



DRAFT - Minutes of the ECRA Advisory Council Meeting

February 7, 2025

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Meeting held virtually via Zoom

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT	ESA EMPLOYEES PRESENT
Cameron Hann, OEL, Chair	Patience Cathcart
Larry Shaver, ECAO, Vice Chair	Sarah Kempel
Cathy Taylor, Community at Large	Shana Hole
Steve Del Guidice, OEL	Declan Doyle
Vince De Gasperis, UCAO	Sylvia Gaidauskas
Kelly Casey, ESA Nominee	Alex Janack (APO Updates)
Leo Grellette, ESA Nominee	
GUESTS	REGRETS
Laura Campbell, MPBSDP	Stephen Green, ECAO
Doug McGinley, Outgoing MEC Chair	
Glen Hicks, Incoming MEC Chair	

AGENDA ITEM	Call to Order Notice and Quorum No conflicts were declared with the Agenda
PRESENTER	Chair

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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MOTION	The motion to accept the minutes of the October 23, 2024 meeting.
MOTIONED	Larry Shaver
SECONDED	Steve Del Guidice
	<i>Motion carried</i>

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Review of Open Action Items:

1. ESA to consider notifying DME’s when an EC licence is no longer valid. The Licensing Technology Platform (LTP) will help address this; addition of an automated flag is within the scope of the project. Status of LTP development is as follows:
 - Software development ongoing since August 2024. Currently in the sixth phase and final phase with an expected end date of February 19, 2025.
 - Testing and integration to existing systems will follow and project delivery is expected by autumn 2025. Project launch is delayed due to the complexity of integration of current functions such as fee processing, exam administration, enforcement, etc.
 - In response to a member’s question, the software platform for LTP is Microsoft Dynamics 365. Current system is SAP.

2. Master Examination Committee (MEC) Update (in-camera): Doug McGinley, Chair of MEC provided an overview of the 2024 statistics, the creation of new exam questions, and the accommodation procedure. Doug has reached the end of his term and introduced incoming MEC Chair Glen Hicks.

3. Introduction of new ESA person and work assignment changes:
 - Sylvia Gaidauskas has joined as Stakeholder Advisor.
 - Shana Hole is back in her role in Licensing after a secondment in Policy.
 - Sarah Kempel was thanked for her support in Licensing and will continue until the end of the ESA fiscal year (March 31).

4. ME Competency Profile Resource Library Filter Functionality has been implemented. In addition to the search functionality which was already implemented, there is an ability to filter content by domain. Thanks to members for providing the suggestion based on their user experience.

5. December 2024 Board Committee Meeting Update: Cam, with the support of Patience, presented an update of 2024 ECRA AC accomplishments which was well received. There were no questions from Board members.

Action Item: Cam to circulate the presentation delivered to the Board, with pre-read materials, for next meeting (June).

AGENDA ITEM	Licence Holder Meeting (LHM) 2024 - Feedback
PRESENTER	Sarah Kempel – Licensing Manager

- A review of the 2024 LHM agenda and high-level numbers was provided:
 - 1060 registrants with attendance of 587 which is in-line with industry expectations.
 - 20 ESA staff were involved in the planning and execution with 10 speakers.

- 218 technical and non-technical questions were answered either pre-submitted (37%) or posed through the chat function (63%).
- Based on post-meeting survey of 187 respondents, key findings were identified as a high satisfaction with the Q&A and technical content, interest in addressing the underground economy and more code-focused content.
- Potential format change scenarios were presented to garner input to inform the development of the 2025 LHM. A summary of feedback includes:
 - Technical Q&A should be separated out as it is not relevant to being a licensed contractor which is focused more holistically on running a business;
 - Ministry of Labour (MLITSD) or equivalent could present to include more business / licence content;
 - Consider pre-recording Q&A session which can be accessed before the live meeting;
 - More focus on regulatory changes. Electrical code updates is not the focus of ECRA and the licensing process;
 - Review the original intent of the LHM to ensure that the right focus is presented;
 - More information about common defects and new technologies is important;
 - Meetings should continue to be held virtually to attract the largest number of participants as in-person meetings generally had attendance of 100 people. To be considered is a Toronto-based in-person meeting which is recorded and then can be shared province-wide.
- A question was asked in regard to the number of registrants (who didn't attend) that accessed the recording after the meeting. No statistics are available to track this specifically, but it was acknowledged that number of people accessing the recording for last year's LHM was low (number of views is reflected on YouTube platform). Further communication, that the recording is available, is planned for an e-blast to licence holders and a piece in PluggedIn (March).

Action Item: ECRA AC members to consider additional suggestions for the 2025 LHM. Topic will be added to June in-person meeting agenda.

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AGENDA ITEM	Bi-Annual council Survey Results
PRESENTER	Patience Cathcart – Interim Director, Licensing

Bi-annual survey was conducted in December 2024 across all Advisory Councils (AC). Participation rate was 30% which fell within the 20 – 40% expected participation range. Responses were collected in the aggregate and not separated per AC.

