

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first Annual General Meeting of the Electrical Contractors Registration Agency of the Electrical Safety Authority, also referred to as ECRA of ESA.

My name is Glenn Carr and I am, at present, the Chair of the Electrical Contractors Registration Agency.

The ECRA Board's mandate is to seek feedback, monitor, review and provide advice and recommendations of ECRA to the Electrical Safety Authority Board of Directors on matters related to licensing, examination, registration and certification of persons or businesses for different types of electrical work throughout the province of Ontario. ECRA represents the interests of all electrical contractors, master electricians, consumers and municipalities, in the province on Ontario.

The ECRA Board is made up of 10 directors representing Electrical contractors, Utility Contractors, Ontario Municipalities, Consumers and ESA and represents broader interest and not just the interests of their nominating associations.

I'll ask the Directors to please stand and take a bow when I introduce them:

Here with us today are:

2 members representing electrical contractors from the Ontario Electrical League (OEL):

Don Gosen – Vice Chairperson - Gosen Electric Limited

Dave Ackison - Ackison Electric

2 members representing electrical contractors from the Ontario Electrical Contractors Association (ECAO):

My self

Gary Beer - Jay Electric Ltd. & Enerscan Control

2 members from the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA):

Peter Marcucci - Electrical Safety Authority

Scott Saint – Electrical Safety Authority

2 members representing the Ontario municipalities from the Association of Municipal, Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO):

Susan Jones - City of Ottawa

Jamie Hinton - City of Mississauga

1 member representing the Utility Contractors Association of Ontario (UCAO):

Namby Vithiananthan – Con-Elco Limited

**1 member representing Ontario Consumers:
John Buchanan**

4 non voting members:

Eryl Roberts – Vice President, Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario

Mary Ingram-Haigh – President, Ontario Electrical League

Barry Brown – General Manager, Utility Contractors Association of Ontario

Lucy Impera – Registrar, Electrical Safety Authority

I would like to go back into the history of licensing and bring you forward to licensing today.

It was back in 1948 that the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario was formed, and one of its principal objectives was to pursue a provincial electrical contractor's license.

1950

A comprehensive brief on licensing of journeyperson electricians was presented to Ontario Premier Leslie Frost with assistance from a legal advisor Roland Michener, who would later become Canada's Governor-General

1954

The ECAO received supplementary letters of patent giving it the authority to establish a system of examination and registration of master and journeyperson electricians

During the following years, ECAO worked with the major municipalities to simplify licensing. A major step forward occurred in the 60's and 70's with the creation of the Reciprocal Recognition program where municipalities agreed to accept the qualifications of each other's licences.

1964

The province proposed the apprenticeship and trades qualification act, which set standards of competence required by journeyperson electricians practicing in Ontario

1974

An electrical contractor working throughout Ontario was required to have a licence in each municipality that granted business licences in which he was working.

Five of the provinces major cities – Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor – representing approximately half of the population of Ontario, entered the reciprocal recognition program.

During this time, the electrical contractors worked along side with the municipalities to standardize the examination process, examination fee and the administrative practices. The Reciprocal Recognition program expanded to twelve areas – Barrie, Brantford, Cambridge, Guelph, Hamilton, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Windsor, bringing the program to 70% of the population.

ECRA was created in 1991. Representatives from the ECAO OEL, Ontario Hydro's Electrical Inspection and municipalities were the founding ECRA Board members that dealt with issues arising between the Electrical Contractor industry and municipalities related to electrical contractor licensing. This Board further promoted the system of examination and registration of Master Electricians and electrical contractors.

George McCue was selected as ECRA's first chairman and Don Gosen, who is here with us today, was also one of the founding ECRA Board members representing the OEL. At that time, the ECRA Board of Directors included two members of each of the following organizations:

Ontario Hydro Electrical Inspection, now known as ESA – the Ontario Electrical League – Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario and two members representing municipal licensing.

At the time, under the Municipal Act in Ontario, municipal governments had the right to grant business licences to electrical contractors that worked in their jurisdictions. There were approximately 800 municipalities in Ontario and many municipalities did not exercise their right to licence electrical contractors.

The Reciprocal Recognition program covered approximately 70% of the population of Ontario with licensing based on the ECRA principals. The remaining 30% represented outlying areas.

In 1995, the Reciprocal Recognition Committee formally endorsed ECRA as a member of the Reciprocal Recognition Program. All participating municipalities used the ECRA Master electrical examination or an examination approved by the Master Electrician Examining Board of ECRA.

