
September 24, 2021**9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.****Meeting via Video-conference**

Present:	Sandy Manners (Chair)	Sunaina Menezes
	Tammie Orifa	Rod Skinkle
Regrets:	Larry Allison	
Guests:	Alexander Janack, MGCS	Melissa Gallina, LURA
ESA Staff:	Borjana Bulajic	Scott Eason
	Shana Hole	Esau Habibulla
	Claire Loucks	Allison Hawkins

PRELIMINARIES

The Chair 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: Rod Skinkle

Seconded by Sandy Manners

Carried

Motion to Approve Minutes of June 25, 2021 meeting.

1st: Rod Skinkle

Seconded by Sandy Manners

Carried

The Chair thanked the out-going Chair for his work and leadership in the role. The out-going Chair thanked the newly appointed Chair and stated that it has been a pleasure to see how the Committee has grown and developed; the committee is in good hands with the new Chair.

The Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations thanked the outgoing Chair on behalf of ESA for his insights, knowledge and passion. She highlighted his significant contributions over a number of years.

The Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations stated that as Sandy Manners is now Chair, Sunaina Menezes has accepted the nomination to be Vice Chair and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Motion to confirm position of Vice Chair

1st: Tammie Orifa

Second: Sandy Manners

Carried

3. ACTION ITEMS

- Director of Licensing to return with update on “lower risk installations”. (See presentation below).
- Director of Licensing to return with update on ME exam and accessibility and accommodations. (See presentation below).
- Share Kijiji Pilot info and the results from the Powerline Safety Campaign with TSSA. Report back to council. (COMPLETE)
- Send presentations to Council. (COMPLETE)

Comments:

4. LICENSING

The Licensing Manager introduced herself and her role at ESA. She provided an update on the ME exam in response to questions raised by the committee at the last meeting regarding how questions were written, with a focus on inclusivity and accessibility. She provided an overview of the Regulatory Compliance Program and its approach and its various proactive pilots and an update on the Electric Vehicles Charger Pilot project. She provided an update on virtual proctoring for ME exam, including the process for these exams, uptake and pass rates. Please see presentation for details.

Comments:

ME Exam

- Chair stated that the presentation was great and covered a lot of the questions that we had about how exam questions were written.
- Member stated that she was very impressed with the work done to meet inclusivity and accessibility principles and to incorporate these standards into exam questions.
- Licensing Manager stated that she is happy to come back and provide future updates, in the interest of ensuring the highest standards possible.

Electric Vehicles Charger Pilot

- Chair asked whether a comparison of maps of EV chargers, such as for Plug n Drive, with ESA data has been conducted.
 - Licensing Manager said she liked this idea and would like to look into this as a way of focusing efforts.
 - Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations responded that ESA has partnered with Plug n Drive, who used our communications material to post and share online, as well as Toronto Hydro, to share information in an integrated approach.
 - Chair asked if ESA has approached Plug N Drive to discuss providing a member for the committee.
 - Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations responded yes, we are in discussions with them.
 - Chair responded that would be a good organization to approach.
- Member stated that many new condo buildings are built without EV chargers but there is a demand for them; lots of people living in condos who would be interested but their condo does not have the capabilities. He asked if this is on ESA's radar.
 - Licensing Manager responded that she likes the idea of reaching out to condos so they can become aware of what the requirements are and that should be relatively simple to do. She asked about how to get list of condo associations.
 - Member responded that he is not sure but as it is a matter of public record, it should be found with some digging. He stated that if you build a new house, you need to have EV ready connections but not at condos, which is something to consider.
 - Stakeholder Consultant stated that property management companies would be a good place to start.
 - Stakeholder Advisor stated that rental properties could also be included in outreach.

- Member stated that there is a pay per use EV charging station at her condo building and that the feedback has been positive.
- Licensing Manager responded that she will take this feedback to the team.

Virtual Proctoring

- Member stated that she is glad that the written piece of the exam is still available as it is an accommodation option and asked if the flags during virtual proctoring have been reviewed for potential biases.
 - Licensing Manager responded that flags have not been reviewed specifically for biases but we can look at the trends.
- Member asked if there are certain individuals whose IDs appears blurry but in reality, the issue is with how the AI system is gathering information?
 - Licensing Manager responded that she would look further into this issue but so far, the issue has been blurry names on the IDs, rather than blurry photos.
 - Member responded that it would likely take time to gather trends but thought it was worth bringing it up.
- Chair stated that the presentation was very useful, with a lot of good information.

ACTION ITEM: *Licensing Manager to look into question about potential AI biases.*

5. ANNUAL REPORT, PODCAST, AG & GR UPDATES, SAFETY AWARDS

The Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations provided updates on:

- Highlights from the Annual Report, including ESA's involvement in supporting provincial initiatives related to COVID-19, ESA /ECRA's AC contribution to Sunnybrook, the Powerline Safety Campaign and the 2021 Wiring Survey Feedback.
- The new ESA podcast, *Grounded in Ontario*
- The annual Safety Awards
- Progress on the Auditor General's recommendations and Government Relations activities

Please see the full Annual Report for details:

https://esasafe.com/assets/files/esasafe/pdf/Corporate_Reports/ESA-AR2021-Final.pdf

Comments:

- Chair expressed her compliments to Communications team for the design, the Annual Report is very informative and easy to read.
 - Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations thanked the Chair and responded that she will pass along the feedback to the team.

6. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Director of Finance provided an overview of the financial result from Fiscal Year 2021 contained in the Annual Report, outlining the impacts of COVID-19 and ESA's responses to mitigate the impacts.

