



Building the Workplace of the Future, Today



Chris Gardner
ICBA President

More than ever, workers are looking for the choice and opportunities that come from flexible work arrangements. In construction, we have an especially intense competition for talent, along with an acute shortage of trades training spaces

and escalating material prices. The result is rising construction costs and an unparalleled affordability crisis.

That's why the B.C. Government's recently announced return to compulsory trades is more than a head scratcher. This new certification regime will do nothing to address

the need to find more workers, or any of the other real challenges facing construction contractors.

It's a result instead of hoping that the policies of yesterday will address the challenges of today and tomorrow. And, let's be clear, this is not about improving the quality of the work performed by B.C. construction workers. Projects are designed by the best in the world, highly regulated, effectively permitted and thoroughly inspected.

The government also announced that it will set ratios of the number of ticketed tradespeople who must work with an apprentice. This added bureaucracy fails to account for the dynamics of complex construction projects. It removes the flexibility that contractors, supervisors and workers

need to get the job done, and will limit the number of workers entering the trades.

What will be served by mandating registration for apprenticeship programs when the wait list to get into schools is generally a year, often two and sometimes more?

How did we end up in this place? Government failed to engage in broad industry consultation. The contracting community, including ICBA and the majority of construction associations, was simply not at the table.

We need to build better workplaces in construction, attract more people to the trades, train them more effectively and become more innovative. Instead, government is missing the mark. We can do better for workers and for contractors.

Compulsory Trades: What Will and Won't Happen

Compulsory trades will create...

...Entry Barriers
One-pathway-only
towards trades certification



...Worksite Restrictions
REDUCED flexibility
and productivity



...Inflexible Training
NO OPPORTUNITY for
cross-trades training



...Costs for Consumers
HIGHER COSTS and a
bigger underground economy



Increased licensing and certification of trades does not improve public safety, health, or quality but directly correlates with higher labour costs and fewer services providers.

Modernizing Ontario's Skilled Trades Apprenticeship and Training System, an analysis by Dawson Strategic, 2015

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Smarter Spending on Training | Industry Steps Up | ICBA's Training Prowess

If I Had a Million (or more) Dollars: Smart and Simple Investments in Training

With construction contractors continuing to face a severe shortage of skilled workers, the money that is about to pour into the re-creation and enforcement of compulsory trades could be so much better spent in support of improved training outcomes.

Training Availability



Construction apprentices today commonly languish on technical training wait lists for a full year, often for two, and sometimes longer. Geographic availability of training also remains limited, with many trades programs offered at only a single institution in all of B.C.

Technical Training Availability (or lack thereof):




For an apprentice Carpenter looking for his first level of technical training:

80% of the intakes over the rest of 2021 already have limited or no availability, and unless he lives in Kamloops, Kelowna or Nelson, he'll have to leave home.

For an apprentice Ironworker (Generalist):

She's probably out-of-luck, no matter what level of training she's looking for or where she lives. BCIT is her only option and all intakes already have limited or no availability.

Trades With Only One School in All of B.C.:

Concrete Finisher
Floor Covering Installer
BRICKLAYER – MASON
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic (compulsory trade)
Glazier
Painter and Decorator
Construction Craft Worker
Powerline Technician (compulsory trade)
Ironworker – Generalist
IRONWORKER – Reinforcing
TILESETTER
Insulator – Heat and Frost

Training Quality

Training delivery – particularly at public institutions – is still largely rooted in a past that involves in-person classes during inflexible weeks-long blocks of time, requiring apprentices to leave their jobs and often their homes.

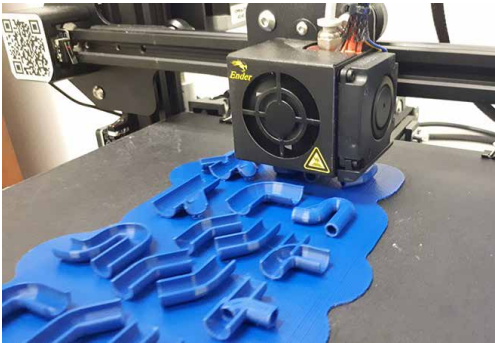
Carpentry Training Intakes (level 4)
Offering INNOVATIVE Delivery Formats

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Industry Steps up on Innovation and Investment

Construction employers and private training institutions have a strong shared commitment to preparing tomorrow's skilled tradespeople, and are leaders in innovation in trades-training delivery. None of these success stories rely on compulsory certification, but they could be threatened by it.

Virtual Classroom & 3D-Modeling



When the pandemic hit, Pacific Vocational College in Burnaby was well-positioned to accelerate its interactive **“distance live”** model of training, which closely replicates in-person experiences through features such as web cams that follow instructors' movements. Among its most recent innovations is the use of **scale models** of plumbing equipment that it produces on its 3D printers and sends out to apprentices – enabling them to do a **code-compliant** set up of an apartment's bathroom plumbing on their kitchen tables. So while the Industry Training Authority deferred practical-exercise requirements during the pandemic, PVC students were able to carry on.

Taking the Training Responsibility In-House



The LMS Reinforcing Steel Group not only sponsors **200+ apprentices** (outpacing the building trades unions), but has ensured that skills development and certification are deeply embedded in its corporate culture. Entry-level installers are provided onsite **new hire training** and encouraged to register as a sponsored apprentice with LMS. They are then fully supported as they advance through work-based training and in-house technical training, offered through the company's own LMS Academy and designed to support achievement of Red Seal certification. Among other outcomes, this has improved recruitment of **under-represented groups** such as women and Indigenous people at LMS.

Helping Painters Meet the Certification Challenge



The **“Challenge” process** is a common pathway to certification. It enables people with significant practical experience to show through an exam that they also have the theoretical knowledge they might otherwise have gained through apprenticeship technical training. ICBA and a group of leading B.C. painting contractors have developed a 14-week **distance learning program** that covers off all the levels of technical training in the painting and decorating trade, without requiring people to take time off work. With the benefit of this preparatory course, challengers are better equipped to successfully achieve their **Red Seal certification**, regardless of how they acquired their experience.

ICBA and the Open Shop Sector: Training Powerhouses

COVID-19 has forced contractors and workers alike to redefine the workplace and the job site. The key drivers are choice, flexibility and adaptability. The open shop construction sector has long set the pace in these areas and in apprenticeship, training and skills development.

The BC CONSTRUCTION MONITOR is an ICBA publication providing ahead-of-the-curve information and statistics on the B.C. construction industry and issues relevant to it.

% of Construction Trades
APPRENTICES SPONSORED

by Open Shop Construction Companies:

81.5%¹

#1 ICBA
SPONSORS MORE
B.C. Apprentices
Than Anyone Else

(Source: Industry Training Authority)

700+

Number of ICBA Training Courses
scheduled for 2021, most
eligible for Professional
Development Credit

ICBA Sponsors the Second
Highest Number of
Both **FEMALE** and
INDIGENOUS
Apprentices

4,500+

Number of Construction
Workers who Pursue
ICBA Professional
Training Annually

ICBA Training options include
VIRTUAL,
Self-Paced Online,
and **IN-PERSON**

ICBA is Continually **EXPANDING ITS TRAINING,**
Including a New **WORKPLACE WELLNESS** Program



ICBA WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAM



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