

# NECA's review of the Effective Supervision of an Apprentice

## 1. Employer and Supervisor responsibilities

Views Employer and Supervisor responsibilities in respect to effective supervision as distinct.

### **Employers Responsibilities and Requirements**

**Section 4:** Updated employer responsibilities when it comes to effective supervision. Employers are responsible for having in place appropriate arrangements that ensure the quality of training and their safety and supervision and ongoing and continuous assessment of these provisions.

Places and explicit onus on employers to appoint a supervisor/s, who are responsible for providing effective supervision of apprentice.

They MUST:

- Hold current relevant electrical license.
- Is competent and has the capacity to supervise the work of the apprentice.
- Agrees to supervise the apprentice.
- Is aware of their responsibilities and the requirements as outlined in the document (Effective Supervision of an Apprentice).

### **NECA Response:**

NECA has concerns about the implementation and application of this requirement. No detail on the arrangement requirements have been provided.

### **Supervisor Responsibilities and Requirements**

**Section 5:** Updated the responsibilities of Supervisors.

Current requirements do not specify what qualifications are sufficient to be "adequately qualified in the role of supervisor". They propose to provide more clarity what adequately qualified is.

### **New Definition**

Apprentice Supervision Requirements specifies that the supervisor must be competent in the work being carried out by the apprentice they are supervising and hold a current relevant electrical licence. 'Relevant electrical licence' is defined as

- A Grade issued by ESV
- Equivalent of an A Grade issued in other States.
- and Electrical Switchgear workers license issued by ESV if apprentice is an electrical switchgear or electrical fitter apprentice.

They have also explicitly linked the responsibilities and requirements of supervisors in section 5 of the draft updated Apprentice Supervision Requirements to each of the other relevant parts of the document for greater clarity. This includes levels of supervision, ratios of supervisors to apprentices and conditions and levels of supervision for specified types of electrical work.

**Key Change:**

- Reference to ensuring work is being correctly performed in accordance with the Electricity Safety Act and Electricity Safety Regulation
- The supervisor is responsible for undertaking a competency assessment of the apprentice as required.
- In all cases, the supervisor is the responsible person for the compliance of the electrical work and is responsible for carrying out isolation procedures, confirmation of isolation, compliance testing and commissioning/energisation. However, an apprentice should have the opportunity to carry out some of these tasks in the final stages of their apprenticeship in accordance with sections 9 and 10 of the document.

**NECA response:**

NECA raises concerns about the requirements for the supervisor to conduct competency assessments. No details have been provided on this requirement.

## 2. Apprentice responsibilities.

**Section 6:** Updated Apprentice Supervision Requirements and states that apprentices must ensure that they are working under effective supervision, while also highlighting their right to a supportive work environment that empowers them to voice concerns if they feel supervision does not meet the requirements.

**NECA response:**

Requests further clarity around how this is to be implemented, supported, and monitored.

## 3. Levels of supervision

**Section 7:** Updated Apprentice Supervision Requirements states that the supervisor must undertake a competency assessment in consultation with the apprentice to determine the level of supervision to be applied for a given work task. It also states, however, that the level of supervision to be applied is always subject to the conditions and limitations outlined in other sections of the document relating to carrying out isolation procedures, fault finding, and the levels of supervision for specified types of electrical work.

Change of wording to the levels and requirements to reflect enforceability.

#### 4. The number of apprentices being supervised by a single supervisor (ratios of supervisors to apprentices)

##### Change from

Type of Supervision	Current	Proposed
Direct	1:2	1:1
General	1:4	1:3
Broad	-	1:5

Cannot supervise more than 1 apprentice under general or broad if supervising 1 under Direct.

##### NECA response:

NECA believes that these ratios are acceptable in principle, but unachievable in practice, and a variation involving a risk assessment should be included, such as in Tasmania.

#### 5. The levels of supervision for specified types of work

##### Change regarding Fault Finding:

3<sup>rd</sup> year can only do basic fault finding (not involving live electrical components) under Direct supervision.

\*Please note – draft does not outline whether a 4<sup>th</sup> year can undertake basic fault finding with Direct, General or Broad supervision.

##### NECA response:

NECA agrees in this principle, but a definition of fault finding has not been included and will restrict 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years from some fault-finding activities that are safety to conduct.

**Section 11:** Updated Apprentice Supervision requirements provides the table noting that the level of supervision specified in the ‘must be at least the level of supervision shown in that table but should be adjusted based on a competency assessment in accordance with section 7’. It also states the following conditions:

- electrical work noted in the table as requiring direct supervision must never be supervised under general or broad supervision.
- electrical work noted in the table as requiring general supervision must never be supervised under broad supervision (but can be supervised under direct supervision).

Table 2: Levels of supervision for specified types of electrical work

Type of electrical work	Year of apprenticeship			
	First	Second	Third	Fourth (+) or final
New electrical installations (not connected to supply)	Direct	General	Broad	Broad
Maintenance, alterations and additions to existing electrical installations	Direct	General	General	Broad
Consumer mains and sub-mains installation	Direct	General	Broad	Broad
Workshop assembly and maintenance of electrical equipment	Direct	General	Broad	Broad
Distribution and main switchboard installation	Direct	Direct	General	Broad
Electrical isolation of installation and equipment (subject to the conditions in section 9 of this document)	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct
Testing to confirm isolation (subject to the conditions in section 9 of this document)	Direct	Direct	Direct	Direct
Fault finding (subject to the conditions in section 10 of this document)	Not permitted	Not permitted	Direct	Direct
Live work	<p>Work on or near any live or energised electrical equipment as defined in AS/NZS 4836 is not permitted by an apprentice.</p> <p>Testing to confirm isolation and fault-finding are exceptions but must be done under direct supervision as per sections 9 and 10 of this document. Refer to the relevant sections of AS/NZS 4836 in respect of procedures for safe working practices.</p>			

## 6. Focus on the overall clarity, readability and understandability of the draft updated Apprentice Supervision Responsibilities.

**Section 5 & 7:** Incorporated the criteria for assessing the competency of apprentices and the elements of effective supervision, aimed at forming enforceable requirements, while other parts serve as a guide.