

# Red Seal Certification Changes

Q: Are Red Seal standards being lowered for construction trades?

A: Red Seal standards for construction trades (e.g., electricians, carpenters, plumbers, pipefitters, ironworkers) remain unchanged. Required competencies, national exams, and safety expectations are exactly the same.

The government's goal is faster access to fully qualified journeypersons, not reduced skill or safety standards.

Q: What does "faster Red Seal certification" mean on a construction site?

A. It means fewer delays between work-ready stages—not weaker training.

For construction employers, this translates to:

- Less downtime between apprenticeship levels
- Faster recognition of verified job-site experience
- Fewer apprentices stalled by administrative or scheduling gaps

Journeyperson qualification still requires full competency demonstration and a passed Red Seal exam.

Q: Will construction apprentices still complete full on-the-job training?

A. Yes.

Apprentices must still prove all required job-site skills, supervised work experience, and technical training outcomes.

What changes is efficiency, not expectations—for example:

- Reducing duplicate instruction on already-mastered tasks
- Improving scheduling between job-site work and in-class blocks

Q: Does this change provincial construction apprenticeship systems?

A. No. Provinces are still in charge. Construction apprenticeship training, ratios, and trade scopes are still under provincial authority. The federal role is to:

- Coordinate policy alignment across provinces
- Fund incentives and grants
- Support Red Seal portability for construction workers moving between provinces

Q: How does this help construction employers right now?

A. It improves workforce reliability on projects. Construction employers' benefit from:

- More apprentices entering and completing programs
- Earlier availability of certified journeypersons
- Less attrition caused by financial stress during in-class training
- Improved labour mobility across regions and projects

This is especially important for:

- Large infrastructure projects
- Multi-site residential and commercial builds
- Renewable energy, utilities, and industrial construction

Q: What new financial supports affect construction employers?

A. Two key supports improve apprentice retention and hiring economics:

1. Apprentice support
  - \$400/week during in-class technical training
  - Up to \$16,000 total per apprentice
  - Paid on top of Employment Insurance
2. Employer wage support
  - Up to \$10,000 per apprentice, focused on early-stage hiring and retention

These supports reduce the risk of losing apprentices mid-project or mid-program.

Q: Will this increase the apprentice-to-journeyperson ratio on sites?

A. Not automatically. Apprenticeship ratios stay provincially regulated and unchanged. However, faster progression through apprenticeship stages means:

- Apprentices stay productive and engaged
- Journeyperson shortages ease sooner
- Employers gain better workforce planning predictability

Q: How does this affect construction safety and quality?

A. Construction safety and quality remain non-negotiable.

- Red Seal competencies include safety-critical skills and code compliance
- Certification standards are status quo
- Faster certification does not allow under-qualified workers to bypass requirements

Industry safety expectations are still central to the policy design.

Q: Is this about youth, or experienced construction workers too?

A. Both—through different pathways:

- Youth (15–30): earlier exposure to construction trades, paid entry-level experience, faster transition to apprenticeships
- Experienced workers and career switchers: improved recognition of prior learning and verified work experience, reducing repeat training

This helps address workforce gaps across the experience spectrum.

Q: How does this support major construction project delivery?

A. By addressing schedule and labour risks.

Construction faces:

- Large retirement wave (Baby boomers)
- Tight project timelines
- Regional labour shortages

Faster Red Seal certification:

- Expands the pool of qualified labour
- Improves interprovincial mobility
- Reduces project delays caused by skill shortages

Q: What should construction firms do now?

A. Prepare to engage early.

Construction employers should:

- Review apprenticeship hiring strategies
- Engage with provincial apprenticeship authorities
- Work with unions, colleges, and training partners
- Plan to use wage supports and faster progression pathways

Early participation will improve workforce outcomes and competitiveness. OpenCircle will have more information as our team dives into the program.

#### **Construction Industry Bottom Line:**

- The Red Seal stays rigorous.
- Journeyman quality stays high.
- Apprentices move through the system faster.
- Construction projects get the workers they need—when they need them.

For Members looking for more information, please connect with  
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