

## Chapter 38

# Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan—Inspecting Elevating Devices

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

By July 2021, the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan (TSASK) improved its processes to inspect elevating devices. It developed a risk-informed strategy for prioritizing inspections and was in the early stages of implementing the strategy. In addition, TSASK consistently followed its procedures for handling complaints and incidents.

TSASK and the Ministry of Government Relations had not yet formalized the expected frequency for inspecting elevating devices to enable reporting of overdue inspections.

Effective inspections of elevating devices helps prevent device malfunction and keeps the public safe.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

TSASK administers Saskatchewan’s safety programs for boilers, pressure vessels, elevating devices, amusement rides, and gas and electrical licensing and inspections on behalf of the Ministry of Government Relations under the Safety Standards Agreement.<sup>1,2</sup> It specifically administers and enforces *The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999*, *The Passenger and Freight Elevator Act*, *The Amusement Ride Safety Act*, *The Gas Inspection Act*, *The Gas Licensing Act*, *The Electrical Inspection Act*, *The Electrical Licensing Act*, and related regulations.

This chapter describes our second follow-up audit of management’s actions on the recommendations we first made in 2017 about TSASK’s processes to inspect elevating devices.<sup>3</sup> In 2017, we concluded that TSASK had effective processes to inspect elevating devices, except in the areas of our seven recommendations. As reported in our *2019 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 41, by February 2019, TSASK implemented three of our seven recommendations.

Effective regulation of elevating devices helps keep the public safe. Elevating devices refer to any apparatus, appliance, or device used for lifting or lowering persons or material from one permanent level, floor, or landing to another.<sup>4</sup> Regular and proper inspections are a

<sup>1</sup> The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan is a not-for-profit organization established under *The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan Act*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Safety Standards Agreement* is an agreement between TSASK and the Ministry of Government Relations effective June 30, 2015. The agreement establishes the rights and responsibilities of both the Ministry and TSASK as the Ministry delegated administration of *The Amusement Ride Safety Act*, *The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999*, and *The Passenger and Freight Elevator Act*, including regulations, to TSASK. The agreement outlines the obligations of both parties (e.g., TSASK shall administer, perform and fulfill all duties, obligations and responsibilities under the Acts, the Ministry shall collaborate, advise or consult with TSASK as required), reporting requirements (e.g., TSASK to provide the Ministry a quarterly report), as well as gives the Ministry and TSASK the right to access each others records as required to perform their duties. Responsibility for gas and electrical licensing transferred to TSASK on August 1, 2020, from the Ministry of Government Relations. Gas and electrical inspections transferred to TSASK on February 1, 2021, from SaskPower. TSASK and the Ministry of Government Relations have not yet updated the agreement for these changes.

<sup>3</sup> *2017 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 14, pp. 193–205.

<sup>4</sup> *The Passenger and Freight Elevator Act*, s. 2(d).



key component of effective regulation. In addition, strong inspection processes encourage device owners to maintain elevating devices within industry standards, and reduce the risk that equipment deficiencies go undetected and unaddressed.

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate TSASK's progress toward meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. TSASK's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To carry out our audit examination, we interviewed TSASK management and staff. We examined TSASK's policies and procedures relating to inspecting elevating devices. We assessed the functionality of TSASK's IT system, and the reasonableness of supporting documentation. We also examined a sample of incident reports and complaint records.

## 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at July 30, 2021, and TSASK's actions up to that date.

### 3.1 Risk-Informed Strategy for Prioritizing Inspections Developed and Implementation in Progress

***We recommended the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan develop a documented risk-informed strategy for prioritizing inspections of elevating devices.*** (2017 Report – Volume 1, p. 198, Recommendation 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 3, 2018)

**Status**—Implemented

***We recommended the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan perform in-service inspections of escalators in accordance with a risk-informed inspection strategy.*** (2017 Report – Volume 1, p. 201, Recommendation 5; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 3, 2018)

**Status**—Partially Implemented

In April 2021, TSASK approved a risk-informed strategy for prioritizing inspections of all elevating devices (e.g., elevators, escalators). It rated each elevating device based on this risk-informed strategy, but had not yet conducted inspections within the timelines set out in the new strategy.

