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PREVENTING FIRES... SAVING LIVES!

...official newsletter for Fire Protection Technicians in British Columbia

February, 2004

Fire Protection Certification Program Goal...

To ensure public health and safety by requiring fire protection technicians to be professionally qualified to **inspect, test** and **maintain** fire protection systems.

PRACTICE REVIEW BOARD HEARINGS

Public Safety...

The fire protection certification program was instituted in 1996. Since that time there have been numerous complaints against Technicians doing inferior fire protection and testing and not abiding by the code of ethics. The work that is conducted by Fire Protection Technicians involves the life safety of the public. You are charged with doing this work in an ethical, comprehensive and professional manner in accordance with the minimum standards of the fire code. Anything less is unacceptable. **ASTTBC is taking these complaints very seriously and will be disciplining those technicians that put the safety of the public in jeopardy.**

On October 2, 2003, the PRB held six hearings. This was the result of complaints against technicians for failing to conduct work in an ethical and professional manner. The technician was allowed to address the PRB and provided his version of the complaint. The Board asked pertinent questions in regard to the complaint. Both ASTTBC and the Technician were able to call witnesses to substantiate their case. As a result of the hearings the following disciplinary actions were taken.

Burt Wong

CHARGES...

The charge against Burt Wong was that he demonstrated incompetence, negligence and/or

unprofessional conduct in the use of an expired stamp for work performed at a restaurant, contrary to articles 1, 2, 4, and 7 of the Code of Ethics.

FINDINGS...

Mr. Wong is the owner of Burtecton Systems Inc. and is considered to have been a trainee. He was engaged to work on the emergency lighting at a local restaurant.

The Disciplinary Committee found that Mr. Wong used an expired stamp for the work performed at the restaurant. Further, it found that neither Mr. Wong nor his employee, were certified to perform the work undertaken.

JUDGMENT...

The Disciplinary Committee found Mr. Wong to be guilty of the charges. Effective October 2, 2003, he will be ineligible for registration as an RFPT for a period of one year. In addition to the certification requirements at that time of his future application, Mr. Wong must show proof of completion of the CTHRB 'Professionalism in Practice' course prior to certification.

Steve Payne

CHARGES...

The charge against Steve Payne is that he demonstrated incompetence, negligence and/or unprofessional conduct in the use of an expired stamp for work performed, contrary to articles 1, 2, 4, and 7 of the Code of Ethics.

FINDINGS...

Mr. Payne is an employee of Burtecton Systems Inc. He performed inspection and testing services at a local restaurant, though not certified to perform

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Use of Fire Protection Technician Stamp...

It has been alleged that there are ASTTBC Registered Fire Protection Technicians who are both pre-stamping tags and indiscriminately allowing other persons to use those tags on fire protection equipment. Another alleged example is where only one individual in a company is an 'RFPT' and that Technician allows other employees to use their stamp. These matters are currently under investigation by the ASTTBC Practice Review Board.

This type of practice is completely unacceptable and falls under the jurisdiction of the ASTTBC Practice Review Board. Such misuse of a stamp would be grounds for cancellation of the Technician's certification and other penalties.

Use of Stamp...

- Use of the stamp is dictated by the regulations of the Applied Science Technologist and Technicians Act.
- The stamp can be used only by a Registered Fire Protection Technician in good standing and to whom the stamp was issued.
- The right to use the stamp is a privilege granted a Technician by ASTTBC under the ASTT Act.
- The privilege can be removed if not used in an ethical or professional manner.

Application of Stamp...

- The professional stamp should be applied in a clear and legible manner.

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such tasks. Mr. Payne then applied an expired stamp to the tags evidencing their work.

JUDGMENT...

The Disciplinary Committee found that Mr. Steve Payne exercised poor judgment by participating in the inspection and testing that no one on site was certified to do. Accordingly, he was guilty of the charges. Effective immediately Mr. Payne is required to complete the CTHRB 'Professionalism in Practice' course and submit proof of completion to the ASTTBC Registrar.

