



LICENSING STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2025

Electrical Safety Authority

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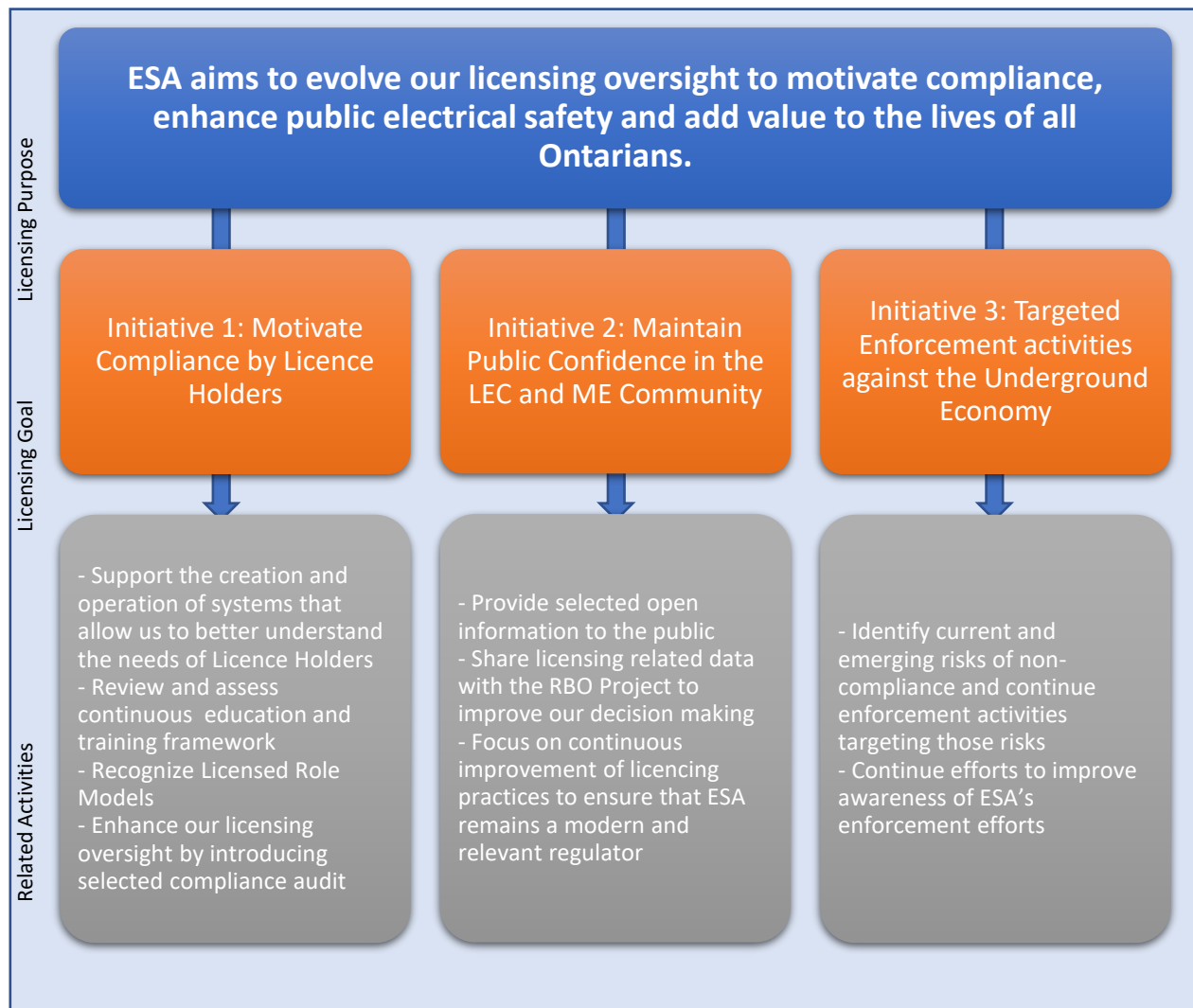
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ESA'S LICENSING STRATEGIC PLAN

ESA's Licensing Strategic Plan in Brief



The Role of Licensing

A fair and transparent licensing function is an important part of ESA's integrated regulatory framework and one of the critical enablers of a robust electrical safety system in Ontario.

