Frequently Asked Questions - What Owners, Installers and Real Estate Professionals Need To Know

Owner Information

1. Why does my boiler require inspection and certification?

Every boiler--even the heating unit for a small apartment building--poses a potential hazard to public safety because of the stored energy it contains. If the boiler ruptures, the instantaneous release of that stored energy could cause a catastrophic explosion. History teaches that the best way to safeguard against the hazard of boiler explosion is to ensure that the people who design, construct, install, repair and use boilers and pressure equipment do so according to stringent safety codes and standards.

Manitoba, like every other Canadian province and most jurisdictions in the United States, has legislation to address the hazards related to the use of boilers and other pressure equipment. The Manitoba Steam and Pressure Plants Act requires owners to have every commercial-residential and industrial boiler, most pressure vessels, and most refrigeration plants inspected and certified by the Manitoba Mechanical and Engineering Branch.

Through its adopted codes and standards, the Manitoba Steam and Pressure Plants legislation identifies the cornerstone of boiler and pressure equipment safety:

- *The safe use of boiler and pressure equipment technology depends upon the responsible action of the every participant involved in boiler and pressure equipment related-activities.*

As an owner, you are a key link in the chain. Your partners are:

Equipment/piping designers and manufacturers	Responsibilities
Installers	Responsibilities
Repair organizations	Responsibilities
Other equipment owners	Responsibilities
Power Engineers	Responsibilities
Mechanical and Engineering Branch inspectors and administrators	Responsibilities

The ability of the chain to protect against hazard relies on how well each link performs its responsibilities.

Explore the links in the table to examine the responsibilities of each of the participants in boiler and pressure vessel activities.

2. What makes boiler and pressure equipment potentially hazardous?

Potential hazard is inherent to boilers and pressure equipment/pressure piping because of their main purpose: to contain steam, water, or other gases and liquids under pressure.

When contained under pressure, these substances--even good old familiar water--gains the capacity to store immense amounts of energy. An important job of a boiler and its piping system is to contain the energy stored in the steam or hot water, and to provide a controlled way for the energy to be distributed to where it is needed: to radiators for space heating in a small apartment block; to large air handling units for heating in a massive modern shopping mall, or to steam "cookers" in a pulp mill, for instance.

If the boiler or pressure piping were to crack or fail suddenly, it can release the stored energy not in a controlled manner, but explosively and with potentially deadly force.

Over the last two centuries, the use of energy contained within boilers and pressure systems has been the engine of industry, and the heating/cooling solution for our increasingly large residential, commercial and institutional complexes. The early development of industry is scarred by devastating boiler and pressure vessel explosions because the demand for power outstripped understanding of how to safely contain it within pressure systems.

By the early 1900's, loss of lives and damage to property were becoming an all-too-familiar outcome of the use of steam and pressure power. Legislators began to realize that the safe use of pressure technology would be possible only when all players recognized and adhered to minimum standards for the design, construction, installation, operation and repair of this equipment.

Our own Steam and Pressure Plants Act grew out of this requirement for common rules. Today, most jurisdictions have implemented pressure equipment safety legislation that adopts widely-recognized codes and standards of safety, and requires at least some form of government inspection or regulation to ensure that each player is meeting his or her responsibilities to safety.

3. As the owner of the equipment, what should I do if the certificate expires, but no one from the government contacts me about an inspection appointment?

Although Mechanical and Engineering Branch inspectors and administrative staff work hard to try to make the inspection and renewal process as convenient as possible, when it comes to renewing your boiler, pressure vessel or refrigeration plant certificate, "No News" is definitely not good news.

If you do not hear from the Mechanical and Engineering Branch, you MUST NOT CONCLUDE that you are free to operate your equipment without proper certification. As the equipment owner, you bear full responsibility for ensuring that your equipment is inspected annually and properly certified.

What to do:

1. If you know the name and telephone number boiler inspector you usually deal with, call him or her to arrange an inspection appointment.
2. If you do not know who your inspector is, call the Mechanical and Engineering switchboard in Winnipeg (204) 945-3373 or consult 5. Who Inspects My Boiler.
   If you telephone the Branch to make a certificate renewal inspection appointment but are unable to reach your inspector or for some other reason do not establish an appointment, you may NOT assume that you have "done enough". The ONLY way to operate legally is to follow the procedure outlined in Section 13 (2) of the Act. Note that you must be able to attest that to the best of your knowledge, the plant is in good and safe operating condition.