Harjit Sangha

CHARGES...

The charge against Harjit Sangha was that he demonstrated incompetence, negligence and/or unprofessional conduct in allowing fire extinguishers to be removed from a residential condominium complex, contrary to articles 1, 2, 4 and 7 of the Code of Ethics.

FINDINGS...

Mr. Sangha owns a fire protection company, Active Fire and Safety Services. As a certified RFPT, he supervises trainees in the practice. While under Mr. Sangha's supervision, a Trainee removed fire extinguishers from the residential condominium complex for service, leaving the complex unprotected overnight. The Disciplinary Committee found that the normal practice is for temporary extinguishers to be provided where the client's extinguishers must be removed for servicing.

JUDGMENT...

The Disciplinary Committee found Mr. Sangha guilty of the charges. Effective October 2, 2003, he is suspended from eligibility as a 'Trainer' for a period of one year. After this period, and prior to reinstatement as a 'Trainer', Mr. Sangha must complete a paper for the Practice Review Board based on the guidelines issued by the Fire Protection Certification Board.

Sukh Singh

CHARGES...

The charge against Sukh Singh is that he demonstrated incompetence, negligence and/or unprofessional conduct in allowing fire

extinguishers to be removed from a residential condominium complex, contrary to articles 1, 2, 4 and 7 of the Code of Ethics.

FINDINGS...

Mr. Sukh Singh, an employee of Active Fire and Safety Services, supervises trainees. While under Mr. Singh's supervision, a Trainee removed fire extinguishers from the residential condominium complex for service, leaving the complex unprotected overnight. The Disciplinary Committee found that the normal practice is for temporary extinguishers to be provided where the client's extinguishers must be removed for servicing.

Mr. Singh was made aware of the missing fire extinguishers but failed to ensure that temporary fire extinguishers were immediately installed at the condominium.

JUDGMENT...

Mr. Singh was found guilty of the charges. Mr. Singh is required to study training materials to be provided by ASTTBC and to confirm to the Practice Review Board, in writing, his understanding of them of the principles contained therein.

Al Singh

CHARGES...

The charge against Al Singh is that he demonstrated incompetence, negligence and/or unprofessional conduct in connecting and verifying the kitchen special fire protection system to the building fire alarm system at a restaurant contrary to articles 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the Code of Ethics.

FINDINGS...

A restaurant engaged a fire protection company ('Company A') to install and verify a connection from the kitchen special fire suppression system to the fire alarm system in the complex. Al Singh is the owner of Bayside Fire & Safety Services and was hired by Company A to assist in the installation and verification. The system was found to be faulty two days later.

The Disciplinary Committee determined that Mr. Singh did not have the required certification to work on the systems. Consequently, he should not have undertaken the task.

JUDGMENT...

Mr. Singh was found guilty of working on a system without certification, in violation of the ASTTBC Code of Ethics. Effective October 2, 2003, Mr. Singh must provide proof of completion of the CTHRB course 'Professionalism in Practice' and 'retake' and successfully complete the BCIT course in Special Suppression Systems prior to reinstatement or re-certification in Special Suppression Systems.

Andy Sangha

CHARGES...

The charge against Andy Sangha was that he demonstrated incompetence, negligence and/or unprofessional conduct in verifying a kitchen special fire protection system to the building fire alarm system at a restaurant, contrary to articles 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Code of Ethics.

FINDINGS...

A restaurant engaged Mr. Sangha's company, Ace Fire Prevention Ltd., to install and verify a connection from the kitchen special fire suppression system to the fire alarm system in the complex. Mr. Sangha hired an uncertified person to assist in the installation and verification of the connection to the fire alarm system. The system was found to be faulty two days later.

