



Minutes of the Natural Gas Advisory Council meeting of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) held at 1 p.m. on the 14th day of April 2023.

Present:

Martin Luymes (Chair), Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Institute (HRAI); Sunaina Menezes, TSSA Consumers Advisory Council & Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM); Alan Reitzel, Reitzel Heating and Sheet Metal Ltd; Andy Vella, Canadian Standards Association (CSA)

Alexandra Campbell, VP, Communications & Stakeholder Relations; Olga Dias-Sousa, Executive Assistant; Gary Highfield, Manager, Engineering, Fuels Safety Program; Anil Lal, Manager, Engineering & Technical Services; Sam Sadeghi, Director, Fuels Safety Program; Phil Simeon, Policy Director

1. Welcome and Constitution of Meeting

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

a) Safety Moment

For the safety moment, Council received a message on barbeque safety.

2. Adoption of April 14, 2023 Agenda

Council adopted the agenda as presented.

3. Adoption of October 13, 2022 Minutes

Council adopted the minutes as presented.

4. Review of Action Items from the Last Meeting

A. Lal said requests have been sent out to get information on the interprovincial comparative pipeline safety data. He will present the Ontario data at this meeting. The item will remain open until the next advisory meeting. The Chair said it would be useful to know how Ontario is doing relative to other jurisdictions, along with a comparison to the past.

The Red Seal Transition item has been made an information standing item on the council agenda, and the email address for the TSSA Fuels Technical Services Desk has been shared with Council members.

These items have been completed.

5. Chair's Update



The Chair said HRAI hosted a recent event about heat pumps. Attendance was 680 and the event sold out within two weeks. It was a very successful event, showing that interest in electrification is growing. Experts dispelled the myths that heat pumps break the grid and do not work in cold weather. A speaker from Sweden told how Sweden switched to heat pumps over a 20-year period, not with an intent toward decarbonization, but toward becoming energy independent. Approximately 40% of homes in Sweden now have geothermal heat pump systems. The symposium also resulted in a recent series of CBC articles on heat pumps that garnered a wide readership and lots of discussion. The industry needs to be prepared and to think through the implications for natural gas. The Hydrogen Heating Network will host a virtual conference on June 20-21, 2023.

A. Lal asked if Canadian AC manufacturers are getting into the sector. The Chair said all major unitary product manufacturers are now producing heat pumps. There has been a big surge in interest from traditional boiler manufacturers that now have an air-to-water heat pump that will work with hydronic heating systems. In the past 10 years, a lot of resistance to switching out of natural gas has come from boiler manufacturers who did not have a product they could offer. Now they are a bit more bullish. However, there is no standard yet to accept the products for sale, but the industry is aggressively working toward that. If you can produce an air conditioning unit you can produce a heat pump. It is straightforward technology.

The Chair said ground source heating was invented in Canada and has been around for 40 years. It is expensive. Enbridge has created a separate business called Enbridge Sustain to promote geothermal heat pumps, solar, battery storage, and other complementary electrified products.

6. Council Administration

A. Vella will renew his membership for another term.

A. Campbell said a three-year term for Council members has been set, effective January 2022. Vacancies will be sent out in newsletters, and members are invited to bring names forward. Regarding the large utilities/distribution vacancy, the Chair stressed the importance of finding the right person. There was also some discussion about considering adding a hydrogen representative on the council.

7. Issue Prioritization and CSA Codes

A. Campbell spoke to this item. TSSA asks that Advisory Councils table issues so they can be prioritized. Industry stakeholders are encouraged to participate in code committees and through the CSA's public review periods. An up-to-date CSA code schedule is included with today's meeting materials, and is also posted on the CSA website. The Chair said he appreciates receiving the schedule. S. Sadeghi said TSSA wants Council to spread the word of upcoming dates so that concerns can be brought to the national code level in a timely manner. The Chair said HRAI will reach out to its members.



8. Pipeline Strikes Data Trends

A. Lal spoke to this item. The Ontario pipeline incident trend for all regions as of fall 2022 shows an average of seven strikes per week. This was higher than the previous year. The strikes tend to drop over winter. Over the course of a full year, the average is 51 strikes per week or 2,000 per year. Strikes are higher in summer than in winter. TSSA will gather data from other provinces. The Chair asked how long strikes have been tracked and if the average number is trending up or down over the longer term. A. Lal said TSSA will soon have three years of data. The Chair asked how many strikes are considered acceptable. S. Sadeghi replied that an acceptable target has not yet been determined. Strikes can be impacted by weather and the volume of construction activities. Working with Enbridge the number of normalized strikes versus the number of digs a contractor has done will be analyzed in order to identify the top offenders. To summarize, TSSA is looking at the data with the aim to reduce the number of strikes.

A. Lal said other incident trends include fire/explosion, vapour release, CO release, leak/spill, and near misses. Weekly data are collected on these and robust follow-ups are done by inspection staff. In the past TSSA received a repeat offender list from Enbridge, however, it was vague. More information is needed in order to target those responsible for the strikes. It was noted that Enbridge is considering a \$200 fee for anyone other than a homeowner who is requesting a locate for a gas line. The idea is on pause for additional stakeholder consultation. The Chair suggested perhaps Enbridge could build this into its rates and bring it to the OEB. G. Highfield noted that Enbridge is encouraging private proponents to go to the dedicated locator model. In summary, Enbridge is anticipating a much higher volume of locate requests.

9. Red Seal Transition

P. Simeon shared some updates. The pathway to certification for G1, G2, and Oil Burning Technician I are still under discussion, including the consideration of mandatory apprenticeships or multiple pathways. Who is responsible for the safety and certification frameworks and whether there will be impacts on people who are currently certified needs to be determined. The government has communicated an expected program implementation for 2025. TSSA and Skilled Trades Ontario are meeting regularly to share their approaches, requirements, criteria, and background on curriculum and exams.

In closing, the Chair urged Council members to talk to their colleagues and identify issues to bring forward to council meetings. A. Campbell added spots are available for new Council members.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m.