

Meeting: Consumer Advisory Council (CAC)
Date: February 22, 2017 9:30 am to 1:00 pm
Location: ESA Provincial Office – 155A Matheson Blvd W, Mississauga

Present: Rod Skinkle (Chair) Kari Manninen
Carol Gravelle (Vice Chair) Joan A. Pajunen
Sandy Manners Tim Krause
Larry Allison

Absent: Andre Bachand

Guests: Sharmila Uruthirandasivam, Michele Aplin, Mississauga Fire
MGCS

ESA Staff: Nancy Evans Kathryn Chopp
Farrah Bourre Carol Keiley

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 13, 2016

Motion to approve the agenda by Tim Krause
Seconded by Joan Pajunen

Motion to defer adoption of the minutes of Nov 23, 2016 meeting: Joan Pajunen
Seconded by Carol Gravelle
CARRIED

Conflict of interest – none identified.

A reminder of the importance of risk management was given.

All guests and members were introduced. Michele Aplin was introduced as a potential new member of the CAC who was attending the meeting to understand the focus and purpose of the group.

2. REPORT: THE ELECTRICAL SAFETY LANDSCAPE IN 2025

See Report.

Members participated in a Council workshop during the November 2016 meeting where they discussed how the electrical landscape will change over the next ten years. A report was developed and distributed to CAC members for their approval to share with ESA management.

Motion to approve the report: Tim Krause

Seconded by: Carol Gravelle

Carried

3. RISK-BASED OVERSIGHT

See presentation.

Nancy Evans provided CAC with an update on ESA's transition to a Risk-Based Oversight (RBO) Model. Mark Taylor, one of the leads for the project, joined the CAC for the discussion.

The transition relates to the electrical landscape discussion at the November meeting. The changes in the electricity sector are one of the drivers for ESA's need to evolve its approach to compliance.

Inspections will be done based on level of risk; high-risk electrical work would always be inspected. ESA will progress to this model in three steps – 1) pilot, 2) a phased-in program, and 3) all wiring work being handled via the risk-based system.

ESA relies in part on the licensing system to ensure the appropriate oversight is provided during implementation of electrical work. It is expected that capable and competent LECs are doing the electrical work and meeting their obligations in regulation.

Different inspection scenarios were reviewed and discussed to determine the public's perception.

Questions/Comments included:

Is there a concern with contractors who have a good reputation, but hire new people who may not have the same reputation?

ESA looks at an LEC's work and defect rates as a whole; their staff's work would be reflected in this system.

Is there a system in the contractor community to ensure accountability?

Contractors are required to have a Designated Master Electrician who has specific requirements in regulation to provide oversight and accountability.

If a consumer complained about a contractor would that influence the risk model?

Discipline would be taken into account to an extent. A single complaint would not likely impact the overall assessment of the contractor

In rural areas, there can be a relationship between the contractor and inspector so the qualitative data supports the inspection process and inspector's decisions.

The risk-based system incorporates inspector feedback and local knowledge as a factor in determining response.

Is there a liability risk for ESA for moderate risk work that is not inspected?

The liability for doing work to Code is with those doing the work as per obligations in the Ontario Electrical Safety Code and licensing regulation. ESA is looking at all implications of the risk-based approach.

Has the model been shared externally to ensure accuracy?

An external agency reviewed the risk assessment model for validity and it received strong endorsement. There is also an evaluation going on by inspectors who are reviewing permits over 18 months worth of data and the risk associated with each permit.

The public will need to understand the risk level and what it means.

The risk assessment of a specific wiring job will not be visible to the public as it is within the work deployment system. The larger issue is understanding ESA's variable response e.g. why an inspection in one case but not another?

The average consumer may not know when permits are required – this could just pass right over them.

Schools, nursing homes, etc. vulnerable people, should always be inspected – never consider them low risk.

Just because something is considered low risk doesn't mean it doesn't require in depth observation.

Management noted the feedback.

4. CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE – PUBLICLY AVAILABLE LEC INFORMATION

See presentation.

