



January 20, 2010 Industrial Electrician Review Meeting

Purpose

The Resource Training Organization (RTO) is committed to working with key industry, labour, post-secondary education, and government stakeholders for the betterment of the Industrial Electrician (IE) trade in British Columbia. Clear, on-going communication is critical to the effectiveness of this trade.

This communiqué summarizes the background to a plan the RTO will undertake to address the concerns raised by various stakeholders that attended the January 20, 2010 Industrial Electrician Review Meeting.

Background

Development of the Competency Standards

The Competency Standards for the Industrial Electrician trade were developed through extensive consultation with a broad cross section of stakeholders in BC's heavy industry sectors – mining and smelting, oil and gas, pulp and paper and solid wood processing. The program was the first of its kind in British Columbia to include 4 levels of time of theory assessment, on the job training and workplace competency assessment. The major difference between this program and other apprenticeship models is the inclusion of workplace competency assessment.

The Heavy Industry Training Advisory Committee (HITAC) led the development of the competency standards that make up the program. Work commenced in 2005. This committee commissioned the development of a BC Occupational Analysis for Electricians working in industry, which was based upon the National Occupational Analysis of Industrial Electrician (2004). The competency standards are based upon the 2005 BC Industrial Electrician Competency Profile, the product of the 2005 BC Occupational Analysis.

Development of these competency standards continued through 2006 with extensive support of industry, unions and both Federal Government Departments and Provincial Government agencies as well as through the dedicated participation of a group of electrician Subject Matter Experts (SME's) who participated in eight development workshops held in Vancouver from 2005 through to 2007.

Extensive development work was carried out on these competency standards through the Industrial Electrical Training Provider Consortium. This group of four colleges supported development of the theory competency standards.

These competency standards were developed through funding provided by the Industry Training Authority, in kind contribution of participating heavy industry and secretariat support funding from Service Canada. To date, direct costs and costs in kind have totaled approximately 1.5 million dollars.

Background (cont'd)

Assessment of Apprentices

Theory assessment of apprentices is carried by training providers through typical lab/classroom assignments and quizzes, ITA administered level exams and finally the red-seal interprovincial exam.

The workplace competency-based assessment of apprentices in the industrial electrician program is significantly different than most other apprenticeship programs. Assessment takes place in the workplace. This approach requires a much higher degree of employer and apprentice responsibility in tracking and assessing the apprentice's progress throughout the apprenticeship. A comprehensive logbook is provided to guide the apprentice's development, record their achievements, verify their assessments and ultimately prove competence in the workplace. To achieve the B.C. Industrial Electrician Trade Qualification, the apprentice must achieve the industry standard in each competency, which is assessed by a designated assessor.

Employers are required to designate assessors that must successfully complete a training program and be registered with the Industry Training Authority of British Columbia. In most cases the assessors will be qualified electrical journeymen from the employer's operation. The assessors are responsible to ensure the apprentice has the practical skills and is proficient in all of the on-the-job competencies.

The requirements for Assessor registration are as follows:

- Have 5 years industrial experience as a Red Seal Electrician.
- Attend an RTO facilitated assessor training course.
- Pass an exam based on the training course curriculum.
- Complete one assessment with an apprentice, which is reviewed by RTO.
- Complete the Assessor Registration required by the Industry Training Authority.

January 20, 2010 IE Review Meeting

Approximately 30 stakeholders attended a review meeting to discuss the current status of the IE program and to ponder the future.

The largest area of concern from stakeholders centered around the workplace competency assessment and the apprentice log book. A summary of this concern is, the logbook is a necessary component of workplace competency assessment but it is difficult to complete and therefore needs to be reviewed.

The largest area of concern from RTO is the lack of support for the Industrial Electrician Apprenticeship Program. This lack of support is reflected in the employers not enrolling new apprentices, apprentices not completing the logbook and assessors allowing this to happen. RTO is also concerned about the ongoing cost/apprentice ratio.

Review Meeting Outcomes

Program Review Committee (PRC)

As a result of the areas of concern related to the IE program, RTO will establish a Program Review Committee (PRC). The committee will consist of approximately 12 members from a cross section of the current industry stakeholders.

Program Review Committee (PRC) (cont'd)

The meetings will be facilitated by Dan McFaul of North Pacific Training and Performance. The first meeting of the committee will be held in the Vancouver area on or about April 15, 2010. The committee will meet as necessary to carry out the following work.

- Conduct an industry review of active apprentices and assessors to determine specific feedback on the experience of workplace assessment.
- Determine the future demand for apprentices.
- Determine the viability of the logbook as a means of recording workplace assessment and based on this, establish a logbook review committee.
- Determine viability of other models of industrial electrician apprenticeship programs. Some examples:
 - common Level 1 - 2 of the construction electrician program; Level 3 – 4 specific industrial electrician curriculum
 - common Levels 1- 4 of the construction electrician program and level 5 specific industrial electrician curriculum
 - Other examples would be explored
- Determine optional paths of workplace assessment. Some examples:
 - The logbook could be an optional development tool made available to sponsors of IE apprentices. The logbook would be administered solely by the sponsor.
 - A competency assessment center could be established where trained impartial assessors conduct real and simulated exercises to prove competence in the workplace.
 - Other examples would be explored.
- Deliver a final report to RTO by July 15, 2010.

Workplan to Move Forward

A detailed workplan will be compiled after July 15, 2010, which will be based on recommendations from the Program Review Committee.