The law concerning operating your boiler with proper certification is as follows:

> ***Steam and Pressure Plants Act:***
> ***Section 13 (1)***
> ***Boiler or pressure vessel not to be used without certificate***
> ***Subject to subsection (2), no owner shall use or permit to be used, and no person shall operate, a plant unless an inspection certificate in respect thereof has been issued by the minister; and the plant shall not be used or operated after the inspection certificate has expired.***
>
> ***Section 13 (2)***
> ***Where re-inspection not made***
> ***If, before the inspection certificate expires, an inspector has not made a further inspection of the plant the owner may send to the minister by prepaid registered mail a notice stating***
> ***(a) the date on which the inspection certificate expires;***
> ***(b) that the plant has not been inspected since the inspection in respect of which the inspection certificate was issued; and***
> ***(c) that, to the best of his knowledge, the plant is in good and safe operating condition;***
> ***and thereupon the owner may continue to operate and use the plant.***

4. How much will this cost?

Fee for inspection depends on the size and type of your boiler, as follows. The fee you pay is for the work of the inspection. If an inspector must make more than one inspection--if for instance, he or she must re-inspect on work orders--you can expect to be charged the re-inspection fee. There is no additional fee for issuing the certificate after the boiler is confirmed to be in satisfactory condition.

Fees for Boilers PV's and Refrigeration Units for Inspections Effective August 2003 - pdf

5. Who inspects my boiler?

Boiler and Pressure Equipment Inspectors generally work in one geographical area. Although inspectors are rotated periodically, you can generally assume that the inspector you saw last year will be the one you see again this year. To speak with or correspond with your inspector, please consult the contact information below. If you are unsure who your inspector is, please call the Mechanical and Engineering switchboard for help: (204) 945-3373.

District #	Area	Name	Cell Phone	E-mail
1	Inkster, Point Douglas North, Seven Oaks	Bruce Fierheller	794-6455	Bruce.Fierheller@gov.mb.ca
2 and 3	Brandon, Dauphin, Swan River, The Pas, Flin Flon and Area	Dwane Babee	204-281-1396	Dwayne.Babee@gov.mb.ca
2 and 3	Brandon, Dauphin, Swan River, The Pas, Flin Flon and Area	Lorne Mosionier	204-781-1927	Lorne.Mosionier@gov.mb.ca
4	Assiniboine South, River Heights West, Fort Garry	Randy Schreyer	791-0260	Randy.Schreyer@gov.mb.ca
5	St. Bonniface, River East, Transcona	Derrick Slater	799-3780	Derrick.Slater@gov.mb.ca
6	Downtown East, Point Douglas South	Vacant	Office 945-3373	
7	Downtown West	Paul Gatin	770-9351	Paul.Gatin@gov.mb.ca
8	St. James - Assiniboia	Gordon Stadnyk	781-7695	Gordon.Stadnyk@gov.mb.ca
10	St. Vital, St. Boniface East, River Heights East	Darrell Friesen		
11	Eastern Manitoba, North of Lake WPG/MB and North of Flin Flon	Barry Prokopetz	803-0525	Barry.Prokopetz@gov.mb.ca
12	Portage La Prairie and Area	Jerry Painter	204-871-0851	Jerry.Painter@gov.mb.ca
	Supervisor of Inspectors	Peter Skrupski	793-3767	Peter.Skrupski@gov.mb.ca

6. What if I disagree with an order written by the Inspector?

You have the right to appeal any order. Write a letter that includes:

- Your name and mailing address
- The address of the location of the equipment, and the building name, if possible
- Details to identify the equipment in question (i.e. boiler manufacturer, serial number, Manitoba Identification number if possible)
- Description of the order written by the inspector
- A brief summary of why you disagree with the order.

You may submit your letter to the Minister, care of:

Director, Mechanical and Engineering
500 - 401 York Avenue
Wpg MB R3C 0P8
(204) 945-3374

Installer Information

1. What are my responsibilities when commissioning a newly-installed boiler?

The legislation states:

Steam and Pressure Plants Act:
Duty of installer
11(2) Every installer, after installing a boiler or pressure vessel and before it is operated or used, shall cause it to be inspected by an inspector; and he shall produce to, and leave with, the owner thereof an inspection certificate issued by the minister respecting the boiler or pressure vessel after the installation thereof

This means that you must make arrangements to have a Mechanical and Engineering Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspector attend the commissioning or "Start-up" Inspection. You require the express consent from a specific inspector or the Chief of Inspection Services to put newly installed equipment into operation without the attendance of a boiler inspector.

If the inspector issues orders for correction of deficiencies, the installer is responsible for:

- ensuring the deficiencies are corrected
- ensuring that the inspector is contacted for re-inspection
- ensuring that the installation is ultimately found to be satisfactory.

Following a satisfactory inspection, Mechanical and Engineering will issue the first certificate to the installer on behalf of the owner. It is your responsibility as the installer to:

- pay for the certificate
- leave the certificate with the owner, and
- explain the requirements for annual certification renewal and re-inspection.

2. How do I notify Mechanical and Engineering that I will require a Start-up Inspection?

Your responsibility for communication with Mechanical and Engineering regarding newly installed equipment begins at the outset of the job.

You must show that you are qualified to install the equipment: a boiler is a fuel-burning appliance in pressure system. This means that you must have:

- The appropriate gas/oil fitter's licence to apply for a permit to allow you to install the fuel-burning appliance under the CGA B-149 Code; AND
- A Manitoba Certificate of Authorization to construct/install the pressure piping and equipment under the CSA Boiler, and Mechanical Refrigeration codes. In lieu of a Manitoba Certificate of Authority, you may hold comparable Quality Control Certification issued by another approval agency recognized by Mechanical and Engineering as having authority in the field of pressure equipment quality control.

Obviously you need a gas/oil permit only if a fuel-burning appliance is part of the installation. If you are installing only pressure piping and pressure vessels, you need only a Certificate of Authorization to install pressure systems.

If you are installing a new or replacement boiler, you must:

1. Apply for a gas/oil permit before beginning work.

   Remember that to qualify for a permit to install a commercial/industrial/multiple occupancy residential boiler, you must have both a gas/oil fitter's licence and a Manitoba Certificate of Authorization to install pressure systems.

2. Once you have a gas/oil permit number but PRIOR TO BEGINNING work: mail, drop off or fax your completed 'Traveler' form to any Mechanical and Engineering Branch office. Record your gas/oil permit number on the traveler form.

   - It is your responsibility to:

     - ensure that the inspector in your district has received your traveler.
     - ensure that you know what hold points the inspector has requested
     - ensure that you arrange inspection appointments and receive sign-off from the inspector at each hold point.

3. Once you have confirmed the hold points with your inspector, you can schedule suitable appointments--including an appointment for start-up--with her/him.
4. When all hold point inspections are completed, including start-up, and there are no outstanding orders to be addressed, you will be issued the first operating certificate.

- You are responsible to the Mechanical and Engineering Branch for all inspection fees. You are also responsible for ensuring that the owner receives the operating certificate.

Note:
A Certificate of Authorization is required to install all boilers, pressure vessels and pressure piping systems regardless of size. If the system exceeds 17 cubic feet in volume, determined by using Chart to Determine if Pressure Piping Installation Exceeds 17 cubic feet, you must also obtain a Canadian Registration Number for the system. You must submit installation design drawings and specifications for approval, along with your traveler, before beginning work. For information about registering piping designs, please consult the Design Registration Program of Pressure Equipment Programs, accessible on the Steam and Pressure Plant Programs page.

3. Who inspects my installation?

For boilers regulated under the Steam and Pressure Plants legislation (all boilers 3 boiler horsepower and greater, installed in any commercial application and in all a residential applications where there are 3 suites or more), a Boiler Inspector from the Mechanical and Engineering Department must attend a start-up. The utility or fuel supplier also requires an inspector to attend start-ups. You must coordinate this start-up appointment so that the Mechanical and Engineering Boiler Inspector, the utility inspector, and the gas fitter who drew the permit are all on-site for the start-up. To contact your inspector, please consult 5. Who Inspects My Boiler as part of the Owner Information section.

4. What are the fees for Start-up Inspections and certificates?

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Real Estate Professional Information – Questions that Potential Buyers and Sellers of Apartment Blocks or Commercial / Industrial Property, Real Estate Agents and Real Estate Lawyers Typically Ask

1. What does the Mechanical and Engineering Branch have to do with my real estate transaction?

If the property you are buying or selling includes a boiler or pressure vessel that is regulated under the Manitoba Steam and Pressure Plants Act, you have a legal obligation to provide notice of the change of ownership.

If you are selling property that includes a regulated boiler or pressure vessel, you must:

1. Ensure that the equipment has a valid certificate, AND
2. Notify Mechanical and Engineering of the sale, AND
3. Provide Mechanical and Engineering contact information for the new owner

If you are purchasing property that includes a boiler or pressure vessel that is regulated under the Manitoba Steam and Pressure Plants Act, you must:

1. Ensure that all regulated equipment has valid certification BEFORE taking possession of them
2. Notify Mechanical and Engineering of the sale, AND
3. Provide Mechanical and Engineering your contact information and equipment identification details

You may request a search for outstanding work orders on any property by submitting a letter stating the address in question. There is a charge for the search: $75 for searches that return no work orders; $100 dollars for searches that return outstanding work orders.

If you are considering purchasing property, you are well advised to verify the certification status of all regulated equipment included with the property.