

Why is Professional Development Important?

Electricians and power company workers provide a very important role in the community in the delivery of safe and reliable electricity. The Wiring Rules, codes of practices and laws are regularly reviewed and updated. The equipment used and available technologies are changing at a rapid rate and the electricity supply industry has been in a state of continual change since the 1990's.

Those that develop themselves professionally are often able to secure better roles with their existing employer or when seeking positions with other employers. Developing skills and knowledge also helps to improve job satisfaction.

Laws and regulations place onus on employees for their actions. Fines can apply to individuals where they have not met their legal obligations. It is therefore very important that electrical trade staff continue to develop professionally.

Employer Responsibility

Employers have responsibilities under WHS laws and regulations to provide basic training and instruction for workers and safety committee representatives. But this is generally where many employers stop.

Good employers will however provide additional training and conduct annual performance assessments and training needs analysis for each and every employee. From these, training programs can be developed for individuals or groups of employees.

Career development and progression is also important in retaining employees in the longer-term and career mapping is recommended.

Does the Employee have Responsibility?

Many smaller businesses struggle to maintain profitability and will have a limited budget for training. This budget will generally be spent in meeting regulatory compliance.

More importantly, the employee has much to be gained from their professional development and should therefore take a lead role in this development.

What Options are there for Professional Development?

Other than talking with your employer and developing a training program, the employee should:

1. Attend trade or technical conferences, field days and seminars where possible. There may be a cost associated with some conferences but many trade seminars are free. Wiring Rules seminars/updates are particularly important for electricians – these are often provided free by Standards Australia and/or NECA or on a fee-for-service basis by private service providers when

new versions of the Wiring Rules are published. After hours attendance is often required for these types of seminars.

2. Read trade magazines such as:
 - Electricians:
 - [Electrical Connection](#);
 - [ECD Solutions](#) (free);
 - [Industrial Electrix](#) (free);
 - [Masters Electrician magazine](#) (free by email)
 - Power company workers
 - [Transmission and Distribution](#) (free).
3. Subscribe to E newsletters or read publications such as:
 - [Powerlogic electrical consulting & training](#);
 - State based safety regulators such as [NSW Workcover](#), [EnergySafe Victoria](#), [QLD Government Electrical Safety](#), etc;
 - [Leonardo Energy](#).
4. Social media: many organisations now use social media. This may also be a source of valuable information.
5. Join associations such as:
 - [Institute of Electrical Inspectors](#).
6. Carry out additional studies such as:
 - Online free courses;
 - Industrial Electronics;
 - Electrical Engineering Diploma;
 - Frontline management;
 - Project management.
7. Access reference material:
 - An incredible amount of high quality information is available on the internet (see www.powerlogic.com.au/electrical-policies-and-procedures.php)

It is worth discussing some of the initiatives mentioned above with your employer as they may just contribute to the costs. You may be able to claim a tax deductions for such things where your employer doesn't contribute – talk to your accountant.

For further technical information, go the “[Training](#)” and “[Publications](#)” pages of www.powerlogic.com.au

Conclusions

Electrical trade staff should embrace professional development and get involved in the items mentioned above. This will assist in the enjoyment and sustainability of their career.

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