The Disciplinary Committee determined that Mr. Sangha in his letter of verification, had amended it, at the direction of the owner, to include incorrect information. Mr. Sangha also, at the direction of others, included information that was not relevant to the verification.

JUDGMENT...

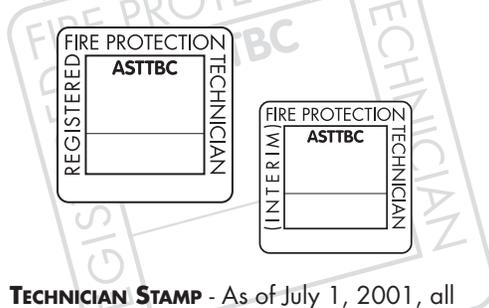
The Disciplinary Committee found Mr. Sangha guilty of the charge. Effective January 12, 2004, he is suspended for a period of one hundred days from practicing as a Registered Fire Protection Technician (RFPT) in Fire Alarms. Prior to reinstatement or re-certification as a Fire Alarm Technician he must submit proof of completion to the ASTTBC Registrar that he has completed the CTHRB course 'Professionalism in Practice' as well as submit a 2000 word report describing how in the future he will conduct himself in similar circumstances. ■

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE...

1. Fire Protection Certification Board review the licensing of Trainers and review the training program which does not emphasize the wholly unacceptable practice of RFPT's pre-stamping tags and the suspected loaning of stamps.
2. That the Fire Protection Certification Board review the completed Log books of all Trainees at the time they apply for certification.

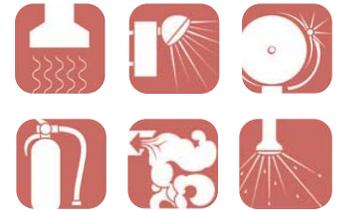
FULL CERTIFICATION – here as of July 1, 2001, and is in place in the lower mainland. That brought several important changes.

PROFESSIONAL TITLE – Fire Protection Technicians that have met the minimum academic requirements and work history will be granted the title 'Registered Fire Protection Technician', and will be allowed to use the designation 'RFPT' after their names. The title and designation are federally protected trademarks reserved for use by technicians who are currently registered with ASTTBC. Technicians who are **NOT** currently registered may **NOT** use the title or designation.



TECHNICIAN STAMP - As of July 1, 2001, all Registered Fire Protection Technicians in the lower mainland area and all 'Interim' certified technicians in other areas of BC will be required to use the Fire Protection stamp. The stamp will identify the disciplines for which the technician has full/interim certification. The disciplines are noted at the bottom of the stamp, and will include one or more of the following, depending on disciplines in which the Technician is registered...

AL	=	Fire Alarm Systems
EX	=	Fire Extinguishers
EM	=	Unit Emergency Lighting
GS	=	Generator Systems
WA	=	Water-Based Fire Protection Systems



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RFPT Stamp...

- The stamp should be used on any preliminary, draft or final documents, which have been prepared by the Technician or under the immediate supervision of the Technician.
- The normal signature of the Technician should be clearly shown in the space provided.
- The use of initials without surname is not recommended.
- The date the stamp is used, when required, should be noted.

A Fire Protection Technician may only apply or use the stamp in those disciplines in which certification has been granted by ASTTBC.

Beware... Be Alert!!! Duplicate Technicians Stamps.

We have discovered that there is a stamp being used on inspection reports that is a fake. The stamp has no name or FP number and a scribble where the technician is required to sign. If you come across this type of stamp please notify the AHJ and ASTTBC immediately.

Any unauthorized reproduction or production of an ASTTBC 'RFPT' stamp is a matter for both civil and criminal proceedings, as well as action by the Practice Review Board.

Technicians are encouraged to bring forward written complaints of breaches of these requirements and will be supported by ASTTBC in this matter; where necessary confidentiality will be maintained.