In general, quantitative results were quite positive. Areas recognized in the survey for improvement were reviewed individually to allow time for discussion. A summary

includes:

- ESA resources are appropriate and effectively supporting ECRA AC. No concerns raised with turnover of staff as some attrition is a normal part of business.
- Process to permanently fill the position of Director of Licensing is in process. Applications have been received and interviews will start shortly.
- In regards to council effectiveness, members commented that ECRA AC could be involved earlier in initiatives to provide insight into the LEC perspective. The library filter, discussed earlier, is a good example where the user experience enhanced the functionality of this resource.
- Some survey comments were not applicable to ECRA AC. For future surveys, consider the timing of the survey to maximize responses and also consider communicating AC-specific comments.
- In response to one comment in the survey regarding understanding of the role of other ACs, a recommendation was tabled to have ACs Chairs and Vice-Chairs meet annually to share information. Although there is some cross-pollination of AC members, not all members are receiving adequate updates of the actions and discussions within other Advisory Councils.

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AGENDA ITEM	Terms of Reference
PRESENTER	Patience Cathcart – Interim Director, Licensing

ECRA AC Terms of Reference (ToR) were last updated in 2017 and could benefit from an update to align with current practices and other Advisory Councils, streamline language and update some terminology. A draft revision has been prepared and a summary of the proposed changes was shared with ECRA AC.

Members were in agreement that a refresh is necessary and that the draft revision could be circulated two weeks before the June in-person meeting. In regard to the open position that was previously reserved for a municipal representative, Chair recommended that a second representative from the utility contractor sector be considered.

Action Item: Distribute draft ToR revision prior to June meeting and add review of the draft to the June agenda.

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AGENDA ITEM	Continuing Education (CE) for Master Electricians (ME)
PRESENTER	Cam Hann – Chair / Roundtable

This item was moved up in the agenda to accommodate members' schedules. Before addressing Continuing Education, a question was raised as to tracking member terms and

recruitment to fill positions that may soon be vacant. Stakeholder Advisory team (Sylvia Gaidauskas) confirmed that monitoring the membership is currently ongoing and that the process has already been started to fill Larry Shaver’s position by June 2025.

Action Item: Sylvia to send status of members’ terms to ECRA AC Chair.

There seems to be consensus amongst ECRA AC Members that some form of promoting Continuing Education (CE) is necessary. Many other related organizations e.g. professional engineers and unrelated organizations e.g. finance/ mortgages have this requirement. Could be especially useful to smaller contractors.

- Several members indicated that it might be time to petition the Ministry once again.
- Declan commented that many levels of management within the ESA have advocated to the Ministry to make CE a mandatory requirement. As an alternative to a mandatory requirement, there were efforts to make qualifying training modules available e.g. OESC.
- A suggestion was made to the former Director of Licensing that “mandatory” be removed from communication to the Ministry. Most people are interested in bettering themselves and accepting of a program.
- Models from other industries include completion of required courses but also a certain number of hours of self-reporting with an accompanying attestation for traceability in the event of a complaint or incident. Since inspectors are reviewing LEC work, data collected on defects could be used to assess number of hours of CE credits required annually or bi-annually.
- A member suggested that a CE program does not need to be mandatory with government reporting but to be effective it should be measured in some way and administered by an appropriate association.

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AGENDA ITEM	High Risk Non-Compliant LEC Pilot (HRP) - Update
PRESENTER	Sarah Kempel – Licensing Manager

The pilot adopts a data-driven approach to non-compliant LECs in order to prioritize actions that have most significant impact on safety, consumer protection and compliance while also effectively utilizing limited resources. Since the pilot period ended as of January 31, 2025, results and learnings are currently being tabulated.

Next steps include:

- Understand how the pilot and Conditions issued against licences may have affected licensees in terms of measurable performance or behavioural changes.
- Break down themes in reactive licensing complaints received.

Note:

- Some cases fall outside of the jurisdiction of ESA and maybe fall under the purview of other organizations such as Skilled Trades Ontario (STO).

- Consideration of external environmental factors, such as language barriers, lack of skilled resources, etc., that may impact compliance to be analyzed.

More information will follow as further analysis is done and future actions are defined.

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AGENDA ITEM	APO Framework for Licensees
PRESENTER	Shana Hole – Licensing Manager

Framework to enforce APOs to licensees was drafted in December. Meetings were held internally to incorporate their feedback. ECRA AC feedback from previous meetings was also taken into account.

To date, the majority of APOs have been levied against unlicensed contractors / individuals. Though the focus remains the underground economy, enforcement against licensed contractors maintains the same proportionate and equitable response to findings of non-compliance. As per the Compliance Pyramid an education-first approach is taken with escalating penalty in relation to the risk level as well as the severity, nature, or frequency of the non-compliance.

A graphic overview of the process was reviewed with the first two steps identical to the existing process. A question was asked in terms of issuance of a Notice of Intention (NOI) as to whether the public registry changes. Shana confirmed that this is not the case nor is there visibility to the public. APOs are published only at the conclusion of due process, which includes an appeals period, and will remain public record for two years.

