

BOMA Canada in co-operation with BOMI Canada has undertaken an initiative to develop a Building Operator Certification program - In acknowledgment that there is a shortage of skilled building operators and that the aging current workforce presents a serious challenge for building management. BOMA with BOMI Canada have undertaken this initiative to develop a long term response to alleviate the training shortage and to establish it as a skilled trade to encourage people to consider building operations as a career path.

In 2014, a two-day meeting facilitated by BOMA and BOMI Canada was held to develop a skills report defining the skills required of a Building Operator today and into the future. This meeting led to discussions with the Ontario Colleges of Trades regarding their Facilities Technician and Facility Mechanics Apprenticeship programs. BOMA and BOMI then collaborated with the Colleges of Trades to update their current program and to encourage a renaming of the Apprenticeship program to be called the Building Operator Apprenticeship program.

In 2015, a joint session was held, which included the Colleges of Trades and industry representatives from across Canada, to review the Training Standards for the Apprenticeship program currently in place. This led to an amended version of the Training Standard ([http://www.collegeoftrades.ca/wp-content/uploads/FACILITIES-TECHNICIAN-255B-EN-TS.V300.FINAL .pdf](http://www.collegeoftrades.ca/wp-content/uploads/FACILITIES-TECHNICIAN-255B-EN-TS.V300.FINAL.pdf)) which recently has been approved and implemented. The next step in the process is to encourage the updating of the Curriculum Standard and to conduct a session similar to the one held for the Training Standard.

With the completion of these two standards, we will be in a position to qualify and quantify existing programs with respect to their meeting the needs of the Building Operator today and into the future. Without these standards in place arbitrary decisions will be made on the effectiveness and value of available training. With the standards in place and once a review of existing training programs is completed, we will be in a position to determine where the gaps are as well as be in a position to define an industry certification / apprenticeship program.

The strategy established by BOMA is as follows:

For a program to be put in place that has immediate credibility and can be recognized nationally it was agreed that accessing existing training structures would be required. The Ontario Colleges of Trades has a non-compulsory apprenticeship program for building operators that has been in place for more than a decade. This program, while underutilized, has the components that are required to establish a national program. By working with and through the Ontario College of Trades and expanding the program we can apply for recognition as a Federal Red Seal program.

The Red Seal Program is the Canadian standard of excellence for skilled trades. Formally known as the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program, it sets common standards to assess the skills of tradespersons across Canada.

The mission of the program will be:

- To harmonize provincial/territorial processes and requirements for skilled trades training certification and standards.*
- To develop and maintain interprovincial standards for Red Seal trades.*
- To facilitate collaboration with industry to build a skilled trades labour force.*
- To increase the mobility of skilled tradespersons in Canada. One of the benefits of working within an existing recognized structure is that employers can be confident that the Red Seal tradespeople they hire are skilled and knowledgeable. The Red Seal endorsement is widely recognized and respected by the trades industry across*

Canada and internationally making it easier for tradespeople to have their skills recognized across Canada1.

The development of a long term product that will sustain the test of time is in the foundational work we are currently undertaking. Without Training and Curriculum Standards, decisions regarding what training is required will be arbitrary and lack long term vision. We are now approaching the stage where the standards will be available and are updated so we will be able to start developing a program that will respond to the needs today and into the future.

For more information, or to pass along your support or interest in contributing to the initiative, please contact BOMA Canada.