

March, 2011

Fire Chiefs' Association Supports ASTTBC Certification

The Fire Chiefs' Association of BC (FCABC) supports the use of ASTTBC-certified Fire Protection Technicians when carrying out inspections and testing of fire protection equipment and is encouraging municipalities to introduce a Bylaw calling for ASTTBC certification. Fire Technicians registered with ASTTBC have achieved a minimum standard of competency and are required to abide by a Code of Ethics. You will recognize these practitioners by the title Registered Fire Protection Technician and the designation RFPT. There are currently 13 municipalities with a Bylaw requiring technicians to be ASTTBC-certified to inspect and test fire suppression equipment such as fire alarms and extinguishers. There are presently 739 Fire Protection Technicians registered with ASTTBC.

The FCABC advised in a recent letter that the Office of the Fire Commissioner is supportive of the objective and will be consulting with others in Government. The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) has also indicated support and that it will consider ways to communicate with their local government membership. FCABC suggested that ASTTBC prepare an information package and distribute this to the municipalities. ASTTBC's Manager, Fire Protection Registration, Brian Stegavig, said, *"This is a significant step forward and will be very helpful as we advance the program throughout BC."* ASTTBC's Executive Director, John Leech, ASCT, CAE, a champion of this program since inception 15 years ago, spoke to the importance of ASTTBC certification to ensure public safety. *"ASTTBC appreciates the support of the FCABC, the Office of the Fire Commissioner and UBCM. Professional certification of fire protection technicians is critical to ensuring public health and safety. The public should have confidence that the workers carrying out inspection, testing and maintenance of fire protection systems are fully qualified and accountable. ASTTBC certification provides this assurance."*

The public will know that fire safety equipment such as extinguishers and alarms have been carried out by an RFPT by the distinct ASTTBC stamp on the tag attached to the equipment. ASTTBC cautions that some firms use an ASTTBC-designed tag and have a non-certified technician initial the area where a RFPT stamp is supposed to be applied. If the tag does not have an RFPT stamp then the work was not carried out by an ASTTBC-certified technician. For information on the ASTTBC program go to: <http://fireprotection.asttbc.org>

ASTTBC is continuing its work with the FCABC, OFC and UBCM to extend professional certification throughout BC.

To view the FCABC letter of support click here: <http://www.asttbc.org/docs/firechiefs.pdf>