

## ESA's Next Five-Year Strategy: Fiscal Years 2021 – 2025

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### Development of Strategic Plan

The Electrical Safety Authority is in the process of developing its strategic plan from Fiscal Year 2021-2025 and is seeking input during its development. This backgrounder will assist with responding to ESA's strategic plan consultation.

### The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA)

ESA is an administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario with specific responsibilities under the Electricity Act and the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act. As part of its mandate, ESA is responsible for administering four regulations:

- Ontario Electrical Safety Code (Regulation 164/99);
- Licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians (Regulation 570/05);
- Electrical Distribution Safety (Regulation 22/04); and
- Electrical Product Safety (Regulation 438/07).

ESA operates as a private, not-for-profit corporation. Funding derives from fees for safety oversight, safety services, and licensing of electrical contractors and master electricians.

ESA's activities include:

- Identifying and targeting leading causes of electrical risk;
- Promoting awareness, education and training on electrical safety;
- Ensuring compliance with regulations;
- Investigating fatalities, injuries and fire losses associated with electricity; and
- Engaging with stakeholders to improve safety.

**Our Vision:** An Ontario free of electrical fatalities and serious damage, injury or loss.

**Our Mission:** To improve electrical safety for the well-being of the people of Ontario.

**Our Mandate:** To enhance public electrical safety in Ontario.

**Our Values:**

- Safety: We can and will make Ontario a safer place for all citizens.
- Leadership: We will always strive to do better, challenge assumptions, and welcome new ideas.
- Collaboration: We work best when we work together.
- Accountability: We hold ourselves to the highest standards of responsibility and ethical behaviour.
- Integrity and Trust: We will take the high road.

## ESA's Harm Reduction Strategy 2.0 2015-2020

In 2015 ESA established a five-year strategy called *Harm Reduction Strategy 2.0*. It reflected a mission-driven focus, recognition of the needs and challenges of a mature marketplace, and the adoption of regulatory best practices. These best practices include problem solving approaches, investment in collaborative partnerships, focusing clearly on safety outcomes, and applying risk-based management.

*Harm Reduction Strategy 2.0* defines the major corporate goals for 2015-2020 and the leading strategies used to address them. It also includes the measures that ESA used across the period to track progress.

ESA committed to deliver public value by generating a meaningful benefit to the people of Ontario, while using our powers and resources in effective and efficient ways. To ensure we delivered that public value, ESA established three strategic goals for the Harm Reduction Strategy 2.0:

**Safety:** ESA will seek to improve the state of electrical safety in Ontario by accelerating the reduction in the combined rate of electrical fatalities and critical injuries over the next five years.

**Results to date:** The milestone measure is to achieve a 20 per cent decrease in the combined rate of electrical fatalities and critical injuries (based on the five year rolling average) between 2015 and 2020. ESA has helped to reduce the combined rate of injuries and fatalities by 12.6 percent since 2015.

**Compliance:** ESA will seek to increase the rate of compliance with electrical safety regulations over the next five years, where required.

**Results to date:** Our five-year goal for compliance improvement is to increase the amount of renovation wiring work being captured by ESA by 7.5 per cent over five years. Progress is assessed based on data collected in wiring notifications. Since 2015, ESA has achieved a 6.5 per cent increase, 87 per cent of the five-year target.

**Public Accountability:** ESA will ensure stakeholders recognize us as an effective, publicly accountable organization.

**Results to date:** Overall performance is tracked via multi-stakeholder accountability perception research every two years. In addition, every week a third party research firm conducts a satisfaction survey of 25 randomly selected customers who recently completed the inspection process. Latest results were very high, rating ESA at 8.4 out of 10. Over 2600 of these surveys have been conducted since May 2017.

## Learnings from the Harm Reduction Strategy 2.0

Since *Harm Reduction 2.0*, ESA has learned valuable lessons that will inform the next 5-year strategic plan. ESA aims to take a bold step forward in its ongoing and ever evolving journey towards being a modern, risk-based electrical safety regulator for Ontarians. To achieve this goal, ESA intends to further build on the foundational concepts of Risk-Based Oversight (RBO) which were introduced in *Harm Reduction 2.0*.

