



# Modernization of the CAW Skilled Trades on the Railways of Canada



Canadian Apprenticeship Forum Conference  
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[www.caw.ca](http://www.caw.ca)



## **Part I:**

# Brief History of Railway Skilled Trades:



Until 1995 the National Railways in Canada had robust and well developed apprenticeships in 6 metal trades:

- Carmen-Welder
- Machinist
- Electrician
- Pipefitter
- Sheet metal
- Boilermaker



1995-1996, two Railway Commissions were appointed, which, among other things ordered a Modernization of the Railway Skilled Trades



The Railway Commission for CPR & CNR ordered that any new modernized Trades agreed to by the Railways and the CAW would have be:  
“Recognized, Portable, & Consistent”



As a result of the the Rail Commission's order, CAW Local 100 with Canadian National Railway, and CAW Local 101 with Canadian Pacific Railway, agreed to develop new "Red Sealed Trades" for the Railways.



## Local 100 - Canadian National Railway:

In 1995-1996, Local 100 - CN merged all their skilled trades into 3 major Trades:

- Heavy Duty Mechanic
- Car Mechanic
- Electrician



Since 1995-1996, (10 years) Local 100 and CN have been at odds over what training should be available in regard to Red Sealed Trades. This has culminated in the parties agreeing to place the matter before an Arbitrator. The matter is being heard at present and will be finalized in the coming months



## Local 100-VIA RAIL:

A separate Commissioner was appointed and in 1995-1996, the Commissioner merged the traditional skilled trades into 3 separate skilled trades:

- Specialist Mechanic (Machinist)
- Heavy Duty Mechanic (Carman)
- Electrician



The VIA Rail Commissioner did not see fit to put in place an Apprenticeship Program. Nor did he put in place a mechanism to upgrade employees being merged into the 3 new skilled trades. Consequently, there is no Apprentice Program at VIA Rail.

“Trainees” are utilized to fill new positions in the new skilled trades. The CAW is meeting with VIA attempting to establish an Apprenticeship Program.



## Local 101-Canadian Pacific Railway:

In 1995-1996, Local 101-CP attempted to merge all skilled trades (including Rail Car Mechanics/Welders, formally known as “Carmen”) into the Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic Trade.



Eventually, after 10 years, and with advice from a number of Provincial Apprentices Boards and the CCDA, the Parties settled on the following Major Trades:

- Diesel Mechanic
- Electric Motor Systems Technician
- Rail Car Mechanic/Welder



Local 101-CP continues to apprentice, what are referred to as the smaller skilled trades or “Maintenance” Trades:

- Maintenance Electricians
- Machinists
- Sheet Metal Workers
- Steamfitter/Pipefitter/Plumber/Gasfitter



## Contact with Provincial Apprentices Boards:

In the preliminary stages of implementation, in 1995-1996, intermittent contact was made with the Provincial Apprentices Boards by the Railway Modernization Committees.



## Contact with the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprentices

In the early stages of implementation, contact was made, with the CCDA, by the Railway Modernization Committees. Subsequent contacts were made individually, by the Railways and the CAW



Unfortunately, this 10 year implementation process, and the positions taken by individual Provincial Apprentices Boards, in regard to which Red Sealed Trades would be appropriate with respect to the Railway Skilled Trades Modernization initiative, has been difficult to say the least.



At the original meeting between the CCDA and the Skilled Trades Modernization Committee, in the late 1990's, the CCDA committed to assisting the Railways and CAW in the Modernization of the skilled trades.



## **Part II:**

Issues associated with Federal  
Railways and  
Red Sealed Trades:



Through, a 10 year odyssey, the Railways and the CAW have been confronted with a number of, either individual or systemic obstacles, which exist between the respective Provincial Apprentices Boards, in relation to establishment of Red Sealed Trades on the Railways of Canada.



## Skilled Trades are Provincially Controlled:

Federal organizations must have approval from Provincial Apprentices Board to establish an existing or new skilled trade for Red Seal.



