TECHNICAL SAFETY BC

INFORMATION BULLETIN

AIR RECEIVERS

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This information bulletin is being issued to provide owners and licensed contractors with clarity on the regulatory requirements that apply to the installation, operation, inspection, maintenance, repair, alteration, and decommissioning of regulated air receivers. An air receiver is a pressure vessel that is used as a reservoir in a compressed air system.

This bulletin applies to:

- stand-alone air receivers; and
- machine-mounted air receivers.

Definitions

Pressure vessel: a vessel and its fittings, other than a boiler, that is capable of being used to contain, store, distribute, transfer, distill, process, or otherwise handle gas, vapour, or liquids under pressure.

Owner: as defined in the Safety Standards Act and directive D-BP 2024-03. In some instances, more than one person may meet the definition of "owner." Where an operating permit is in place, the primary accountability for compliance is with the operating permit holder.

Pressure relief device ("PRD"): a fitting installed on pressure equipment designed to provide primary protection from over-pressurization. PRDs include both reclosing devices (e.g., safety valves, relief valves, safety relief valves) and non-reclosing devices (including rupture discs and fusible plugs).

Canadian registration number ("CRN"): a registration number allotted by a provincial Authority Having Jurisdiction (**"AHJ"**) that allows a boiler, pressure vessel, or fitting to be used in the province.

Manufacturer's data report ("MDR"): a document in an accepted form by which a manufacturer certifies that a boiler, pressure vessel, or fired-heater pressure coil has been manufactured in accordance with a particular section of the ASME Code or CSA B51. The document supplies a technical description of the vessel, is signed by a representative of the manufacturer, and, when required by this standard, provides for a countersignature by an inspector or authorized inspector.

Decommission: the permanent de-activation and removal of a regulated product.

General Details

Owner Responsibilities

Owners are responsible for ensuring the **safe installation, operation, inspection, maintenance, repair/alteration, continued service, and decommissioning** of air receivers in accordance with the Safety Standards Act and Power Engineers, Boiler, Pressure Vessel and Refrigeration Safety Regulation (the "**PEBPVRSR"**). This includes ensuring PRD's are properly maintained, serviced, and replaced as required, and any required periodic inspections are performed to ensure equipment is maintained in a safe and operable condition.

1. Design Registration and MDR Verification

When purchasing an air receiver:

- Confirm the pressure vessel design is **registered for use in British Columbia**. The CRN must be stamped on the vessel nameplate and contain digit "1" to the right side of decimal point in the CRN.
- Obtain and retain a copy of the **MDR**. The MDR is required when applying online for an **operating permit**.

2. Installation and Operating Requirements

- Air receivers and associated pressure piping systems must be installed by organizations holding an appropriate class of contractor licence issued by **Technical Safety BC**. Details about licensed contractors, including their licence classes and allowable scopes of work, can be found using Technical Safety BC's Find a Licensed Contractor Tool online.
- Installations must meet the applicable requirements of the codes adopted under the PEBPVRSR, including but not limited to:
    - CSA B51 Boiler, Pressure Vessel, and Pressure Piping Code (**"CSA B51"**);
    - ASME Code; and
    - National Board Inspection Code ("**NBIC"**).
- Manufacturer requirements **must** also be strictly followed to ensure equipment specific requirements are addressed, including:
    - adequate access for inspection and maintenance; and
    - protection from vehicle traffic (e.g., bollards or cages), where applicable.
- An installation notification **(FRM1444)** must be submitted for **each** pressure vessel installation, which will support issuance of an appropriate operating permit.
- An **operating permit** must be obtained **prior** to placing the vessel into operation.

3. In-Service Inspection and Maintenance Requirements

Owners must ensure:

- The air receiver is inspected periodically as required by the manufacturer and applicable codes, such as CSA B51 and NBIC Part 2.
- Condensate is removed regularly via automatic or manual drains.
- The **PRD set pressure** is **equal to or less than the maximum allowable working pressure ("MAWP")** stamped on the nameplate.
- The PRD has adequate **relieving capacity** and is:
    - **lift-tested annually**; **or**
    - tested per manufacturer's recommendations, whichever is more stringent.
- PRDs are replaced immediately if malfunctioning or obstructed.
- PRDs are serviced or replaced **at least every 5 years**, or sooner, if recommended by the manufacturer. Refer to Table 5 of CSA B51 for further details on maximum PRD in-service testing and service intervals.

4. Repairs and Alterations

4.1 Minor Repairs and Routine Maintenance

- An operating permit holder or an employee of the permit holder may perform routine maintenance or minor repairs without holding a contractor's licence. In all cases, the manufacturer's requirements must be followed. For details on the types of activities which fall within the scope of minor repair and routine maintenance, see the information bulletin – minor repair and routine maintenance.
- For machine-mounted air receivers, all associated components — including motors, pulleys, compressors, intercoolers, aftercoolers, and drive belts — must be replaced **in kind** (same size, capacity, and specifications) and in accordance with original manufacturer requirements.
- Changes to **pulley ratios**, **motor sizes**, or **drive systems** are prohibited.

4.2 Repairs and Alterations Requiring a Licensed Contractor

- For all repairs not falling under 4.1 above, or for any alterations, only a licensed contractor may perform these activities.
- Alterations to a registered vessel design must be registered with Technical Safety BC prior to the start of work. Additionally, notification to the area safety officer and approval of repair or alteration procedures must be obtained **prior** to the start of work.

4.3 Prohibited Activities

- Welding anywhere on the pressure boundary or adding saddles by welding onto air receiver vessels **not designed** for such support, is prohibited.
- Air receivers must only be used in the **orientation (vertical/horizontal)** for which they were designed.

5. Documentation Requirements

Owners must maintain accurate, accessible records including:

- Operating permit
- MDR
- Logbook
- Condensate drainage logs
- Routine inspection records
- PRD testing and replacement records
- Repair, alteration, and inspection reports

Records must be maintained and made available to a **safety officer** upon request.

6. Decommissioning

Decommissioning is a regulated activity and may only be performed by individuals who possess the appropriate class of contractor's licence for the scope of work to be performed, demonstrating that they have the required knowledge and skills to perform the activities safely.

A vessel must be **immediately removed from service** when exhibiting internal or external corrosion that has exceeded the corrosion allowance where applicable, structural damage, or any other unsafe condition.

For detailed information and requirements related to decommissioning of regulated pressure equipment, see directive D-BP 2024-02 Decommissioning Requirements. FRM-1539 must be completed and submitted to Technical Safety BC.

Provincial Safety Manager – Boiler, Pressure Vessel, and Refrigeration.

References:

- *Safety Standards Act*, SBC 2003, c. 39
- Power Engineers, Boiler, Pressure Vessel & Refrigeration Safety Regulation
- CSA B51:24, Boiler, pressure vessel, and pressure piping code
- National Board Inspection Code Part 2 – Inspection
- Technical Safety BC Information Bulletin IB-BP-2020-02: Minor repair and routine maintenance
- Technical Safety BC Information Bulletin IB-BP-2017-01: Incident and Hazard Reporting – Boilers, Pressure Vessels, Piping and Fittings
- Technical Safety BC Directive D-BP-2024-02: Decommissioning Requirements
- Technical Safety BC Directive D-BP-2024-03: Definition of “owner” in the Power Engineers, Boiler, Pressure Vessel and Refrigeration Safety Regulation