TSASK defines a risk-priority number for all elevating devices based on the assessed probability that an elevating device will fail, the severity of probable failure, and the probability of detecting failure. TSASK inspectors assign a risk score to each elevating device based on these risk rankings. TSASK uses the assessed scoring to determine inspection frequency (e.g., 12 months for low- and medium-risk escalators, and six months for high-risk escalators).

We found TSASK completed escalator inspections annually for the year ended June 30, 2021, consistent with the expected timeline outlined in its previous policy. TSASK plans to base future inspection intervals on the risk-informed strategy.

In addition, TSASK built a query into its IT system (Basebridge) that reports outstanding inspections (i.e., identifies elevating devices where the next expected inspection date has passed). This report allows management to monitor outstanding inspections at any time.

Performing regular in-service inspections in accordance with a risk-informed strategy reduces the risk of equipment deficiencies going undetected and unaddressed. It also reduces the risk of elevating-device incidents that can result in injuries to people.

### 3.2 Incidents and Complaints Procedures Followed

***We recommended the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan formalize its procedures for handling incidents and complaints related to elevating devices.*** (2017 Report – Volume 1, p. 199, Recommendation 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 3, 2018)

**Status**—Implemented

At July 30, 2021, TSASK followed its documented procedures for handling incidents and complaints related to elevating devices.<sup>5</sup> It outlined procedures in flowcharts and made them available to staff.

For the five incidents we tested out of 42 incidents that occurred during our audit period, TSASK followed its established procedures for handling incidents. TSASK's procedures to handle incidents include forwarding incidents to the Chief Inspector, completing an investigation, implementing a response based on the nature and cause of the incident, and logging the incident.

TSASK periodically receives complaints about the operation of an elevating device via email, telephone or its website. For the three complaints received during our audit period, TSASK followed its procedures for handling complaints. TSASK's procedures to handle complaints include forwarding the complaint to the appropriate manager with the manager evaluating the complaint, communicating the result with the complainant, and retaining evidence for each complaint.

Following established procedures for incidents and complaints promotes consistency in handling similar situations.

### 3.3 Reporting of Overdue Inspections Needed

***We recommended the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan and the responsible Ministry define the expected frequency for inspecting elevating devices to enable reporting of overdue inspections.*** (2017 Report – Volume 1, p. 205, Recommendation 7; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 3, 2018)

**Status**—Not Implemented

<sup>5</sup> An incident is an event related to the operation of an elevating device that is abnormal to routine operation.



TSASK and the responsible Ministry (Ministry of Government Relations) have not formalized the expected frequency for inspecting elevating devices to enable reporting on the nature and extent of overdue inspections. Overdue inspections are where the actual inspection interval of licensed equipment exceeded a formally-defined, expected inspection interval.

Each quarter, TSASK gives the Ministry information for elevating devices required under the Safety Standards Agreement. The Safety Standards Agreement between TSASK and the Ministry requires TSASK to give the Ministry quarterly reports containing the following information:

- Total number of inspections during the quarter
- Total number of reported accidents since the last report<sup>6</sup>
- Details on issued corrective action reports (i.e., inspections with noted deficiencies) during the quarter
- Total number of overdue inspections (i.e., those where the last inspection date exceeds a legislated inspection frequency)

At July 30, 2021, TSASK was able to track overdue inspections using the query built into its IT system (Basebridge) using the frequency it approved internally.

However, there was no legislated inspection frequency for elevating devices. That is, neither *The Passenger and Freight Elevator Act* nor related regulations establish an inspection frequency for TSASK's inspections of elevating devices. In addition, TSASK and the Ministry have not yet formally defined the required frequency of inspections. TSASK and the Ministry have ongoing verbal conversations about future changes to the Safety Standards Agreement. Until TSASK and the Ministry agree on the required frequency of inspections, TSASK is unable to report the number of overdue inspections to the Ministry.

Agreeing on how often elevating devices should be inspected would help TSASK facilitate better monitoring. Not inspecting elevating devices in a timely way both increases the risk that deficiencies go undetected and incidents occur. Without complete information regarding overdue inspections, the Ministry cannot fully monitor performance under the Safety Standards Agreement.

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<sup>6</sup> An accident is any incident that causes death or serious injury which involves equipment that TSASK regulates. TSASK defines serious injury as receiving medical attention (i.e., in clinic or hospital).