The Licensed Electrical Contractors (LEC), Master Electricians (ME) and Designated Master Electricians (DME) (jointly referred to as "Licence Holders") regulated by ESA are a group that combine skills, expertise and professionalism to provide services that advance electrical safety for all Ontarians. ESA strives to maximize the value of the LEC or DME//ME licence, yet also recognizes opportunities for continuous improvement. Some Licence Holders are role models in the community, while others still strive to align their licensing related activities with some regulatory

requirements. ESA aspires to clarify and simplify the paths to compliance for all Licence Holders while acting as a partner that encourages a culture of electrical safety. ESA also recognizes that there is a group of unlicensed contractors that cannot or will not comply with the law, operating entirely outside of the regulatory system in the “underground economy”.

In ESA’s Licensing Strategic Plan, ESA considers avenues to maximize compliance for these groups, and intends to take action where all attempts to encourage compliance have been exhausted.

Licensing Objectives

ESA will continue the evolution of our licensing efforts through the three initiatives listed below. In doing so, ESA believes that we will have a meaningful and positive impact on electrical safety and consumer protection.

Initiative 1: Motivate Compliance by Licence Holder

Initiative 2: Maintain Public Confidence in the LEC and ME Community

Initiative 3: Targeted Enforcement activities against the Underground Economy

Overview of Key Licensing Initiatives

Initiative 1: Motivate Compliance by Licence Holders

ESA recognizes that there are diverse groups within the LEC and DME/ME community. By building on ESA’s understanding of the nuances and needs of the Licence Holder community, ESA will continue to make informed decisions on how ESA can best motivate licensing compliance and positive behavioral changes. ESA’s aim is to work in partnership with Licence Holders to understand barriers to compliance and identify opportunities to simplify and clarify regulatory requirements.

Supporting Activities:

ESA will use technology to improve how Licence Holders work and interact with ESA

1. As part of ESA’s continued evolution of data management and analysis capabilities, ESA’s Licensing Department, in collaboration with other departments, will take steps to develop better data management structures to improve the effectiveness and find efficiencies in the management of licensing related information.
2. ESA recognizes the value in a deep understanding of LEC and DME/ME behaviours and needs. To ensure that ESA is able to recognize the nuances and diversity of Licence Holders, ESA wants to understand various stages of the LEC and DME/ME professional journey so ESA can work to better address their specific needs.
3. While ESA develops this understanding, ESA intends to reduce regulatory burden and improve the licensing experience for LECs and DME/MEs. ESA will take steps to simplify the licensing and licensing renewal process. In addition, ESA hopes to better communicate and assist License Holders with understanding regulatory requirements. As ESA’s understanding of the contractor community continues to grow, ESA intends to continue taking actions to improve contractors’ licensing experience.

Review and assess a continuous education and professional development framework

ESA believes that there may be opportunities to review and assess various models of continuous education, professional development and training opportunities that can assist LECs and DMEs/ MEs in building their brand, enhance professionalism and provide additional clarity with respect to compliance.

Celebrate licensed role models

For those LECs and DMEs/MEs that are role models in the licensed community, ESA intends to find ways to recognize their exemplary behavior and professional attributes. This may include ways in which ESA could provide the status of these role models more broadly within the electrical safety system.

Enhance ESA's compliance oversight process to consider a selected audit process

ESA will undertake a comprehensive review of best practices and evaluate the benefits of introducing selective licensing compliance audits as a tool to motivate compliance. ESA anticipates that this process may be used only in serious cases of repeated non-compliance and may involve such tools as a review of certain business records to ensure compliance with the Regulation 570/05 (Licensing Regulation) and other regulatory requirements.

