LEC Campaign Goes Digital

In October, ESA launched a successful online-only Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC) campaign. This was the first time this awareness effort was solely online.

Online Ads Drive Results
As with previous campaigns, the digital campaign focused on educating consumers about the risks of doing electrical work and raising awareness about the importance of using an LEC. The goal was to drive visitors to the pluginsafely.ca website and to build on the momentum of previous campaigns. Previously created ads and videos were used, supported by a robust public relations effort.

The campaign, which took place from October to mid-November 2012, used “intercept ads” to target consumers. These ads appeared on the pages where consumers were likely to visit when researching doing electrical work. Ads also appeared on DIY sites and home renovation sites, as well as alongside YouTube videos for DIY projects. The campaign was geo-targeted to Ontario consumers.

The campaign results provide an important base for the spring 2013 campaign, which kicked off in February.

Spring Campaign Goes Social
Building on the success of the fall campaign and refining based on what we’ve learned, the spring campaign includes radio ads and public service announcements in various markets across the province. The spring campaign also includes online ads and search marketing tools as well as messages on Twitter and content on ESA’s Facebook page.

Also ongoing is a public relations campaign that includes generating media coverage, providing stories to community newspapers and arranging media interviews. If a contractor is interested in using ESA’s safety awareness materials, please send your request to: ESA.Communications@electricalsafety.on.ca.

If you are aware of anyone doing electrical work in violation of the Ontario Electrical Safety Code or electrical contractor licensing regulations, you should report it to ESA at 1-877-372-7233. We will need some basic information in order to be able to follow-up on the report – where the work is being done and the name of the company or individual doing the work. In addition, if you provide your contact information we will be able to follow-up if we have further questions for our investigation. ESA looks into every such report we receive.
POLARITY IDENTIFICATION FOR PHOTOVOLTAIC DC SYSTEM CONDUCTORS

ESA has been involved in several investigations of fires that occurred when polarity of photovoltaic (PV) source and/or output circuit DC wiring was accidentally reversed during installation. One of the main contributing factors was the lack of marking and/or improper field marking of conductors which present many opportunities for errors and consequently dangerous failures. The failures are suspected to have been caused by increased potential when a single array’s wiring was reversed to a combiner box. Minor contaminants, such as moisture or dirt, have started self-sustaining DC arcing faults even with the fuses in the open position.

Unlike traditional AC systems, where connection of incorrectly identified conductors will cause reversal of motors or an overcurrent device to operate, reversal of DC sources can create series circuits that will produce voltages well in excess of the rated system voltage. Diagram 1 below explains the circuit analogy of a reversed PV source circuit polarity.

Diagram 1 – Reversed polarity of DC sources

Addressing the Problem

Recently, a new rule has been approved by the Canadian Electrical Code, Part I Committee to address this issue. The rule will require the DC PV output circuit conductors, and PV source circuit conductors installed between a module and the power conditioning unit of the DC system, to be coloured, coded, or both. This new requirement will become mandatory when the 26th Edition of the DESC is introduced (anticipated in 2015).

ESA is encouraging contractors to start using coloured or/and coded conductors for the DC PV circuits to minimize the potential of similar incidents and enhance the safety of workers during PV installation. The details of this recommendation are published in bulletin 50-4.5 for all PV installations. The bulletin can be found on ESAsafe.com/Contractors in the Technical Bulletin section.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DESIGNATING A MASTER ELECTRICIAN TO YOUR ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING BUSINESS

One of the most common reasons for a contractor licence to be suspended is when the contractor no longer meets the licensing requirement to have at least one designated Master Electrician (ME) with a valid ME licence.

Avoiding a suspension is straightforward: simply make sure that the licence for your designated ME is renewed prior to its expiry. To make this easier, ESA sends MEs a notice prior to the expiry of their ESA licence.