1997

ECRA began the development of its pre-examination course. The 36 hour course which was designed to be delivered by third party course givers such as the Ontario Hydro's Electrical Inspection Department, community colleges, local

electrical associations and qualified independent course givers. The pre-masters course greatly helped applicants in their preparation to write the master electricians examination.

1998

ECRA continued its campaign to establish a provincial standard for master electricians and contractor licensing; and

1999

The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) was created in January 1999, to succeed Ontario Hydro as the governing body for electrical inspection and code development. In April 1999, electrical inspection was officially transferred. ESA is a not-for-profit corporation governed by a Board of 12 Directors, including three electrical contractors. Dane MacCarthy, a former senior vice president of Ontario Hydro was appointed as ESA's first chairman. Later today, following this meeting we celebrate Dane's contributions to the initial years of ESA.

2001

After multiple attempts for the industry to achieve provincial licensing, it was in early January, 2001 that an Industry Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the ECAO, OEL and ESA was charged by its constituent organizations to develop a recommended course of action and operational model to achieve effective province-wide licensing of electrical contractors and master electricians in Ontario.

The primary objective has always been to realize a true province-wide standard and system of licensing electrical contractors and master electricians.

The first challenge was to determine how the three organizations could work together to create a province-wide contractor licensing system to meet their own expectations as well as fulfill the interests of the public and government.

Principles for a Provincial System of Licensing Electrical Contractors

The formula for meeting this challenge was to develop a set of guiding principles to govern the process and measure the efficiency of the various models to be considered. The principles were developed at the executive level of each organization and validated through a broader Industry Steering Committee/Focus Group on Provincial Licensing.

Principles

- 1. A provincial system of licensing electrical contractors should be self-regulated.**

2. The system should be built on the existing standards already in place, which are the master electrician examination and licensing.
3. The purpose of the system should be to improve and streamline public safety.
4. There should be no duplication or conflict with other standards.
5. The system should be independent from any apparent conflicts of interest and visibly seen as representing the public interest.
6. The system should be self-funding.

Five models for realizing provincial licensing were identified and evaluated against the guiding principles by the Steering Committee.

The Recommendation

Establish the existing “Electrical Contractors Registration Agency” (ECRA) of the ECAO to ECRA as part of the Electrical Safety Authority. It was to:

- Use the existing standards embodied in ECRA and municipalities as the model for contractor licensing;
- Consolidates existing municipal systems into a single system;
- Continues to ensure contractor and stakeholder input to licensing requirements and processes;
- ESA provides the infrastructure and resources to support licensing province-wide

2003

A Provincial Auditor’s Report noted electrical safety concerns from deficiencies in trade and contractor licensing. The Provincial Auditor recommended that the Ministry of Government Services and the Electrical Safety Authority work with the stake holders to develop provincial standards for the training and licensing of electricians to improve public safety.

2004

A major development in licensing occurred when in November, the Government of Ontario amended Part VIII of the Electricity Act, with the passage of Bill 70, which provided the authority for province-wide licensing of electrical contractors and master electricians to be administered by the Electrical Safety Authority.

2005

A uniform provincial system through regulation was established to licence electrical contractors and master electricians. This new system brought electrical safety forward, with new training and education for the electrical contracting industry.

The regulation enabling provincial licensing was approved in November 2005 and the one year transition period commenced January 1, 2006.

ECRA of ESA began accepting applications for Master Electrician and Electrical Contractor licences on July 1, 2006. It was hoped that the registration would be completed by the January 1, 2007 start up date, but this was not achieved due to the large number of applications received.

2007

As of January 1, 2007, all electrical contractors and master electricians are required to hold a provincial licence issued by ECRA of ESA

The objective of provincial licensing is to improve public safety, make contractors code compliant and remove the burden placed on the electrical contractors to obtain multiple municipal business licences to carry out work across the province

As of August 30, 2007 ECRA of ESA has issued:

6309 - Master Electrician's licences

4105 - Licensed electrical contractors licences

1822 - Provisional electrical contractor's licences.

The previous 58 years have seen many very dedicated individuals from the Electrical Contractor Association of Ontario, the Ontario Electrical League, governments, municipalities, Ontario Hydro Inspection and the Electrical Safety Authority to bring us to today where we now have an Ontario provincial electrical contractors licence which will provide our consumers with electrically safe and professional electrical installations.