

Operational Guidelines for Field Evaluation



Background information:

Last year ESA received several inquiries regarding the acceptability of conducting a field evaluation (SI) for PV panels. Preliminary information revealed that special inspection services were being conducted by several of the accredited Inspection Bodies. ESA conducted a formal survey of the Inspection Bodies in order to better understand what evaluation criteria was being applied. The survey was in the form of a questionnaire. Responses to the questionnaire were received from nearly all of the Inspection Bodies. From this information we were able to determine current practices.

Based on the information received, ESA drafted a proposal on what evaluation and testing criteria would be acceptable for the field evaluation (SI) of a PV panel. The additional testing and evaluation proposed is limited in scope to the essential fire and shock safety considerations and is supplementary to the mandatory testing specified in SPE-1000.

This proposal was circulated for feedback to all field evaluation agencies late last year. We received their responses, and in principle all agreed to the content of the proposal. Comments made by the agencies were incorporated into the final proposal. In the absence of other information, Ontario will be moving forward and adopting the final proposal as formal guideline on February 1, 2010. We will also be sending these guidelines to the SPE – 1000 committee for their consideration. A copy of the guidelines will be posted on the [ESA web site](#).

Note: Quantities permitted under field evaluation in Ontario are limited to 300 units per model per year. Larger quantities of PV panels are expected to be evaluated and certified by a third party certification organization.