ESA has made a specific effort to implement risk-based prioritization principles that have contributed to the successes ESA has seen in meeting previous strategic goals. ESA believes that the best way to manage the greater potential for electrical harms is by continuing to execute modern, risk-based

regulation and by embedding these operational concepts (such as risk-based inspection) throughout ESA.

ESA will work to leverage and hone key capabilities that already exist today and are vital for the execution of the strategic plan. These capabilities include augmenting our project management, stakeholder communications, and change management capabilities.

## ESA: The Next 5 Years 2021 – 2025

ESA took a proactive approach and began strategy development two years prior to the April 2020 launch. This allowed the organization to do research to support ESA's programs and metrics and continue the change management process with stakeholders and the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS), and within ESA.

Throughout 2018, management and ESA's Board of Directors engaged in setting the stage for developing the new strategy for fiscal years 2021-2025. Several activities brought ESA to this point such as comprehensive environmental scanning that considered how ESA should evolve over the next five years and the development of a directional narrative. The current year will be one of intensive planning before the launch of the new 5-year strategy.

The draft strategic plan is a continuum of the progressive work that ESA has done to fulfill the current 5-year strategy that ends in March 2020. ESA is introducing a purpose statement that includes two new important activities to help focus our efforts. The purpose reads as follows:

*“ESA **anticipates, understands** and mitigates electrical related harms to improve safety for the well-being of Ontarians.”*

It is important to define two key words in the above stated Purpose; **anticipates** and **understands**.

**Anticipates** is defined as proactively identifying and getting in front of harms before they adversely affect Ontarians. To sense future harms in this way will require us to be more nimble than we historically have been in the way we deliver our mandate.

**Understands** is defined as researching and studying emerging and existing technologies on a global scale and quantitatively measuring risk in Ontario.

By relying on this Purpose statement as the cornerstone of ESA's operations moving forward, we will be able to evolve the way we work to continue to lead the world as a modern electrical safety regulator.

Whereas ESA's current strategy focuses on three goals, ESA is contemplating the addition of a new goal: *Organizational Excellence*. This new goal refers to ESA's focus on operating in a way that maximizes ESA's ability to deliver results through increased efficiency and productivity of our processes and personnel. By investing in the capabilities of our people, we will empower ESA to operate with greater organizational agility than ever before.

The four goals of the next five-year strategic plan are:

- Further reducing electrical related harm
- Creating a regulatory environment that enables electrical safety
- Operating with excellence to maximize the electrical safety of Ontarians
- Being a publicly accountable regulator

<p><b>Goal #1 – Further reduce electrical related harm</b></p>	<p>ESA will leverage its knowledge of electrical safety to identify areas where ESA anticipates electrical harm, and optimize ESA’s efforts against both forward looking and known harms by operating in a more agile work environment. Activities will include understanding current and emerging harms, prioritizing harms, systematically addressing harms and developing partnerships.</p>
<p><b>Goal #2 – Create a regulatory environment that enables electrical safety</b></p>	<p>ESA will drive compliance with all regulations with added focus on increasing the compliance rate with the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC), reducing estimated size of the underground economy, and ensuring that LECs operate in compliance with their licence and with professional responsibility. Activities will include encouraging compliance with the OESC, cracking down on the underground economy, educating the public, and encouraging the compliance and professional responsibility of LECs.</p>
<p><b>Goal #3 – Operate with excellence to maximize the electrical safety of Ontarians</b></p>	<p>ESA will work to efficiently achieve its mandate of helping Ontarians to remain free from electrical harms by being agile in its approach to managing harms. ESA will work to do more with what it already has. Activities will include implementing best in class productivity tools and continuing ESA’s cultural evolution and enhancing its team.</p>
<p><b>Goal #4 – Be a publicly accountable regulator</b></p>	<p>ESA will ensure that our stakeholders see ESA as publicly accountable by improving the experiences they have throughout the interaction experience with ESA. Activities will include improving stakeholders’ accessibility to ESA, Improving the way ESA delivers services and improving stakeholder perceptions of ESA.</p>

Over the current year, ESA will continue to proactively engage internal and external stakeholders to develop activities that support the goals of the next five-year strategy.

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