If you allow your ME’s licence to expire, you’ll be notified and given five business days to renew the ME licence or designate a new ME who has a valid licence. If you can’t do either, you have the option to apply for a 60-day licence provision to allow you time to hire a designated ME.

Every effort is made to avoid suspending an Electrical Contractor Licence. Before being suspended, Electrical Contractors receive a Notice of Proposal to suspend their licence. If the ME licence is not renewed, or if the Electrical Contractor does not employ a designated ME after 15 business days, the Electrical Contractor’s licence is suspended. Once suspended, Electrical Contractors have one year to designate an ME who holds a valid ME licence. If a year passes without a new ME designation, an application for a new Electrical Contractor’s licence must be submitted and all requirements relating to new applications apply.

If your business no longer employs a designated ME, notify ESA within five days to apply for your 60-day provision. This allows you to continue operating while you search for a new designated ME. At the end of the 60-day period, you may request an additional 60-day extension, if necessary.

CERTIFICATE OF QUALIFICATION IS ON THE MOVE

To renew or obtain a Master Electrician licence from ESA, a valid Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) is required.

Currently, C of Qs are issued by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). Later this year, responsibility for issuing and administering C of Qs will transition to the Ontario College of Trades (OCTT). To ensure a smooth ME licence renewal process, we recommend that anyone who may be affected by this change visit the Ontario College of Trades website at www.collegeoftrades.ca to find out more about the transfer of responsibility from MTCU to OCTT. Note that although there are no changes to the ESA ME or Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC) renewal processes, a renewal of the ESA ME or EC licence cannot proceed unless the applicant holds a valid C of Q.

Visit the Ontario College of Trades website at www.collegeoftrades.ca to find out more.
RCL12-37 Robert Bosch Tool Corporation Recalls Skil® Circular Saws Due to Laceration Hazard

The lower guard hub can break, allowing the lower guard to contact the blade during use which may result in laceration hazard. 618 affected units were sold in Canada.

RCL12-40 Cooper Lighting Recalls Commercial Reflector Assembly with Glass Lens Due to Risk of Injury

The reflector can fall out of its fixture to the ground, which could result in an injury. Approximately 1,475 affected units were distributed in Canada.

RCL12-48 DeVilbiss Air Power Company Recalls Air Compressors Due to Fire Hazard – Sold under brand names Craftsman, EX-CELL, Pro-Air II and Porter-Cable

The air compressor motor can overheat, posing a fire hazard. Approximately 4,900 affected units were sold in Canada.

RCL12-38 Cooper Lighting Recalls Commercial Reflector Assembly with Glass Lens Due to Risk of Injury

The reflector can fall out of its fixture to the ground, which could result in an injury. Approximately 1,475 affected units were distributed in Canada.

To learn more about recent product recalls and safety alerts please click on the link on the front page of the ESA website.

Public Consultation on Now for OESC Amendments

ESA has opened a public consultation on two Director’s Orders to review the current electrical safety requirements. The consultations, which are in response to stakeholder and industry feedback about some of the requirements under the Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC), will be open from February 7, 2013 to March 26, 2013.

ESA is seeking input on the following proposed amendments to the OESC:


ESA has identified an inconsistency between the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) Distribution System Code and OESC, which is causing confusion in the marketplace. Under the existing OESC, licensed generators and licensed distributors are fully exempt. However, the OEB requires that all generation facilities, including renewable energy generation and licensed generator’s owned/operated facilities, obtain a connection authorization by ESA prior to connecting to the distribution system. If approved, the proposal will result in an amendment to Rule 2-000 of the OESC and would provide clarity for a licensed distributor and a licensed generator with respect to the OEB’s connection authorization requirements.

Rule 8-102: Revision to Voltage Drop Limits in Single Dwelling Units

ESA is reviewing the existing allowable limit for voltage drop in dwelling units and is proposing to change the voltage drop limit requirements in single dwelling units. If approved, the proposal would allow a slightly higher voltage drop limit provided that electrical safety is not compromised. The existing voltage drop limit defined in the OESC is viewed as too restrictive for current wiring methods in single-dwelling units and require contractors to overbuild in order to meet the Code. This results in additional cost and doesn’t make the installation safer.

