

Department of Industrial Relations

Division of Occupational Safety and Health

PRESSURE VESSEL UNIT

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Circular Letter PV-2005-1

Effective Date June 1, 2005

Subject: Boiler Attendance

To: All Parties Operating Boilers in Places of Employment

This circular letter is in response to the numerous inquiries from the owners and operators of boilers concerning how a boiler is to be attended during operation.

The California Code of Regulations Title 8 Boiler and Fired Pressure Vessel Safety Orders Section 781 (which is available as a hard copy from Barclays at 800 888-3600 or online at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/781.html>) requires that **all** boilers be under the direct supervision of a responsible person. This person shall be responsible for the safe operation of the boiler by a competent attendant (a person who: can operate all controls, light off the boiler, feed water to the boiler, blow down the boiler, address a low water condition or carryover, and can shut down the boiler) and proper maintenance of the boiler and its appurtenances.

Boilers that require a permit to operate (typically steam boilers greater than 400,000 BTU/hr input) issued by the Division shall not be left unattended for a period of time longer than it will take the water level to drop from the normal operating level to the lowest permissible water level. For most boilers, this time is between 30 and 90 seconds. These boilers shall have an audible alarm that can be plainly heard by the attendant and shall not use an auxiliary paging system. The attendant shall personally check the operation of the boiler a minimum of every 60 minutes and at the beginning of each shift.

It is the employers responsibility to provide a competent attendant for boiler operation. Mismanagement of steam boilers carries significant penalties to the employer and places the employees under undue risk. Please ensure a safe working environment by providing a competent attendant for your boiler.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Donald C. Cook

Donald C. Cook
Principal Safety Engineer