

Discussion Paper

1. Introduction

This discussion paper has been produced by the Registrar to give all persons registered under the Electricity Act 1992 and other interested parties the opportunity to comment on the prerequisite requirements for the issuing of practising licences.

2. Background

In September 2003 the Electrical Workers Registration Board released a discussion document (the document) on the minimum requirements for electrical worker practising licence refresher courses.

In excess of three hundred submissions were received on the document and a summary of submissions was tabled at the February 2004 Board meeting. Following consideration of the submissions the Board referred the draft minimum requirements to the Registrar for further research and consultation.

3. The Paper

This paper has been developed after consideration of the views of the commentators to the document and the concerns of the Board, which were listed in the document.

This paper sets out the policy for practising licence refresher courses and while course content is addressed from a subject matter perspective, the degree to which the subject matter is tutored is not covered.

4. General

It is considered that the Board needs to have requirements for practising licence refresher courses (refresher courses) that:

- reduce as far as possible the cost of compliance to industry, and
- are readily available to industry, and
- have integrity and be appropriate for the licence categories, and
- are subject to regular audit, and
- provide an assurance to the public that persons who are issued with practising licences on the basis of completing the course are competent to carry out prescribed electrical work to a level that satisfies the regulatory requirements.

5. Proposed tuition course

From a refresher course perspective it can be argued that the Board does not need to include occupational health and safety aspects in the tuition courses. However as this aspect is a regulatory requirement the Board must ensure the subject is addressed to the level required by regulation.

6. Tuition course content

It is proposed that the Board's refresher course cover the following subjects:

- testing generally, and
- the requirements relating to the supervision of trainees both from a supervisor and trainee perspective, and
- earthing requirements, and
- earth testing, and
- the installation, operation and operational testing of residual current devices, and
- an appreciation of prospective short circuit current levels, and
- hazard identification, and
- certification, and
- an appreciation of the types of accidents that have occurred within the previous twelve months.

7. Degree of tuition

Whilst it is proposed that the Board's refresher course be made up of the above mentioned subjects, specific comment would be welcomed on the degree to which the subjects should be tutored.

8. Duration of course

It is proposed that the Board requires its refresher course to be a minimum of five hours in length and this would be excluding the cardio pulmonary resuscitation and first aid aspects.

9. Course presenters

There has been considerable debate in the industry for many years over the quality of tuition courses presented and this raises the question as to the merit of the Board not having requirements for presenters and course content.

It is proposed that the Board require persons wishing to offer refresher courses to be accredited by the Board on an annual basis. This would require potential tuition course presenters to present their credentials for Board accreditation on an annual basis.

The Board would then only publish the names of accredited presenters in its publicity material and on its website.

10. Tuition course appropriateness for licence categories

There has been considerable debate in the industry about tuition course appropriateness for specific licence categories. The comments particularly pertain to tuition courses offered to electrical service technicians.

It is considered that the above nine tuition course content subjects are relevant to all registered electrical workers, however it is accepted that the degree of tuition required between the categories of practising licences should occur.

11. Auditing of tuition courses and presenters

It is considered that to develop and maintain an appropriate quality refresher course it is important that an effective auditing programme be put in place.

Auditing would ensure that the Board's statutory function to ensure competency is satisfied, as well as satisfying the Board's role in ensuring public safety.

It is envisaged that experienced auditors would be contracted to undertake the auditing task.

12. Opportunity to comment

All people registered under the Electricity Act 1992 and other interested parties are invited to comment on this paper.

All comments received will be summarised and made available for publication.

If you would like to comment on this paper please address your correspondence to me at:

P O Box 10156, Wellington or email to john.sickels@med.govt.nz by 20 September 2004

John Sickels

Registrar/Group Manager

27 July 2004