



Stop finger-pointing, David Miller says

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But mayor wonders if propane safety group would be better as an arm of provincial government

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Public safety — not finger-pointing — should be the main concern in the wake of the explosion at the Sunrise Propane facility in Downsview, Mayor David Miller said today.

But Miller also questioned whether the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) — which licenses and inspects operations like Sunrise — should become a department of the provincial government, instead of operating at arm's length.

Toronto's zoning bylaw permitted a wide range of uses on the Murray Rd. site, including propane operations. But the actual license to operate was issued by the TSSA.

Miller likened it to a restaurant: The city permits restaurants to operate on certain streets, while the province decides whether it gets a liquor license.

But Miller told a news conference today at City Hall that the focus should be on safety going forward.

"From my perspective, I don't care whether it's a provincial job or a city job," he said. "We have to make sure the city's safe. And this incident has made it very clear that we need a review of both the zoning and the provincial regulations."

Miller has ordered a review of the city's zoning policies on propane operations.

The mayor said the TSSA has informed the city that there are 73 licenses to operate propane facilities in the city but has not yet supplied the city with a list of where they are.

Miller said he has questions about how tightly supervised propane operations are.

"From my perspective, it's not adequate to inspect a facility like this every three years," he said.

"Suppose the operator doesn't operate to the highest standards. How are you going to find that out? I think that issue needs to be reviewed. And our understanding from the province is that is one of the issues they will be reviewing."

Asked whether he thinks the provincial government should directly regulate the propane

industry, Miller said it's worth considering.

"I think that's a legitimate question," he said. "There is a certain public accountability when it's a direct government department. I think accountability is enhanced on regulatory matters when the government handles it directly."