

BC SAFETY AUTHORITY

Field Safety Representative (FSR) Continuing Education Requirements

Commencing in 2012, Class A, B, and C Field Safety Representatives (FSRs) will need to demonstrate up-to-date knowledge relevant to that FSR class of certificate of qualification, as required by the *Safety Standards Act*.

It is important to note this program is under development by the BC Safety Authority, and many details need to be worked out before it launches three years from now. Preliminary consultation with industry began in November 2008, and will continue. Comments and suggestions for improvements are welcome by using the contact information at the end of this document.

Here are some commonly asked Questions and Answers that will help explain why and how the Safety Authority is looking at shaping the continuing education program:

Q. Why is the BC Safety Authority implementing this program?

A. It is important for safety that FSRs maintain current knowledge in their trade, particularly on code and other regulatory matters as required by the Safety Standards Act. FSRs are responsible for ensuring that regulated electrical work is compliant to the Safety Standards Act and Regulations, which includes the BC Electrical Code.

Q. Are there any other reasons?

A. The provincial governments are implementing agreements to allow for easy movement of labour across the country. One such agreement is TILMA, signed by the BC and Alberta governments. A key requirement of this agreement is that there is no additional technical qualification required when moving from one jurisdiction to another. That means that if an FSR is qualified in BC, and wishes to become a Master Electrician in Alberta, then no further code training or examination will be required (Of course, there will still be examination on local regulatory matters). To enable this mutual recognition of technical qualifications, we must demonstrate that the FSR is current in his knowledge.

Q. What is the model for this program?

A. The model is adapted from programs used in Washington and Oregon for electricians to renew their qualifications. Many other professions require mandatory continuing education. Other jurisdictions in Canada also have continuing education requirements, and even other technologies within BC have a renewal program.

Q. What are the program requirements for continuing education for FSRs?

A. Class A, B, and C FSRs will be required to renew their certification with the BC Safety Authority every 3 years, beginning in 2012. In order to renew that certification, the FSR will have to demonstrate that 24 hours of approved technical training has been completed (or an average of 8 hours per year).

Q. Who is the program registrar, and what do they do?

A. The BC Safety Authority has partnered with the BC Electrical Association. The BCEA will act as the program registrar, and will process applications from educators, compile attendance results for each FSR, and provide a transcript to the BCSEA and to the FSR of completed courses.

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Q. How do I get more information on this program?

A. The program is still under development. As the program registrar, the BCEA website will contain more information for educators as the Safety Authority approves courses. The BCSA will communicate periodic updates to FSRs, beginning when the 2009 code is adopted, expected in mid-2009.

Q. Who approves the training course?

A. Educators will apply to the program registrar for approval, and if the course meets the suitability criteria, approval will be given by the Safety Authority's Provincial Safety Manager.

Q. How do I track my courses?

A. The educator will provide a list of attendees to the program registrar. That information is available only to the registrar, the BC Safety Authority, and the FSR. No one else can access your course information.

Q. Who can be an educator and provide approved courses?

A. Anyone can apply to be an approved educator. Both the BCSA and the BCEA are approved educators. Even privately organized training may be approved for credit to this program.

Q. Do I need to be a member of the BCEA?

A. No membership in the BCEA is required. This program is available to all approved educators and all FSRs.

Q. What will this cost me?

A. Costs have not been finalized, but the program will be operated on a cost-recovery basis only. That means that any fees charged to the FSR will only be enough to cover administrative costs. Based on current BCSA fee schedules, it is expected that this fee will be about \$150, which would be paid only at time of renewal, once every three years. Training costs are set by the educator. Many courses are currently offered without fee — for example, BCSA contractor workshops and presentations. Other courses, such as code courses, are already being taken by many FSRs.

Q. What do I have to do now?

A. If you are an educator, please apply to the program registrar to obtain approval for your courses. If you are an FSR, begin looking for approved courses that may interest you. You could wait until 2012 to obtain the necessary continuing education credits, but it would be to your advantage to take some training every year.

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Q. How do I provide suggestions for improvement?

A. Submit your written suggestions to any BCSA office or electrical safety officer, but please use "FSR renewal" in the subject line. Contact information can be found on the BCSA website at www.safetyauthority.ca or by calling the BCSA toll-free number at 1-866-566-7233.