Comments:

- Chair noted that the return on investments has been good.
 - Director of Finance responded that it represents paper gains and it is hard to know the end result, as there is always risk in this area.
 - Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations responded that the financial information presented is contained in the Annual Report for transparency.
 - Director of Finance stated that he is happy to return to provide future updates.

7. AUDITOR GENERAL RECOMMENDATION 12.1: LOW-RISK INSTALLATIONS

The Project Specialist, Licensing introduced himself and his role. He provided an overview of AGR 12.1 and introduced the purpose of the presentation to collect feedback to share with the Ministry. He explained the regulations governing electrical installations, provided an overview of the work conducted to date and internal working group processes. Please see presentation for details.

Comments:

- Chair asked for clarification of terminology used: are certified electricians, Master Electricians (MEs) and Licensed Electrical Contractors (LECs) the same thing?
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded no, certified electrician is the individual qualified to be able to do electrical work for an employer, ME is a licensed individual who is a certified electrician or other¹, a licensed electrical contractor is a business licensed to offer electrical services.
 - Chair asked if you can be a certified electrician but not an LEC?
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded yes. One person could be all three of those but not always the case. In Ontario, there are over 30,000 certified electricians, 15,000 MEs and 9,000 LECs.
- Chair asked what is included in heating elements.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded a thermostat for example.
- Chair asked whether bonding work would be inspected after it is completed.

¹ As outlined in the presentation, a Master Electrician could also be a Powerline Technician, Professional Engineer or a Certified Engineering Technician/Technologist.

- Project Specialist, Licensing responded that ESA inspectors would be responsible.
- Chair asked whether the bonding of a pool is similar to that under transformer station.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded in principle, yes.
- Chair asked whether the requirements for underground conduits would extend to other utilities such as telecoms.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded that the same principles would be used but ESA would not always be involved, depending on the situation.
 - Chair asked if the same regulations would apply in cases where the same conduit is shared with other utilities.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded that it would have to meet requirements in OESC.
- Chair asked whether exemptions would be in place for home renovations involving knob and tube wiring, as that is trickier.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded that is not something that had been specifically discussed but it is a good point. Aluminum and copper wiring being mixed could also be an issue.
 - Chair asked if it could be that when considering buildings completed before a certain date/before aluminum wiring was discontinued, the same type of exemption would apply.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded that the team has not gotten this granular in its discussions as it depends on decisions yet to be made.

Group Discussion

Members were asked to consider the following questions:

- What are your thoughts on the proposed “lower risk” work categories?
- Does it make sense to have unlicensed contractors provide services within these categories?
- Are there (any) situations where it makes sense to have unlicensed contractors provide services?
- Are there any other thoughts you would like to share?

Comments:

- Member stated that it makes sense at a conceptual level and in general, it makes sense to include people like this. It seems like you have proper safety controls in place and it is better to work with people operating in the underground economy, as you can exert more control over time.

- Member agreed and stated that although she does not understand the technical pieces, it is positive if you can broaden the opportunities to legitimize work that is already being done.
- Member agreed that reducing barriers to come into compliance is a great idea.
- Chair asked if the Fire Marshall has been part of the stakeholding.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded no but if it is accepted by the Minister, the proposal would require broader consultation at that point.
- Chair stated that she is fine with categories 1-3 but 4 might require more consideration. With small residential renovations, she would like to see a list of what is being discussed and asked if is there a way for people to get around invoicing requirements. She does not know what the scope of work would be required for a home renovation.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing stated that good points have been raised. There is the potential for someone to game the rules, although that also exists today. By increasing the number of people legally allowed to do the work, does it empower others to wedge themselves into a space that they ought not to be in? There could be confusion from homeowner regarding who is allowed to do what type of work, which could weaken the message and could be a step backwards.
 - Chair asked whether the potential Potlights Pilot mentioned previously would fall under these requirements.
 - Project Specialist, Licensing responded that potlights could be included in residential renovations or class 2 wiring exemptions, depending on the situation.
- Member stated that this is a pretty major rethink and agreed with the Project Specialist, Licensing's comment about potentially being a step backwards. The proposal has advantages but changes introduce potential for confusion. He stated the potential for issues in invoicing requirements and that people will try to subvert them.
- Chair stated that MEs could be put in a tricky situation. A homeowner might call one for one thing but once they are on site, they could be asked to do more work than originally agreed to, which would put them in an awkward situation when it comes to invoicing.
- Project Specialist, Licensing stated that key points have been made; expanding to a broader workforce is a good idea in principle but when you look further into it, you see why the rules exist today and if they are changed, careful consideration is needed.
- Chair stated that the discussion has been eye opening.

Project Specialist, Licensing provided an email address for submissions into the chat for feedback; stated that there is lots to contemplate.

8. MEMBERS UPDATE

No updates.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

- Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations discussed hiring process for three new members of the Council and encouraged members to share resumes; all potential members are welcome, as we are all consumers.
- Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations stated that recruitment information is available on the ESA website and potential members can email her directly.
- Stakeholder Consultant stated that recruitment messaging can be resent to members.
- Chair asked if members are permitted to post to their own LinkedIn accounts.
 - Director of Communications, Government & Stakeholder Relations responded yes.

ACTION ITEM: Stakeholder Advisor to send Terms of Reference and recruitment messaging to members.

10. WRAP UP & ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Rod Skinkle

Seconded by Sunaina Menezes

Carried

End of Consumer Advisory Council Meeting

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

Next Meeting: November 26, 2021

Location: ZOOM Conference Call or in-person if possible.