Norm Breton gathered feedback on what information ESA could or should make publicly available

regarding LECs. The Electrical Contractor Registration Agency (ECRA) Advisory Council has asked for comments from CAC on this topic.

ESA currently publishes information on LECs or unlicensed contractors that have been convicted of wrongdoing (no personal information included). ESA doesn't publish warnings or disciplinary actions.

With regards to ESA's authority, there is information that we don't publish and other authorities/jurisdictions do. ESA would have to appeal to the Government to have the ability to publish more information.

What would consumers want to know when considering hiring an LEC?

Comments included:

In general, access to this information is important – the more information available, the better.

What about the number of outstanding defects that prevents an LEC from obtaining an inspection certificate? Publishing this information could be a selling point for LECs who have a clean record.

If looking for an LEC using the lookup tool, it would be good to have classifications like "in good standing" so you know if they had disciplinary action taken. Looking at the contractor lookup tool, there's no reason not to think they are all the same; they are all authorized and licensed.

Multiple companies owned by the same person should be linked together.

With regards to the information we don't publish, what would be the consumers' perception of ESA "withholding" information? This could be a liability for ESA.

There is no reason a consumer shouldn't have access to all disciplinary information on a company they are considering hiring.

What's the plan on getting public input?

Coming to the Advisory Councils is the first step; already presented this to ECRA. ESA will need to talk to the contractor community as well since this is very impactful. ESA could also create focus groups to get feedback from consumers. This is challenging and ESA needs to ensure consistency.

5. AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

2017 Powerline Safety Campaign

See presentation.

Farrah provided an overview of the spring powerline safety campaign.

New this year :

In-article videos, as well as mobile geo-targeting and advertising on Hockey Night in Canada, Punjabi

edition. ESA will also be doing outreach with occupational safety materials to dump truck and construction companies.

Questions/Comments:

Translation into multiple languages should be made available for the stickers and other materials being distributed.

Targeted media aspect is great and it will be interesting to see how it works out.

Introduction to ESA's Low Voltage Injuries Campaign

See presentation.

Kathryn Chopp provided the Council with an introduction to ESA's non occupational electrical injuries campaign.

This is a new at-risk group which emerged from reviewing safety data. The group is comprised of children and seniors.

A low voltage shock can often be more damaging than high voltage shocks leaving victims with long term injuries that are often not identified at the time of injury.

Comments:

How is a low-voltage shock treated at the ER and useful as a data point? There's the issue with an unseen injury.

ESA is working with medical field and colleges to ensure the awareness is there.

Sick Kids Hospital has a different theme each year so it would be a good idea to partner with them on electrical safety for kids.

6 SERIOUS INCIDENTS REVIEW

See presentation.

Patrick Falzon provided a review of serious electrical incidents that have taken place in Ontario.

Patrick is working with the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (IHSA) on a working group that is reviewing the feasibility of requiring "box raised indicators" in dump trucks.

7 OTHER BUSINESS...

Utility Advisory Committee Update – Joan Pajunen

Stormy weather resulted in the December having no quorum.

There will be changes to Regulation 22/04 and the reporting of serious incidents. There was a discussion by LDCs about needing enough time to implement the changes.

Member survey results – not enough LDCs responded to survey.

UAC members want communications and prereads in advance of the meeting to have ample time to review.

LDCs want access to more electrical safety consumer awareness materials.

ECRA Update – Larry Allison

The ECRA Chair unexpectedly resigned at the January meeting.

Discussed some topics that have been presented at CAC – RBO discussion and public knowledge of LECs' information.

Member Survey

Farrah Bourre reminded Council about the Council's member survey – proposed moving the survey to every two years due to the various changes that occur in administrative roles and members.

Council suggested having a CAC survey this year because of the new Chair; then stagger them every two years.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Kari Manninen

Seconded by Larry Allison

Carried

End of Consumer Advisory Council Meeting

Next Meeting: May 18, 2017
9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Location: ESA Provincial Office