

2021 OCC AGM POLICY RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION TITLE

Establishment of Small Vessel Marine Trades in Ontario to include Voluntary Marine Electrician, Service Technician, and the overall expansion for Marine Training Certifications across Ontario.

SUBMITTED BY: The Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce, co-sponsored by Quinte West Chamber of Commerce, Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce, Napanee and District Chamber of Commerce, 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce, and the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce.

ISSUE

Ontario boasts many waterways, as such, there is a large and thriving marine industry in the province, but the industry lacks support, resources and safety regulation that is afforded to land-based vehicles. Although there are specific certifications for electrical, engine, etc. technicians for other industries, skilled trades for recreational boats apprenticeships are limited. Not only would the safety of residents and tourists on Ontario's waterways be improved, but also an increase in the current number of technicians and the creation of two voluntary new skilled trade designations would strengthen this industry to build the skilled workforce necessary to meet this sector's growing demands.

BACKGROUND

Ontario has a thriving marine industry with dealerships, marinas, and is home to manufacturers of small vessels for both personal and commercial use. While construction standards exist (see TP1332E, TC), there is no standardization or oversight to ensure the safety of vessels on the water except as applies to their engines (Marine technician is effectively a mechanic trade - Trade Code 435B). As with Recreational Vehicles (RVs) on land, there is more to a boat than its engine, but unlike an RV, if there is a fire, leak, or other issue on a boat, it cannot as easily be moved to the side of the road for repair. Luckily, there are few major safety incidents involving small vessels, but many of the incidents and insurance claims are preventable by improving the general service technician and electrician standards (for construction and maintenance not related to engines). Through expanding marine apprenticeship opportunities, Ontario could lead the way for boating safety and supporting the marine industry.

Transport Canada recognizes training from the "American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC), a non-profit, member organization that develops voluntary global safety standards for the design, construction, maintenance, and repair of recreational boats."¹ Courses offered by the

¹ <https://abycinc.org/page/About>

2021 OCC AGM POLICY RESOLUTION

ABYC are taught in Ontario by certified instructors, but these classes are not required for technicians to work in the recreational boat sector within the province.

Currently, Georgian College is the only post-secondary institution in Ontario that offers the Marine Engine Technician apprenticeship program. Boat dealership owners and staff are required to receive/attend mandatory training to sell specific companies' products, for example "Legend Boats".² But, not all boats are purchased new and serviced/repaired at dealerships with company certified technicians, especially in emergency repair situations. With cars, all repair shops must have mandatory certified licenced repair personnel.

Recreational boating is an important past time and sector for Canada. According to Pat's Boating in Canada, "The Economic Impact of Recreational Boating in Canada Report" prepared by the National Marine Manufacturers Association Canada (NMMA) tells us that that about 12.4 million adult Canadians go boating every year. Recreational boating adds \$5.6 billion to Canada's GDP with over \$10 billion in revenues. About 75,000 Canadian are employed by the core of the recreational boating industry while boaters themselves spend \$1.4 billion annually in boat trips."³ According to Rick Layzell, the CEO of Boating Ontario "47% of all boats sold in Canada are sold in Ontario"⁴

Other mandatory certified skilled trades, such as electricians, millwrights, have specific training levels (year 1, year 2, etc.) pay scales that reflect this training ensuring standardization of knowledge and a path to completion. A clear-cut path with earning opportunities is used to attract talent to specific occupations. Work within the recreational boating industry's ability to attract a skilled workforce is limited with only a handful of seats available in Midland Ontario, a location that is inconvenient to attend the required in-class training. According to Boating Ontario, over two-thirds marine technicians are offered year-round employment paying up to \$40 an hour. Although the industry works to promote these opportunities, many companies and individuals do not have access to local apprenticeship training. The current model assumes that people are purchasing new boats that can be serviced, winterized, and stored by local dealerships and marines. To attract talent interested in this industry with to growing opportunities, Ontario needs to provide better access to apprenticeship training/certifications across the province.

To protect recreational boaters, the Canadian government has established training and guidelines for people to receive licenses. As boat safety for the operators is a priority, it is logical that the Ontario government would extend these standards to establish certifications

² <https://boatingindustry.com/top-100/2018/01/03/2017-best-in-class-best-training-benefits/>

³ <https://boating.ncf.ca/stats.html#links>

⁴

<https://boating.ncf.ca/buyaboat.html#:~:text=%E2%80%9C47%25%20of%20all%20boats%20sold,Canada%20are%20sold%20in%20Ontario.%E2%80%9D>

2021 OCC AGM POLICY RESOLUTION

under Skilled Trades in more than one location for those responsible for repairing recreational boats ensuring consumer safety.

Supporting organizations for this Policy Resolution include:

- Swiftsure Vessel Solutions, Ltd., Consecon, Ontario
- Hartzel Marine and Auto, Thorold, Ontario

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Work with the marine industry, their associations, and post-secondary institutions to:
 - a. Review opportunities to expand marine apprenticeship training programs to meet the growing and changing needs of the sector.
 - b. Research American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) courses that are recognized by Transport Canada.
2. Develop programs for voluntary marine certifications to include small vessel technician and marine electrician through Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.
3. Expand/improve access to marine apprenticeships across Ontario (technician, small vessel technician, and electrician).
4. Continue to work with industry and partners to develop and improve certifications as required.
5. Upon successful implementation of more marine certifications, work with other provinces to adopt similar programs to lead to these trades achieving the recognized certification/training standards.