

Competency in the Oil Patch continues to be a key phrase. Each of the Trade Associations are dealing with it in their own manner. Some through apprentice programs and some through professional occupation status.

The CAGC has begun its application under Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act (POARA) in Alberta for three different seismic occupations – Seismic Field Operations Supervisor, Seismic Permit Agent and a Seismic Buried Facilities Locator. This will provide these titles with Professional Designations after a determination of competence.

Competency consists of three components; training, experience and skill. Our training elements are through Enform in all cases. Experience is generally defined as 180 days or two years. Skill is a practical test of the individual component set of the job itself. Skill is harder to measure for competency when measured against a set of soft skills as would be exhibited by a supervisor or a permit agent. To some degree is clearer with hard skills such as those exhibited by a pipeline locator.

The benefit to the POARA process is that each occupation is controlled by a committee, which must provide governance for issues of ethics and complaints by the public. This is an important feature for the soft skill set – supervisors and permit agents.

The public will benefit from continued and improved professional standards and conduct for industry members as well as continued health and safety initiatives. Specifically, the registration of the CAGC would allow for:

- Standardization of job classifications. By building on the established training and competency programs for individuals within the industry, overall standards of conduct and professionalism can be monitored to a greater degree. This is very important as it will assist the public in making informed decisions, particularly in regard to interactions with Seismic Permit Agents and Seismic Field Operations Supervisors.
- Standardization of public safety. Proper training and competency increase safety standards and awareness. Seismic Buried Facilities Locators and Seismic Field Operations Supervisors experience on-going safety issues when in the field.
- Formally recognizing and improving standards within the geophysical industry benefits the public greatly. With the registration of the CAGC, the public would have a forum to air grievances regarding conduct, giving them a mechanism to formally communicate with practitioners. Members of the public can respond to specific issues in the aforementioned by submitting written complaints and engaging the disciplinary powers of the association.
- We see the risks to the public if not granted as follows:
- The lack of formalized standards for competency and minimum training requirements, especially for Seismic Buried Facilities Locators and Seismic Field Operations Supervisors, increases the risk to public safety. Companies operating outside the association, with no over-riding code of conduct or proper training standards to follow, are free to cut corners and carry out operations in an unsafe manner. This, in turn, poses a threat to the safety of workers and the public.

- Without the registration of the CAGC under POARA, a lower level of accountability exists for behaviour that has the potential to put the public at risk. In such an environment those members of the industry who have greater levels of contact with the public, particularly Seismic Permit Agents and Seismic Field Operations Supervisors, have more of an opportunity to engage in behaviour harmful to the public.
- A lack of recognized titles to assist employers in making informed hiring decisions adversely affects the overall level of industry standards and safety. Given the continued growth of the geophysical industry and the increasing difficulty employers face in sourcing qualified workers, an absence of standardized competencies and training does contribute to an erosion of safe practices and conduct. Continued deterioration in this area will have an adverse effect on public safety given the high level of geophysical activity in the Province.
- The Province has recognized the need for and encouraged the training of Well Site Supervisors in the drilling industry over the past 3 years but has done so without any real consistency. The CAGC sees training of Seismic Field Operations Supervisors to be of similar importance and through registration under POARA can effectively ensure consistency in standards and training. Without established and enforceable standards of conduct and competency, undertrained or incapable field supervisors may direct crews in an unsafe manner while in the field with no formal mechanism for disciplinary action and accountability. This compromises workers' safety and puts the public at risk when in contact with these crews.

With POARA, the Association plans to prevent fraudulent and incompetent practices being inflicted upon the public by its members through:

- a) Code of ethics/conduct,
- b) Disciplinary committee to hear and decide on complaints,
- c) Granting an identifiable title to help the public and clients make an informed choice.

This process may take a couple of years to complete but it marks the completion of a process our industry has been working towards for years now in terms of training and standards. Competency based occupations mark the final evolution. **R**

From the Thursday Files

I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career.
I've lost almost 300 games.
26 times, I've been trusted to take the
game winning shot and missed.
I've failed over and over and over again in my life.
And that is why I succeed.

— Michael Jordan

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