
June 25, 2021**9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.****Meeting via Video-conference**

Present: Rod Skinkle (Chair) Sandy Manners (Vice Chair)
Tammie Orifa Sunaina Menezes
Larry Allison

Regrets:

Guests: Alexander Janack, MGCS

ESA Staff: Borjana Bulajic Soussanna Karas
Emily Larose Shana Hole
Claire Loucks Allison Hawkins

PRELIMINARIES

Chair conducted roundtable introductions and welcomed members to the meeting.

1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest declared.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Motion to Approve Agenda

1st: Sandy Manners

Seconded by Sunaina Menezes

Carried

Motion to Approve Minutes

MOTION to approve February 19, 2021

1st: Sandy Manners

Seconded by Sunaina Menezes

Carried

3. ADMINISTRATIVE MONETARY PENALTIES

The Assistant General Counsel introduced the Auditor General recommendation that MGCS give ESA the authority to issue administrative monetary penalties (AMPs). See presentation for details.

Comments:

Member asked how AMPs would address repeat offenders and what sort of revenues AMPs could result in. Assistant General Counsel responded that it would depend on the contravention but that AMPs are an additional step in the escalation process. ESA does not expect that AMPs will be an enormous revenue stream; they are intended to be a deterrent, not punitive. The scope of authority will be determined by MGCS in Regulation.

Member asked about the need for AMPs. Assistant General Counsel responded that some of the contraventions ESA prosecutes, which is an onerous process, could potentially be addressed with AMPs instead. ESA would preserve prosecutions for the most serious cases.

4. RESTRICTIONS REGARDING LOWER RISK ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

Director of Licensing and Training introduced the Auditor General's recommendation regarding whether certified electricians or master electricians can be allowed to perform lower-risk installation work. Director of Licensing and Training explained the current licensing regime and restrictions and noted that the recommendation is a joint initiative with MGCS. ESA will conduct internal review and will put together a recommendation which then will be subject to targeted stakeholder consultations.

Member stated that this is a huge undertaking with large implications and asked if this would refer to work like what "do-it-yourselfers" are already doing? What kind of lower risk work? Director of Licensing and Training responded that nothing has been approved yet but the Auditor General recommendation pointed to pot light installations as lower risk items. ESA is looking at Category Two installations, which include extra-low voltage power circuits, such as electrical medical equipment, audio visual and internet equipment, to determine categories that pose low risk, even to those who are not skilled. Low risk installations would allow the public to hire someone at a lower cost. However, it could have long standing implications for the industry and homeowners. ESA will listen to the industry, who tend to be conservative about risk and argue that there is no such thing as low risk electrical work. That is a premise ESA is working with.

ACTION: Director of Licensing to return with update on "lower risk installations".

5. AGR 15.2: ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

Director of Licensing and Training explained the Regulatory Compliance Program, which has dedicated staff to support and conduct pilots aimed at increasing compliance and target underground economy. Staff review reports of illegal installations and respond to those reports, with the goal of reviewing 100% of reports received and responding to them.

6. UPDATING ME EXAM WITH NEW QUESTIONS

Director of Licensing and Training provided an update on work to update ME exam questions and add 200 additional questions to the exam bank by Summer 2021. An external consultant has been retained to provide guidance to a working group. Working Group consists of MEC members and ESA experts and they are working to draft new exam questions.

Comments:

Member asked if advanced and emerging technologies are being considered. Licensing Advisor responded that ESA is looking at emerging issues and the highest number of defects which might indicate a lack of knowledge. After each Code revision, new exam questions are added to address new sections of the Code, which also addresses emerging issues and safety precautions.

Members discussed to what extent ESA is working with the colleges that are graduating the electrical students and the importance of collaboration between Skilled Trades Ontario and ESA. Licensing Advisor responded that ESA consulted with colleges on the best approach. Director of Licensing and Training explained that recommendation 17.2 in the Auditor General's report urges ESA to work with Skilled Trades Ontario to ensure collaboration on requirements for the electrician's journey. ESA will also work with colleges so that apprentices are informed of the ESA and licensing requirements as early as possible.

