



# IBEW British Columbia Provincial Council

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## **A Red Seal is not Red Tape**

A recent poll by Research Co. commissioned by the BC Building trades showed that 94 percent of British Columbians consider restoration of compulsory trade certification an important government initiative. British Columbia had 11 “compulsory” trades until 2003 when BC’s Apprenticeship system was deregulated.

Compulsory trade certification would legally require workers in a specific classification (i.e., electricians) to go through a standard training program known as a registered “apprenticeship” to work in the electrical trade, eventually earning their Red Seal Certificate. This used to be the minimal requirement to do electrical work which ensured a standard of quality and safety. In 2003, the Liberal government was duped into believing that “Red Seal” was synonymous with “red tape” and quashed the “compulsory” requirement.

BC is currently the only province in Canada without compulsory trade certification for electricians. Deregulation changed the construction landscape for the worst. Apprenticeship completion rates plummeted, quality and safety suffered, and working wages were undercut by those who were unqualified. Compulsory certification would instill confidence in investors looking to build in BC, lower liability for employers, result in safer construction sites, fewer customer complaints, and justify higher wages – something we could all use to set down roots and raise a family in Island communities.

BC’s NDP government has committed to restoring compulsory certification and we look forward to seeing the Minister of Labour Harry Bains, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training Anne Kang and Parliamentary Secretary for Skills Training Andrew Mercier move forward with the initiative.

Phil M. Venoit  
BC Chair,  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers