

FIRE PROTECTION CASE SUMMARIES 2015

CASE #14-12

STATEMENT OF COMPLAINT:

That the Respondent, a Registered Fire Protection Technician (RFPT) certified in Fire Alarm Systems (AL), Unit Emergency Lighting (EM), Fire Extinguishers (EX) and Water-Based Fire Protection Systems (WA), did not perform required annual testing of the antifreeze specific gravity of a sprinkler system as required by NFPA 25 2008 and failed to complete the Fire Alarm Inspection Report as required by CAN/ULC S536-04. Further, that the Respondent had knowledge of the antifreeze not being tested as required but failed to notify the AHJ of the deficiency, and did not report this on the service tag and annual report.

INVESTIGATION:

The above allegations, if found to be true, would be contrary to Principle 1 of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines, and the Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspections Guideline.

The PRB investigation determined that the Respondent admitted to failing to fully complete the forms as required, claiming to be unaware that the checklist items all required to be marked. In addition, the Respondent indicated that the antifreeze was not tested because the building owner did not want to pay for the test. Despite having the knowledge that this could lead to a failure of the system to perform as designed, in freezing weather, the Respondent acquiesced to the building owner's decision.

PRACTICE REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

The PRB concluded that a violation of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines, Principle 1, and the Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspection Guideline had occurred. The PRB recommended that the Respondent be levied a fine of \$250.00, as a deterrent to future violations.

OUTCOME:

The Respondent paid the fine. No further action was necessary and the file was closed.

CASE #14-15

STATEMENT OF COMPLAINT:

That the Respondent, a Registered Fire Protection Technician (RFPT) certified in Fire Alarm Systems (AL), Unit Emergency Lighting (EM), Fire Extinguishers (EX) and Water-Based Fire Protection Systems (WA), conducted an inspection of a fire alarm system, but failed to report deficiencies in the installation and operation of the system in the inspection report.

INVESTIGATION:

The above allegation, if found to be true, would be contrary to Principles 1 and 9 of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines, and the Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspections Guideline

The PRB investigation determined that the substance of the complaint related to the original installation of the fire alarm system, previous upgrades and verifications performed by an individual other than the Respondent. This individual was a previously registered RFPT who had since been struck from the Register due to non-payment of dues, and hence, outside of ASTTBC's mandate for investigations. Regardless of this fact, the Investigator contacted the AHJ and confirmed that they were aware of the issues with the system at the location specified in the complaint. The AHJ advised that they had investigated the matter and were satisfied that despite the concerns raised, the Fire Alarm was fully functional pending any repairs that were required to bring it into full compliance.

The investigation also found that the annunciator panel on the system included a labelled zone for a commercial kitchen that was no longer in place. The kitchen zone was inactive and not connected. As the kitchen zone was disconnected, and would not falsely annunciate an alarm in that zone, there was no compromise to public safety. However, as part of best practices, the Respondent should have relabeled

this zone as 'spare', or alerted the owner to this fact. In addition, the Respondent should have punched 'Additional work required' and 'See log and report' on the inspection tag.

PRACTICE REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

The PRB determined that the Respondent had violated the ASTTBC Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines Principles 1, and the Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspection Guideline. However, as confirmed by the AHJ, the alarm system was functional and there was no consequence to the mislabeled spare zone. Therefore, the PRB recommended that a letter of reprimand be sent to the Respondent, as a reminder of the obligation to abide by the ASTTBC Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines.

OUTCOME:

No further action was required and the file was closed.

CASE #14-18

STATEMENT OF COMPLAINT:

That the Respondent, a Registered Fire Protection Technician (RFPT) certified in Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning (CO) made errors in filling out the tag and inspection report after completing kitchen exhaust cleaning at a job site. Further, the complaint alleged that the Respondent had used a photocopy of a stamped tag.

INVESTIGATION:

The above allegations, if found to be true, would be contrary to the Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspections Guideline and ASTTBC's Stamp Practice Guidelines.

The PRB investigation determined that the Respondent's stamp was lost when the Respondent's van was stolen, and recovered 6 months later. In the interim, the Respondent had found a pre-stamped and signed tag, which was then taken to a printer to get copies made. The Respondent then used the pre-printed tags during the 6 months when the stamp was missing. The PRB noted that when the stamp was stolen, the Respondent inquired with ASTTBC regarding the stamp replacement process, and was advised accordingly. The Respondent provided evidence that an affidavit regarding the stolen stamp had been sworn, however, ASTTBC had no record of having received that affidavit, or an application for a new stamp.

In addition to the above, the investigation also noted several clerical errors on the Respondent's part when filling out the tag and inspection report. The Respondent made an incorrect notation on the tag regarding the next test date, and also omitted to note the test date on the tag as well as on the inspection report.

PRACTICE REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

The PRB concluded that the Respondent's actions were contrary to the Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspections Guideline, and ASTTBC's Stamp Practice Guideline. In addition, the PRB also determined that the Respondent had violated the Stamp Practice Guideline by failing to follow the correct reporting and replacement procedure for lost or stolen stamps. Therefore, the PRB recommended that the Respondent be levied a fine of \$250.00 as a deterrent to future violations.

OUTCOME:

The Respondent paid the fine as required. No further action was required and the file was closed.

CASE #14-20

STATEMENT OF COMPLAINT:

That the Respondent, a Registered Fire Protection Technician (RFPT) certified in Fire Alarm Systems (AL), Unit Emergency Lighting (EM) and Fire Extinguishers (EX), punched "Tested/Inspected" on the Fire Alarm Service Tag indicating the system was in compliance, when in fact there were deficiencies noted in the inspection report.

INVESTIGATION:

The above allegations, if found to be true, would be contrary to Principle 1 of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines, as well as the “Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspection Guideline”.

The PRB investigation determined that existing ASTTBC policy for Fire Protection Technicians stated the ‘*Tested/Inspected*’ column should only be checked off or punched when the system that has been tested does not require repair or additional work. In this case, since the report indicated deficiencies and additional work required, the ‘*Additional work required*’ and ‘*see Log and Report*’ columns should have been punched or checked and not the ‘*Tested/Inspected*’ column.

The investigation also determined that misinterpretation and misuse of tags was a recurring issue among RFPTs. There were two issues with the wording of the policy and guidelines on tags in effect at the time of the complaint. First, it would be logical to punch-out or mark the box ‘*Inspected/Tested*’ for every extinguisher or apparatus that a RFPT inspected and tested. Second, if the extinguisher or apparatus did not comply with the minimum standards then ‘*Additional Work Required*’ could also be punched-out or marked. The third column, ‘*See Log and Report*’ would be redundant because in every situation where ‘*Additional Work Required*’ was indicated there was a need to ‘*See Log and Report*’.

PRACTICE REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

The PRB concluded that the Respondent’s actions were contrary to Principle 1 of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines, as well as the “Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspection Guideline”. The PRB recommended that the Respondent be levied a fine of \$250, as a deterrent to future violations. The PRB further recommended that the Fire Protection Certification Board (FPCB) review the policy and guidelines on tags and reports and recommend improvements to reduce ambiguity and redundancy in the instructions and use of tags.

OUTCOME:

The Respondent paid the fine. In addition, the FPCB was advised regarding the PRB recommendation to review the policy and guidelines on tags and reports and recommend improvements.

No further action was required and the file was closed.

CASE #15-02

STATEMENT OF COMPLAINT:

That the Respondent, a Registered Fire Protection Technician (RFPT) certified in Fire Alarm Systems (AL), Unit Emergency Lighting (EM) and Fire Extinguishers (EX) and Water-Based Fire Protection Systems (WA), performed an inadequate annual inspection of a fire alarm system and sprinkler system, and further, failed to correctly report the deficiencies found during the testing.

INVESTIGATION:

The above allegations, if found to be true, would be contrary to Principle 1 of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics & Practice Guidelines, and the Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspections Guideline.

The PRB investigation, which included a review of the Respondent’s documentation and comments on the complaint, as well as a discussion with the Respondent, confirmed that the allegations were justified. Another finding from the investigation was that RFPTs did not have full control over the policies and practices of their employers. This affected the quality and compliance of their work, and was a contributing factor in many complaints received by ASTTBC.

The PRB noted that this complaint may have been a result of company procedures that were non-compliant with ASTTBC’s Fire Protection Certification policy on the use of stamps, tags and reports. However, the PRB concluded that the Respondent needed to understand that it was solely a RFPT’s responsibility, regardless of company policy and procedure, to ensure that Practice Guidelines were

followed. Deflecting the issue to the employer did not relieve the Respondent of the responsibility as an RFPT to follow ASTTBC's Code of Ethics and applicable Practice Guidelines.

PRACTICE REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

The PRB concluded that, regardless of good intentions, the Respondent did violate Principle 1 of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics, the Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of FP equipment Guideline, as well as the Tags and Reports for Fire Tests and Inspections Guideline. The PRB recommended that the Respondent submit to the Registrar a satisfactory explanation of an understanding of Principles 1, 2, 3, and 8 of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics. The Respondent was also levied a fine of \$250.00 as a deterrent to future violations of the Code of Ethics and Practice Guidelines. Further, the PRB recommended that the Fire Protection Certification Board prepare a revised Certification Policy that included substantially revised Standards for the Use of Stamps, Tags and Reports.

OUTCOME:

The Respondent submitted the required statement of understanding to the Registrar, which was found to be acceptable, and also paid the fine. The Fire Protection Certification Board was advised regarding the PRB recommendation for a revised Certification Policy.

No further action was required and the file was closed.