Initiative 2: Maintain Public Confidence in the LEC and ME Community

ESA will continuously assess and review ESA's licensing practices. ESA will ensure its licensing practices are transparent, objective, impartial and fair to improve customer experience and add value to Licence Holders, the public and other stakeholders.

Supporting Activities:

Provide access to select information

ESA will consider sharing relevant licensing information with the public of Ontario. It is ESA's belief that sharing selective information will help consumers make informed decisions about their electrical service providers. Early considerations include areas of specialization, areas of increased training or education, licensing actions taken, and/or the licence status (active, expired, conditional, etc.). ESA aspires to create a comprehensive licensing public registry similar to the public registries offered by other Delegated Administrative Authorities (DAAs).

Share licensing operational experience and continuous learning with other ESA departments

Licensing data can be used as a critical decision input in a Risk-based Oversight (RBO) model. ESA will consider how relevant licensing information can be shared with RBO initiatives and vice versa, and what the impact on all stakeholders would be. ESA intends to continue building integrated licensing and inspection programs and systems that enable ESA's risk-based approach to oversight.

Focus on continuous improvement of licensing practices to ensure that ESA remains a modern and relevant regulator

ESA will work in partnership with the government and stakeholders to ensure the language and provisions of the Licensing Regulation remains current and reflects changes in the environment, technology and work practices.

Initiative 3: Targeted Enforcement activities against the Underground Economy

ESA recognizes that there are individuals that willfully operate outside of the regulatory regime, as part of the underground economy. ESA believes this endangers the electrical safety of Ontarians. ESA will continue with efforts to identify, inform, educate and investigate to bring these individuals into compliance. When enforcement action is deemed necessary, ESA will take actions that are effective, predictable and consistent.

Supporting Activities:

Identify current and emerging trends in unlicensed electrical work and continue enforcement actions targeting high risks

ESA will continue to identify, collect and analyze data to recognize current and emerging risks of unlicensed electrical work, applying the harm lifecycle principles from ESA's corporate strategy. ESA will continue to identify, investigate and take enforcement action, where deemed necessary. ESA will prioritize and direct resources to matters that have the greatest impact on public safety.

In particular, ESA will continue with its Renovation Inspection Program (the Program) and will evolve the Program, based on best practices and lessons learned as the Program matures.

In addition, ESA will explore the feasibility of using information technology and mobile applications to make it easy to report instances of non-compliance.

Help increase awareness of ESA's enforcement efforts

ESA is actively involved in the identification of and enforcement actions against unlicensed contractors who endanger the wellbeing of Ontarians. The Licensing Department will continue to play a key role supporting the communication of ESA's enforcement efforts. The Licensing Department will work in partnership with other ESA teams with the goal of increasing awareness, changing behaviours and encouraging individuals to make decisions that will protect the electrical safety of Ontarians.

Achievement of Objectives

In delivering progress against these initiatives, ESA believes that it will be able to have a positive impact on licensing related compliance, and help deliver a key component of an integrated regulatory framework. ESA is aware that to achieve these objectives, it is essential that ESA:

1. Successfully complete necessary technology enhancements
2. Have available financial and human resources
3. Work with government and stakeholders to evolve ESA's regulatory authority, if and as required

Conclusion

ESA will continue to leverage licensing as a key component in ESA's integrated regulatory framework through the implementation of the initiatives and related activities in the Licensing Strategic Plan. ESA will continue with efforts to better understand and respond to LEC and DME/ME needs at various stages of their professional journey. ESA will add value to contractors' interactions with ESA and work together with Licence Holders to further motivate compliance with the Licensing Regulation.

ESA welcomes the continued evolution of its licensing approach. ESA believes the Licensing Strategic Plan will further complement ESA's risk-based approach to regulation, motivate compliance, enhance public electrical safety and add value to the lives of all Ontarians.