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GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS... cont'd

- SM** = Smoke Control Systems
- CO** = Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning; and
- SP** = Special Fire Suppression Systems

SEVEN MUNICIPALITIES have enacted a bylaw requiring ASTTBC registration to conduct fire protection inspection and testing services... Even though many municipalities have not as yet introduced a bylaw to require ASTTBC registration, ASTTBC - Fire Protection technicians are found in many areas of the province as the technicians and/or their employers believe professional certification adds credibility to their services. Simply stated, they have a marketing edge.

ASTTBC encourages you to promote your professional certification in those areas that are not covered by a bylaw.

Municipalities that have enacted a municipal bylaw and joined the Fire Protection Certification Program...

- Vancouver
- Squamish
- District of North Vancouver
- City of North Vancouver
- Chilliwack
- Richmond
- Sechelt

Number of Technicians that have been certified in a discipline... (Full/Interim) (as of February, 2004)

Fire Alarm Systems	230
Fire Extinguishers	307
Unit Emergency Lighting	227
Generator Systems	27
Smoke Control Systems	33
Water-Based Fire Protection Systems	183
Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning	32
Special Fire Suppression Systems	90

USING YOUR STAMP IN MUNICIPALITIES WITHOUT A BYLAW... Getting registered with ASTTBC is an important step in your recognition as a professional. You are obliged to use your stamp in **ALL** municipalities regardless of whether or not they have a bylaw. This policy is required

for several reasons: (a) it demonstrates your registration with ASTTBC; (b) it assures the client and public that a professionally-registered technician has done the work; (c) it gives you a marketing edge over those who are not registered; and, (d) it helps to promote ASTTBC registration within municipalities that do not as yet have a bylaw in place.

STANDARDIZED INSPECTION, TEST AND MAINTENANCE FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT NO COST. They are on our web site for downloading. Please note that the smoke control forms are not on the web site. Contact ASTTBC for those forms.

Advantages for the Forms...

- Standardize inspection procedures
- Comprehensive reporting
- Raise the standard of Inspection and Testing
- Create a level playing field for service companies
- Consistent and accurate inspection, testing and maintenance
- Meets the minimum requirements as required by the Fire Code
- Provides the fire department with comprehensive information on the building fire protection systems

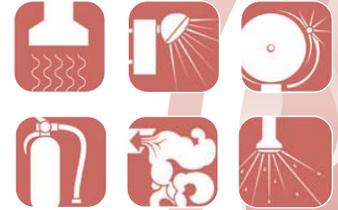
UNACCEPTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHER TAGGING PROCEDURE...

It has been brought to our attention through a complaint that a Technician tagged a fire extinguisher in the following manner.

The inspection took place, for example, on October 6, 2003, and the next inspection date on the tag was shown as October 31, 2004. This time frame is more than one year apart as required by NFPA 10. This is unacceptable and in violation of the Fire Code.

N.F.P.A. 10 Section 4-4.1

Fire extinguishers shall be subject to maintenance at intervals of not more than one year apart, at the time of the hydrostatic test, or when specifically indicated by an inspection.



Red Tags - Protocol for use...

Red tags can be used by the Technician to indicate that the Fire Protection System was inspected, tested or maintained but does not provide the level of protection for which it was originally designed and installed.

The Fire Protection System that is red tagged has deficiencies on the system that may cause it during activation not to operate in the manner to which it was intended. A red tag would be used to advise and alert owners or their Authorized Agent and Fire Department Inspectors that although the system has been inspected, tested or maintained, there are deficiencies that remain on the system. The tag shall be defaced using a large (preferably red) 'X' across the front and on the back.

The Technician shall notify the owner or his authorized agent immediately of any deficiencies on the fire protection system(s).

A Deficiency report shall/may be forwarded to the Fire Department.

The tag shall be colored Red on the top half of the tag and the tag color is preferably white with contrasting colors. The Board will accept other colors as long as the 'technician stamp' is clearly identified.

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Certification for Verification of Fire Alarms Systems...

