



## BOILER SAFETY AT A GLANCE

**Statute:** Chapter 755, Health and Safety Code

**Rules:** Title 16 T.A.C. Chapter 65

**Practice Act?** No

**Title Act?** Yes

**Inspections:** Yes

**Facilities:** Yes

**Equipment:** Yes

**Number of Certificates of Operation:** 53,864 (FY 20)

### Overview:

A "boiler" is a heating boiler, a power boiler, an unfired steam boiler a process steam generator or a nuclear boiler. State law requires that all boilers be registered with TDLR and, receive certificates of operation. Depending on how they're used, they are to be inspected annually, biennially, or triennially by TDLR or an authorized inspector.

There are more than 53,000 registered boilers in Texas. Boilers are used in commercial facilities, such as dry cleaners, car washes, and power plants. Additionally, boilers are found in schools, hospitals, and office buildings.

Much like an automobile, furnace, or air conditioner, boilers require an ongoing, routine maintenance and inspection program. Well-trained maintenance personnel, boiler operators and boiler inspectors are essential to the safe operation of a boiler. Boiler inspectors examine the structural integrity of the boiler along with the associated safety devices attached to the boiler. These devices must remain in good operating condition for the continued safe operation of the boiler.

The loss of water (low water), furnace explosion, over-pressure and excessive temperature are the principal causes for boiler accidents and are primarily the direct result of missing or inoperative controls and safety devices, lack of maintenance, untrained operators, and complacency.

In 2020, Texas became the first state to require a safety system on all new boiler installations that shuts down the boiler if the carbon monoxide level in the boiler room exceeds a safe level.

TDLR inspectors review quality control systems when they issue Certificates of Authorization to boiler and pressure vessel manufacturers, repair organizations, and state owner/user organizations.

### How We Regulate

- The Regulatory Program Management division oversees the boiler inspection process and provides program expertise.
- In addition to the Chief Boiler Inspector and three Team Lead Boiler Inspection Specialists, TDLR has fourteen Deputy Boiler Inspectors throughout the state whose primary responsibility is inspecting uninsured boilers. These inspectors are currently located in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, Amarillo, East Texas, Austin, and El Paso.
- Any offenses under Section 755.043 of the Health and Safety Code are criminally prosecuted as a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to a \$2,000 fine, a jail term not to exceed 180 days, or both.

### Inspections

- TDLR requires each boiler to be inspected internally (if applicable) and externally at the time of installation and at subsequent intervals. TDLR also reviews and maintains summary reports of the in-service inspections of nuclear boilers that are submitted by the owner or operator.
- TDLR may be involved in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) or the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors accreditation process.
- TDLR also performs boiler accident investigations.

### History

The Texas Boiler Act, Chapter 755 of the Health and Safety Code, was enacted on June 3, 1937, in response to the deadly New London natural gas explosion on March 18, 1937. The New London explosion killed 294 men, women and children when a natural gas leak beneath the New London School ignited, destroying the school. After the explosion, state law required that an odor be added to natural gas and required that boilers be approved and regularly inspected.

For many years the program was a part of the agency then known as the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Later, the agency name was changed to the Texas Department of Labor and Standards. In 1989, the name was changed to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

The **Board of Boiler Rules** has 11 members serving staggered 6-year terms, which includes:

- TDLR Chief Boiler Inspector (Presiding Officer);
- three members representing persons who own or use boilers in this state;
- three members representing companies that insure boilers in this state;
- one member representing boiler manufacturers or installers;
- one member representing organizations that repair or alter boilers in this state;
- one member representing a labor union; and
- two public members.

For more information, visit the Boilers and Boiler Safety page: <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/boilers/blr.htm>