

August 8, 2018

Important message from John Marcellus, President, Recreation Facilities Association of British Columbia

Next Steps in response to Technical Safety BC Report.

Technical Safety BC released its investigation report on July 25th into the ammonia release at Fernie Memorial Arena on October 17, 2017, which tragically resulted in three fatalities, as well as the evacuation of 95 residents from 55 nearby homes.

The report provided an overview of the incident, the scope of the investigation, and key findings regarding contributing factors. Technical Safety BC also made 18 recommendations to further improve safety in ice rink refrigeration systems and discussed several regulatory actions taken in recent months to prevent similar incidents.

The RFABC acknowledges the changes in the industry and the challenges that many of our members are encountering. Strategic and effective planning does not occur overnight and so earlier this year, based on results from the WorkSafe BC Ammonia Initiative in December 2017 and trends in the industry, the RFABC proactively discussed implementing further opportunities for awareness and education as a key process to assist our members in understanding regulations and obligations for operators, plant/asset owners and managers in the refrigeration field of recreation facilities. Subsequently at our annual conference in Kelowna, presentations from the regulatory agencies of WorkSafe BC and Technical Safety BC provided opportunity for feedback to these agencies. We have continued to follow up on this and have been diligently preparing further opportunities leading up to Technical Safety BC's release of their investigation report. The RFABC has been in discussions with representatives of Technical Safety BC to provide our feedback on the report and have additionally been in discussion with private consultants, various agencies and associations and other professionals in the refrigeration industry to develop an effective plan to address the key issues identified.

As we move into the start up period and typical operating season for refrigeration plants associated with recreational facilities such as ice arenas and curling rinks we will be bringing forward key elements that will assist in providing the awareness and education that I mentioned previously, and it is our intent to start implementing them shortly. As this implementation starts to unfold we will ensure that our members are advised of the opportunities and associated schedule of events and activities to enable as many of you to participate as possible and practical. In the meantime, if you have any concepts, ideas or comments that will assist the association in our endeavors or perhaps there is an issue or concern that you need addressed, then please contact the RFABC office and we will assist wherever possible. Thank you.