There exists inconsistencies in provincial skilled trade requirements for existing or new skilled trades:

The time it takes to establish an existing or new skilled trade in a Province varies between 3 to 5 years. (in Alberta there needs to be consent from the Provincial Cabinet)



Inconsistencies in workplace evaluations by Provincial Trade Advisory Committees (TAC's):  
Some TAC's will accept the Railway workplace if it can meet the threshold to establish a skilled trade, while others will not.



Some Provinces, existing or new Skilled trades can only be established if they are industry driven:

Provinces differ on what is considered  
Railway Industry (Some Provinces require both  
CN & CP to be involved others do not)



Each Province has its own individual methods and processes for initiating an existing or new skilled trade:

One Province may accept an existing or new skilled trade, others will not.



The name for a Red Sealed Trade can be different between each Province:

Examples:

Alberta - “Electric Motor System Technician”

Ontario - “Electric Motor and Apparatus Rewinder”

Manitoba - “Electric Motor Winder”

Occupational Analysis name:  
“Electric Rewind Mechanic”



## Skilled Trade Specific Documents:

Provinces have different processes for developing a skilled trade and the documentation which goes with such development.

Provinces are reluctant to use established developed skilled trade curriculums and documentation from another Province

- \* Occupational profiles
- \* Sign off booklets
- \* Curriculum design



Acquiring skilled trade apprentice curriculum from Provinces is difficult:

We need to compare external apprentice training to internal to reduce overlaps in training



## Verification of apprentice grades:

Apprentice grades are communicated between the Apprentice Board and the individual apprentice.

Employers nor the Union receive the same information, this makes it impossible to measure status and establish standards for apprenticeships.

(Provincial and/or Federal Privacy Acts)



## **Part III:**

Efforts to date:  
*Ontario in Relation to:  
Railcar Mechanic*



# RAILWAY CAR TECHNICIAN

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities  
Province of Ontario (MTCU)



## ***Ontario Efforts in Relation to: Railcar Mechanic***

### **Working Group:**

Canadian Auto Workers union

Canadian Pacific Railway

Procor Limited

Ontario Northland Railway

Mohawk College

Canadore College

Sault Ste. Marie College

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Colleges



**Definition:**

“A Railway Car Technician inspects, repairs, replaces, and reconditions mechanical or structural components and systems of freight cars and passenger coaches. They must have a mechanical aptitude and hands-on skills and be able to use different types of power, pneumatic, and hydraulic tools or equipment.



October 2004, Procor Limited approach MTCU asking that the Carman (Railway) schedule of training be updated and revised to better fit the training needed for their employees

MTCU contacted CAW and CPR in Alberta to solicit support. The proposed program was met with enthusiasm as the CAW and CPR wanted to move forward with training.



Ontario Northland Railway (ONR) was contacted as it was the only employer using the existing training schedule, however no apprenticeship opportunities for some time.

ONR expressed support as there had been a renewal for training apprentices and this initiative fit into ONR's new direction.

All the stakeholders expressed a desire to have this trade move quickly across the provinces and become a Red Seal trade.



Rob Easto, Manager, Program Development and Standards, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, sent a letter to the CCDA outlining Ontario's proposal to take a lead in developing this new trade.

Ontario agreed to keep interested Provinces up-to-date on developments.

British Columbia and Alberta have received the working documentation



MTCU sponsored successful workshops and accomplished:

- New skilled trade of Railway Car Technician
- On-The-Job Training Standard developed and validated
- Learning Outcomes developed and validated
- Colleges have been contracted to develop curriculum for 3 levels of in-school



## **Conclusion:**

The CAW thank the Canadian Apprentice Forum for this opportunity to raise and share our views on this important matter.

We hope that out of this Conference and through your input and support we will find possible solutions to the problems associated with the establishment of bona fide Red Seal apprenticeable skilled trades in the Federal Railways in Canada.