.

During the inspections, officers focused on, but were not limited to, the following sections of the OHS legislation:

- OHS Act Part 4 – Chemical Hazards, Biological Hazards and Harmful Substances
- OHS Code Part 2 - Hazard Assessment, Elimination and Control
- OHS Code Part 7 – Emergency Preparedness and Response
- OHS Code Part 18 - Personal Protective Equipment
- OHS Code Part 22 – Safeguards
- OHS Code Part 3 – Specifications and Certifications
- OHS Code Part 28 – Working Alone
- OHS Code Part 26 - Ventilation
- OHS Regulation Part 15 - Safety training
- OHS Code Part 27- Violence

Report Summary

A total of 195 inspections were completed consisting of 152 initial inspections and 43 follow-up inspections. Throughout the project, 352 compliance activities were completed. These activities consisted of:

- 304 Compliance Orders
- 4 Stop Work Orders
- 2 Stop Use Orders
- 6 Notice to Produce

| Top 10 Trends of Orders Written | | Total | |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------|------------|
| | | Frequency | Percentage |
| OHS Code- Part 3 | Hazard Assessment | 62 | 20 % |
| OHS Code- Part 4 | Chemical Hazards | 60 | 19% |
| OHS Code- Part 7 | Emergency Preparedness & Response | 52 | 16% |
| OHS Code-Part 18 | Personal Protective Equipment | 24 | 8% |
| OHS Code-Part 22 | Safeguards | 23 | 7% |
| OHS Code- Part 28 | Working Alone | 18 | 6% |
| OHS Code- Part 3 | Specifications and Certifications | 13 | 4% |
| OHS Code-Part 26 | Ventilation | 7 | 2% |
| OHS Code-Part 7 | Violence | 7 | 2% |
| OHS Code-Part 29 | Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System | 7 | 2% |
| Total | | 310 | 88% |

Full Report

It was observed that many of the facilities inspected in rural areas were being run by municipality staff, both employees and volunteers, who were not familiar with OHS legislation. Hazard assessments and emergency response procedures were often lacking or needing modification to meet OHS legislation requirements.

Many facilities with systems that met current code requirements for monitoring mechanical rooms, where refrigeration systems were present, had warning alarms set well above the current 8 hour Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL) of 25 ppm or the 15 minute ceiling OEL of 15 ppm.

Some facilities built prior to current building code requirements had no system for ensuring workers were aware of potential hazards when they entered areas where exposure to cooling system refrigerants could occur.

Both situations required orders to ensure current legislated requirements were met.

Asbestos issues, where observed, were often of a serious nature requiring stop work or stop use orders to ensure the safety of workers and the public using these facilities.

Documentation provided by ABSA with respect to current code requirements was made available to officers to provide to employers. Although not enforceable by OHS officers, this documentation provided reference material to facility operators.

In most instances, it was found that maintenance to cooling systems at the facilities was being contracted to qualified contracted employers.

Conclusion

The Arena Focused Inspection Program was successful in identifying and addressing key compliance issues with respect to arenas. The most significant issues related to hazard assessment, chemical hazards and emergency preparedness and response.

The program was successful in expanding the awareness and understanding of facility operators with respect to OHS legislation.

Further OHS activity in respect to municipalities is warranted, particularly in light of the recent changes to the *OHS Act*. As such, a pro-active focused inspection program, specific to arenas, is scheduled for the 2018/2019 fiscal year.