AWS Global

Are You In The Cold on Refigeration Regs?

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Prior to the repeal of the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act in April 1995 there was a Chief Inspector of Boilers.

He had the authority to recommend to the Minister of Labour to exempt by proclamation certain classes of pressure equipment from the act. It was probably pre 1960 that “process vessels” were made exempt. Vessels associated with refrigeration equipment used commercially and in air conditioning plant were designated “process vessels” and so were exempt from the act. There was no requirement for these vessels to be registered or to be regularly inspected.

In April 1995 that changed. The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act was repealed. There was no longer a Chief Inspector of Boilers; there was no longer a mechanism for exemption from the act as there was no act. The provisions of the old act were taken up under the regulations under the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1995.

Schedule 4 Part 2 of the OHS&W Regulations ” Items of Plant which must be registered” Section 2 lists “ Pressures vessels with a hazard level of A,B or C according to the criteria specified in AS 3920 Pt 1” Many refrigerant vessels fall into one of these categories. Section 3.2.24 (1) (a) requires that pressure equipment “is inspected or tested in accordance with AS3788 Boilers and Pressure Vessels- in–service Inspection.

Unfortunately the refrigeration industry, both suppliers and users, to a large extent, have remained ignorant of these requirements.

While ignorance can be bliss it is no defence if you are caught breaking the law.

Similar laws exist in other Australian states and they are regularly policed, especially in WA.

It is only a matter of time, albiet 14 years have passed since the enactment of the regulations, that the SA regulators wake up to the fact that they are missing out on a considerable revenue stream, in registration fees and fines for non compliance and become proactive like their WA counterparts.

It would be embarrassing for someone in the refrigeration industry to explain in court that he had no knowledge of a law, governing his industry that was passed 14 years ago.

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