Members discussed the importance of how exam questions are articulated, the environment in which the exam is conducted and the involvement of the external consultant. Director of Licensing and Training responded that a psychometric expert is providing input and that exam accessibility is subject to AODA and ESA has provisions for those who require accommodations to write the exam.

ACTION: Director, Communications, Government and Stakeholder Relations responded that an update on the work and answers to the questions raised by the members can be provided at the next meeting. Council was particularly interested in accessibility issues.

7. CONTINUING EDUCATION

Director of Licensing and Training introduced the Auditor General's recommendation regarding CE for MEs, which is intended to enhance safety and Code compliance. The framework has not yet been determined and is subject to government approval; ESA's goal is to discuss the proposal and receive feedback. See presentation for details.

Comments:

Member stated that it is a great initiative, and he is glad to see ESA acting on it. Director of Licensing and Training responded that it will help with consistent knowledge of Code changes, strengthen safety, enhance consumer protection and ensure high quality work.

8. AGR 20.3: IDENTIFY CATEGORIES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO BE PUBLICLY DISCLOSED ON LECS

Director of Licensing and Training introduced ESA's activities to comply with the AG recommendation 20.3. ESA has been working with TSBC to review disclosure categories and conducting comparative analyses. Consumer protection is a key ESA strategy pillar, so CAC will be consulted more in-depth regarding the type of information that would be most helpful for consumers to strengthen public safety.

9. UNDERGROUND ECONOMY UPDATE

Licensing Advisor provided an overview of the Regulatory Compliance Program, the WSIB Pilot and the EV Chargers Pilot. See presentation for details.

Members stated they were impressed with the results of the various pilots and asked whether results could be shared. Manager, Stakeholder Relations & Research responded that presentations will be sent out with the draft minutes.

Member asked if there was any consideration to reaching out to utilities to reach out to the public through their newsletters. Director, Communications, Government and Stakeholder Relations responded that ESA is working with industry.

ACTION: Share Kijiji Pilot info.

POWERLINE SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Manager, External & Internal Communications provided information on the Powerline Safety Campaign, its objectives and its performance and results. See presentation for details.

Comments:

Members discussed the success of the campaign and how it was created and whether the presentation could be shared with TSSA. Director, Communications, Government and Stakeholder Relations responded that the presentation will be shared.

NEW BUSINESS

Director, Communications, Government and Stakeholder Relations introduced Gurvinder Chopra as a strong candidate interested in joining and with expertise in product safety, which is a key aspect for CAC. Members reviewed his resume.

Director, Communications, Government and Stakeholder Relations made a motion to vote on Mr. Chopra joining CAC. All members were in favour; the motion passed. She will share another potential member resume, with focus on electric vehicles.

MEMBER UPDATES

Director, Communications, Government and Stakeholder Relations stated that the Chair's term is completed at the end of this meeting; she asked for a motion to name a new Chair. It was recommended that Sandy Manners, current Vice-Chair be nominated as the Chair and take the role as of the September 24, 2021 meeting; Ms. Manners accepted the nomination.

Motion: Tammie Orifa

Seconded: Larry Shaver

Motion passed

Director, Communications, Government and Stakeholder Relations confirmed that three members with expiring terms have accepted another three-year term. A new Vice-Chair will be elected at the September 24, 2021 meeting. Members were thanked for their work.

UAC Update: Member provided an update from UAC and discussed utility concerns that on the OEB Score Card, they are unfairly rate on some serious incidents that are beyond their control, such as drunk drivers knocking down utility poles. Members discussed that the logic for not including such incidents is that they are beyond the control of utilities.

ECRA AC Update: Member stated that ECRA AC heard presentations on AMPs and CE at the May meeting.

ACTION: Member stated that updates from other Advisory Councils should be a separate Agenda item. Director, Communications, Government and Stakeholder advised that will be done.

WRAP UP & ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Sandy Manners

Seconded by Tammie Orifa

Carried

End of Consumer Advisory Council Meeting

If there are any discrepancies to these minutes, please report them by email to Chair and Carol Keiley.

Next Meeting: September 24, 2021

Location: ZOOM Conference Call or in-person if possible