Participating in the Consultations

Detailed background papers, Q & A documents and a response template are posted at esasafe.com under the Top Story section. To ensure that your input is accurately recorded when responding to one or both consultations, use the designated feedback template and forward it to OESC2012@electricalsafety.on.ca. Following the consultation period, ESA will tabulate the responses and post the consultation reports on esasafe.com.

ESA Surveys Licensed Electrical Contractors

In February, ESA collected feedback from contractors about their interactions with ESA, and also about electrical safety topics.

The survey was conducted by Harris/Decima, a professional research firm. Harris/Decima contacted a cross-section of all licensed electrical contractors by phone. Respondents had the option to complete the survey by phone or via a secure email link. The questions asked about satisfaction in dealing with ESA, for example permits, inspections, fees, licensing, ACP, communications, etc. ESA also asked for contractors’ perspectives on how to improve safety for electrical workers.

The survey results will be released in the spring.

Worth Knowing

In category: Safety + Stats

Managing wiring services

| Calls answered | 394,242 |
| Inspections   | 335,726 |
| Defects recorded | 8,231 |
| General Inspections (Z8) | 3,872 |
| ACP Contractors | 102,360 |

Wiring compliance and enforcement

| Hazard Investigation Requests [Z7] | 7,808 |
| Notices of Violation | 301 |

Product safety

| Reported Electrical Product Safety Incidents | 758 |
| Recalled Product Notifications | 45 |

Licensing management

| Licensed Electrical Contractors | 7,220 |
| Master Electricians | 11,544 |
| Complaints received | 1063 |
| Complaints resolved | 759 |

Preventing hazards and harms

| CSS Customers (26,258 sites) | 3,872 |

Safety materials distributed

| Powerline and Worker Safety, LEC Campaign | 102,360 |

Electrical distribution management

| Distribution-related incidents | 168 |
| Due Diligence Inspections | 349 |

OESC Amendments

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WSIB Changes Update

Electrical Contractor Licence Holders Affected by New WSIB Changes

The new Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) changes, which require independent operators, sole proprietors, partners and executive officers of businesses in the construction industry to have compulsory WSIB coverage (with certain exceptions), came into effect in January 2013.

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 570/05 for the licensing of Master Electricians and Electrical Contracting businesses, you may have to demonstrate that you’re in compliance with the WSIB’s new requirements on your next electrical contractor licence renewal, unless you have already done so.

This applies only to businesses that are required to be registered with the WSIB.

To find out whether you are required to register with WSIB, please visit their website at www.wsib.on.ca and select eServices from the homepage or call them, toll free, at 1-800-387-0750. The WSIB will issue a clearance certificate to businesses that are registered. On your next electrical contractor licence renewal, you’ll need to provide your WSIB account number as proof of registration.

For questions about what to include with your electrical contractor licence renewal or to update the information on your file to show that you have newly registered with WSIB, please contact us at esa.licensing@electricalsafety.on.ca or at 1-877-ESA-SAFE and choose option 3 for licensing.

What’s Happening

ESA offices will be closed:
Good Friday – March 29, 2013
Easter Monday – April 1, 2013
Victoria Day – May 20, 2013

On April 8, 2013, Electrical Contractor & Master Electrician licensing fees will increase:
• Master Electrician from $75 to $80
• Licensed Electrical Contractor from $365 to $395
• Master Electrician Exam fee from $128 to $137

Regional Contractor Meetings are coming this spring.
Watch for your invitation coming soon.

ESA Goes Social

ESA will be actively promoting electrical safety for consumers in social media.

Follow us on Twitter, and Like us on Facebook.

1-877-ESA-SAFE
ESASAFE.COM

We’d like your input
Please send your comments or story ideas to plugged.in@electricalsafety.on.ca.