

Risk information – Equipment breakdown

Boiler and pressure vessel compliance

Introduction

This guide has been prepared to provide guidance to Owners, Insurance Brokers and Maintenance Personnel of their duty for compliance with legislation and Australian Standards in regard to boilers and pressure vessels also referred to as “Pressure Equipment”.

This guide is intended to provide general information only and is not to be relied upon as a substitute for professional advice in relation to any particular circumstances, or any specific case. It is the responsibility of readers of this document to make their own investigations, enquires and decisions about procedures to be adopted in relation to their own circumstances or any specific case.

Before the mid 1990’s pressure equipment was heavily regulated by government legislation in each state. The various states had different legislation governing pressure equipment in general industry and the state’s mining sector. In most cases the state’s Department of Labour or WorkCover Authority administered the legislation and performed inspection and certification for compliance to their legislation.

In the mid 1990’s this changed in most states and the legislation was deregulated, placing responsibility for the safety of pressure equipment onto the owner of the equipment under Occupational Health

and Safety legislation. This caused major confusion as government withdrew from regular pressure equipment inspection and left this responsibility to the owner of the equipment.

Existing pressure equipment is now treated in a similar way, under current legislation, in all states of Australia. The pressure equipment requires to be hazard assessed to Australian Standard/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS4343. This Standard provides a uniform method of calculating the potential risk or hazard to personnel, property or the environment in the event of a vessel rupture using the pressure equipment’s design pressure, flooded volume and the contents. Pressure equipment assessed as having a hazard level of A, B, or C then also require inspection to AS/NZS3788 “Pressure Equipment In-Service Inspection” to ensure that the pressure equipment is kept safe during its life, from commissioning to disposal. Both the hazard level assessment and the In-Service Inspection are required to achieve Item Registration with a State’s regulating authority.

New or imported pressure equipment (if not already done) also requires Design Registration for hazard level A, B, C or D to Australian Standard/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS4343.

Full compliance to both Item Registration and Design Registration is mandatory before the pressure equipment can be legally used. As may be expected, there are variations and exemptions between the states.

Where does this leave owners of pressure equipment?

- ▼ Overlooked pressure equipment may be, or become unsafe.
- ▼ Owners may be liable for stiff penalties under their State’s Legislation for non compliance.
- ▼ Insurance policies may exclude pressure equipment that does not meet the requirements of State Legislation.

Owners of pressure equipment should seek up to date information from their State’s Regulatory Authority.