ASTTBC has been asked if we could certify Technicians for the Verification of fire alarm systems. The Fire Protection Certification Board has appointed a task force to investigate the feasibility of certifying technicians in this field. If you have any comments or suggestions please email or fax those comments to Larry Barker.

New Web Page Address...

Please note that we have a new web site address. You can now find a list of Registered Fire Protection Technicians and their certifications on the site.

<http://fireprotection.asttbc.org>

Professional Practice – A Workplace Ethics Self Study Program

ASTTBC Council approved effective January 1, 2004, that all new applicants, reclassification, reinstatement applicants and any technicians that add disciplines will be required to complete a self-study in ethics prior to becoming certified. This step is being taken in light of the increasing number of complaints concerning the conduct of some technicians.

Fire Prevention Officers Meeting...

ASTTBC hosted the Fire Prevention Officers meeting at the Justice Institute on January 21, 2004. The meeting was intended to give an update on the status of fire protection certification program. Included were presentations on the Verification and Inspection and testing of fire alarms systems. Thanks to Ark Tsisserev on his presentation on the Verification of Fire Alarm Systems and Roy Swallow who talked on Inspection and Testing of Fire Alarm systems. There were about fifty fire inspectors at the meeting.

Kitchen Exhaust Systems Cleaning...

An **Ecology Unit**, also known as an Air Purification Unit, Air Pollution Control Device, or Grease Removal Device, is a separate, large filter/fan box installed in the exhaust duct after the filters in the hood system. The Ecology Unit filters are required to be replaced on a regular basis by the owner, tenant or a service contractor qualified by the manufacturer.

Kitchens have an on-going record of being a serious concern as sources of fire and odours. It has been brought to our attention that there is a problem with the maintenance of these Ecology Unit systems.

It is important to note that a Kitchen Exhaust System cleaner is required to inspect and/or clean this part of the system.

The **Ecology Unit's** box should be inspected and fully cleaned. The filters should be inspected for all of, but not limited to, the following...

1. Are the filters in place and clean.
2. Are the filters punctured, cut out or otherwise made ineffective.
3. Is there grease blowing by the filters.
4. Are the filters listed.

Tags and Inspection Reports...

If you find an Ecology Unit on the system, write '**Ecology**' on the tag beside '**other**'.

If there are deficiencies as described in the report, tick both '**work required**' and '**see report**'.

Identify on the inspection report any deficiencies and make comments where necessary.

For Information...

For further information about the Fire Protection Certification Program or if you would like assistance implementing the program in your community please contact Larry Barker at 1-604-585-2788 or email lbarker@bsc-link.com

Fire Alarm Workshop



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT April 24, 2004

ASTTBC is holding a Fire Alarm Workshop on Saturday, April 24, 2004, at BCIT in Burnaby.

Who should attend?

This workshop will provide valuable information to Fire Protection Technicians and Municipal Fire Inspectors. The workshop will cover...

- Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Fire Alarms Systems
- Parts 3.2.4 and 3.2.6 of the National Building Code
- Part 6 of the Fire Code

This course will provide you with information on the requirements of the Fire and Building Codes and information on the inspection and testing of fire alarm systems. Each student should bring a copy of the appropriate sections of the codes.

Location...

British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)

Building SE2, Townsquare A
3700 Willingdon Avenue
Burnaby, BC V5G 3H2

DATE...	April 24, 2004
TIME...	08:30 – 16:30 hrs
COST...	\$100 + 7% GST = \$107.00 (Lunch Included)

If you would like to attend this course, please fill out the information below and send it to ASTTBC with your cheque or credit card. For information, phone Larry Barker at 604-585-2788, local 240.

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

COMPANY

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

CREDIT CARD

EXPIRY DATE

SIGNATURE

Applications must be at ASTTBC by Thursday, April 8, 2004. ASTTBC's fire protection web site is <http://fireprotection.asttbc.org>

Do your part and...
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