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# STANDATA variance 23-FCV-001

## Fire

### Portable fire extinguishers at unstaffed remote facilities

Date Issued: April 2024

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#### Purpose

To provide an alternative solution that ensures portable fire extinguishers are available at remote unstaffed energy transmission facilities for use by employees and/or contractors in the event of a fire.

#### Discussion

Oil and gas organizations operate in remote unstaffed facilities in Alberta as part of their energy transmission system. The National Building Code – 2023 Alberta Edition (NBC(AE)) and the National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition (NFC(AE)) require the installation and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers in these facilities for use during a fire event. Employees and contractors periodically travel to these normally unoccupied buildings to conduct operational checks and maintenance procedures. Municipal Affairs is aware of situations where the required portable fire extinguishers have been tampered with or removed, leaving no operable extinguisher available for use during a fire event. This situation may jeopardize the safety of the occupants and increase the risk of damage to the property.

The *Safety Codes Act* and the NFC(AE) provide the authority for the Provincial Fire Administrator to issue a written variance (also known as an alternative solution) applicable throughout the province, which provides an approximately equivalent or greater safety performance with respect to persons and property. The Provincial Fire Administrator may include terms and conditions in the variance.

#### Code References

##### NFC(AE) Division B Article 2.1.5.1.

###### 2.1.5.1. Selection and Installation

- 1) Except as provided in Sentence (2), portable extinguishers shall be installed in all buildings.

##### NFC(AE) Article 6.2.1.1.

###### 6.2.1.1. Inspection, Testing and Maintenance

- 1) Portable extinguishers shall be inspected, tested and maintained in conformance with NFPA 10, "Portable Fire Extinguishers."

**NFC(AE) Division C Article 2.2.4.2.****2.2.3.2. Fire Extinguishers**

- 1) All agencies servicing, recharging or carrying out the repair and overhaul of fire extinguishing equipment shall have their facilities and equipment certified
  - a) annually by an *approved* fire testing agency, and
  - b) by Transport Canada or its appointee for high-pressure hydrostatic testing equipment.

**NFC(AE) Article 2.2.4.2.****2.2.4.2. Portable Fire Extinguishers**

- 1) Only qualified persons shall install, test or perform maintenance on portable extinguishers. (See Note A-2.2.4.2.(1))
- 3) Monthly inspections required by NFPA 10, "Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers," shall be completed by
  - a) the owner,
  - b) an employee designated by the owner, or
  - c) a designated representative (e.g. service provider).
 (See Note A-2.2.4.2.(3).)

A-2.2.4.2.(1) The intent is that all staff engaged in the installation, testing and maintenance of fire extinguishers be qualified.

A-2.2.4.2.(3) If the owner is in any doubt about the condition of a fire extinguisher following an inspection, they should contact a certified fire extinguisher company to evaluate the operational integrity of the fire extinguisher.

**Application**

Compliance with this variance requires oil and gas remote operating locations where portable fire extinguishers are not provided to ensure all staff and contractors attending designated unstaffed remote facilities shall only do so in a vehicle provided with at least one 80-B:C rated (minimum) portable fire extinguisher.

This STANDATA does not apply to residential buildings, office buildings, warehousing, and other buildings not specifically used for oil or gas processing even though these buildings may be located on the same site.

This STANDATA applies to oil or gas processing buildings that are:

1. considered low human occupancy buildings,
2. located outside of urban areas, and
3. used to house oil and gas processing equipment, such as:
  - a. compressor stations,
  - b. heater packages,
  - c. pump packages,
  - d. separator packages,
  - e. treater packages,
  - f. dehydrator units,
  - g. field equipment,
  - h. L.P.G. handling facilities,
  - i. refrigeration process units,

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- j. oil batteries, and
- k. similar types of buildings.

Under this variance, all persons attending the facility will have immediate access to the vehicle mounted portable fire extinguisher(s). Compliance with this variance also requires maintaining good operating condition of portable fire extinguishers, as per the NFC(AE), and that the extinguishers are easily accessible from the vehicle.

### Variance

Remote unstaffed oil and gas facilities may adopt this variance as part of their operations, safety and emergency preparedness planning. Operators are to follow all NFC(AE) requirements for extinguishers. This variance may be applied to all remote unstaffed oil and gas facilities that were permitted and constructed during or prior to the publication of the NBC(AE).

This variance expires six months after the effective date of the edition of the Fire Code that supersedes the NFC(AE).

This VARIANCE is applicable throughout the Province of Alberta.

Unless stated otherwise, all Code references in this STANDATA are to Division B of the National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition.

Issued by the Provincial Fire Administrator

*[Original Signed]*  
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