Shana walked through several example scenarios that are reflective of common non-compliance. Members commented:

- Narrow leeway given to MEs for mis-use of their licence as sufficient communication and education has already been provided;
- Regarding subcontracting work to non-licensed contractors, the minor fine (lowest level) of \$100 is not a deterrent as the LEC can easily cover this amount through the non-compliance. Declan commented that there is proportional due diligence and resources required to apply higher penalties. Another member stated that minimum fine should be \$500. Another more powerful deterrent is publication of the APOs and reputation impact on the LEC;
- Posting of ECRA / ESA licence number is much more frequent which is a reflection on the success of communication campaigns;
- Challenge associated with enforcement of unlicensed contractors when issued an APO is their willingness to pay since licence revocation is not available. Publication is then a possible deterrent. Since implementing the APO program in April 2023, there is still a learning curve and the process is evolving. The use of collection agencies could be brought in to support. Payment terms are clear including a deadline to remit payment. A FAQ outlines the whole process.

Spending of APO Funds: Patience provided some examples and ideas currently discussed to raise awareness:

- Additional initiatives to target children such as the recent collaboration with Peel’s Safety Village and use of Carter Current in the messaging. The idea of a colouring book with electrical safety message is being considered. One member commented that this has been successful with fire departments.
- Continue current initiatives such as mobile truck with safety branding, participation in home shows and boosting social media presence.
- Members recommended that there could be campaigns targeted at home buyers, or collaboration with emerging technologies such as the rising use of e-scooters.

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AGENDA ITEM	MEC Exam Update
PRESENTER	Sarah Kempel – Licensing Manager

- Details and statistics were covered by Chair of MEC in the Open Action Items at the start of the meeting so not repeated.
- Presentation has been circulated as part of the pre-read material so is available to ECRA AC members for reference.

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AGENDA ITEM	2025 ECRA AC Workplan
PRESENTER	Declan Doyle – Director, Strategy and Innovation

Workplan is an effective tool to measure actions or topics that are proposed and completed throughout the year. Also facilitates setting of agendas and ensuring that items that happen on a less frequent basis are not forgotten.

Since a similar format has been used over recent years and the work plan was circulated prior to the meeting, the document was not reviewed in detail during the meeting.

A member commented that under the column “Expected Outcomes” the language should be updated to replace (passive) actions with outcomes to better reflect the role of ECRA AC. For example, under annual Licence Holders Meeting, the action is to attend the meeting but this is not an outcome. Some other discussion points include:

- Potentially add a column to reflect what had actually been completed;
- Declan commented that outcomes are already captured in the minutes. It is best to not create redundancy;
- Work plan should be a stand-alone document and not rely on the minutes to make the intent and outcomes clear;
- An outcome log could also be considered at the end of minutes similar to a list of action items.

Action Item: Update work plan or consider implementing other actions to be more outcome-based.

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AGENDA ITEM	Auditor General Report
PRESENTER	Patience Cathcart – Interim Director, Licensing

It had been some time since an update was provided on the 2020 Auditor General “value-for-money” report. There were 25 recommendations to the ESA, some having more than one component which resulted in close to 50 actions.

A link to the recommendations and completion status was shared within the chat function of the Zoom meeting:

<https://esasafe.com/auditor-general-action-plan/>

The vast majority of actions were completed within the first year or two of the issuance of the audit report. Only six actions remain open or partially completed as primarily they are not under the exclusive control of the ESA and / or require collaboration with other organizations.

Open items were reviewed:

- AGR03.1 Travel and expense policy for inspectors to align with Ontario policy. The resolution was delayed due to collective agreement bargaining.
- AGR06.1 Risk Based Observation (RBO) was introduced in response to recommendation to reduce the number of inspections without impacting risk..
- AGR 13.1 Ministry and ESA to work with municipalities to look at incorporating electrical inspections into the building permit process
- AGR17.1 implementation of a mandatory continuing education program jointly with MPBSD. Related action AGR17.2 pertains to certification of electricians. Skill Trades Ontario reviewing their curriculum for trades and discussions are ongoing.
- AGR18 ESA to review regulations related to product safety and the proliferation of unlicensed products available on the market.

Updates are provided to the Auditor General and there will be formal reporting on the progress this year

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AGENDA ITEM	Round Table
PRESENTER	All

Round table discussion, primarily centered around Continuing Education, was held earlier in the meeting. A final call for other comments was extended:

- Chair is the single point of contact with ESA for agenda development but



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members are encouraged to forward any suggestions to be included in future meetings.

- The process to permanently fill the Director of Licensing position is underway.
- Manager of Engineering position is also being filled and the successful candidate will join MEC to replace a vacant position.

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MOTION	To adjourn meeting.
MOTIONED	Cathy Taylor
SECONDED	Steve Del Guidice
	<i>Motion carried</i>

ADJOURNMENT: 12:07 p.m.

End of ECRA AC meeting

If there are any discrepancies to these minutes, please report them by email to the Chair or Declan Doyle.

Next Meeting: Wed., June 11, 2025

Location: In-Person, ESA Provincial Office