

Marketing your company is easy with ETCP Certification

The commitment to safety provides instant credibility on the job

"HI! WE'RE ETCP CERTIFIED, AND WE'RE HERE TO HELP. Your worries are over!" From the first email to a client to the moment we walk through the door at the facility, we make sure people know we are part of the ETCP Certification program—we display the ETCP logo like a badge of honor.

My company, On Location Lighting Systems, has made this important professional commitment to safely serve the entertainment industry through the ETCP Certification program. We were even the first company in our region to become an ETCP Recognized Employer. When the first test was given, we were proud to have three employees pass the test and become certified. We sponsored all of these employees, paid for their testing, and any additional training they needed. One of the initial employees certified has since moved on, but we continue to cover any training required for our new employees to become certified and for our certified employees to become recertified.

In fact, my wife Abby and I were the first married couple to become ETCP certified after the very first certification test. We proudly display this fact on the front page of our website, with links that explain how others can become certified. We immediately had new business cards made displaying the ETCP logo as well, and we changed our email signatures to include the certification designation. We even have the information on our social networking sites, including Facebook and LinkedIn.

I want to make sure that everyone who comes in contact with us knows about the ETCP program and realizes that we support it enthusiastically. It is a great marketing tool because it immediately lets potential clients know that we are a professional organization and that we consider the safety of crews, performers, and audiences as important as every other aspect of our business. When we do trade shows, we hang the ETCP Recognized Employer of ETCP Certified Technicians logo on the truss that overhangs our display area. And that logo gets noticed—at the USITT conference in Cincinnati last March, many people came up to ask us about the program. We sent them all to the ESTA booth to get more information. Students who attended the conference were particularly interested in learning about the test: how difficult it was, what the requirements were, and how long it took to acquire the required number of points to be eligible to take the test.

“... because he saw I was certified, he knew immediately that I was qualified to give him the advice he needed.”

Some of the people who asked us about the ETCP Certification program at the conference have since called us for rentals and perishable sales items. The ETCP logo helps us not only market the program but our business as well. In February, I took the test to become a certified arena rigger. This added another certification to my email signature, and it is amazing what it did for marketing our products and services—it comes into play almost every day.

We wear the ETCP logo proudly on all of our work gear at all times. We have hats, shirts, and bags that display our certification. Whenever I am talking to new prospects who are interested in working for On Location Lighting Systems, one of the first questions I ask them is if they are willing to work to become ETCP certified. I have not found one person yet who said no.



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Paper and pencil exams at LDI2009

All three ETCP examinations will be offered in November at LDI2009 in Orlando, FL. The Entertainment Electrician exam is scheduled for Friday, November 20th; the Arena Rigging exam is to be given the morning of Saturday, November 21st and the theatre rigging exam is planned for that same afternoon. Candidates who wish to take multiple exams will receive a discount for the second exam. Interested applicants must submit their application, along with supporting materials and fee, to the ETCP office no later than **October 26**. Space is limited, so submit your application today!

New ETCP computer-based testing available in Canada

ETCP is pleased to announce there is a new testing center in Canada. All three exams are now available for computer-based testing at Robertson College, 265 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg, MB.

Individuals must meet eligibility requirements to take the exams and applications must be turned in to the ETCP office for approval. Candidate information, including eligibility requirements and applications, is available on the ETCP website at <http://etcp.esta.org>, or if you would like the information mailed to you, please contact Meredith Moseley-Bennett, ETCP Certification Manager, at 212.244.1505 or certification@esta.org.

ETCP launches practice exams

The ETCP Subject Matter Experts were busy last spring working with Applied Measurement Professionals to create ETCP Practice Exams for all three certifications. The fifty question web-based exams were launched on the testing company's website on **July 15**.

The ETCP Council understands that there is a certain amount of fear surrounding the exams because many candidates have not taken an exam in quite some time and/or may be unfamiliar with computer-based testing. The fifty question practice exams will provide candidates with an inexpensive, valuable tool for self assessment. There is no application process for the practice exams; so any interested candidate will be able to take the exam privately at home, at the office, or on the road whenever it is most convenient for him or her.

"I speak with candidates every day who are intimidated by this exam," said Meredith Moseley-Bennett, the ETCP Certification Manager. "Our hope is that the candidates who opt to take the practice exams will go into the actual exam feeling more comfortable and confident because they have gotten a general sense of the exams beforehand. Since the practice exams are exactly one-third of the test questions of the final exams, the candidates can time themselves for one hour to make sure they are answering the questions within the proper time-frame. At the end of the practice exams, candidates will be provided with a score report that is divided into the broad areas of the content outline which will help them get a sense of the areas that need more attention."

The exams are available for purchase at www.goamp.com. Those interested in taking the practice exams should go to "Candidates" and then follow the menu to ETCP where they can choose one of the three exams.



The advertisement features a central image of a cracked egg with a flame-like effect emerging from the crack. To the left is a circular logo with the text 'SPECIAL EFFECTS' around the perimeter and 'J&M' in the center. Below the image, the website 'www.jmfx.net' is listed, followed by 'BROOKLYN, NY' and the phone number '718.875.0140'. At the bottom, a red banner lists services: 'Smoke • Haze • Rain • Mist • Snow • Pyrotechnics • Theatrical Firearms • Trick Weapons • Breakaway Glass'.

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ETCP News | Marketing your company

This certification is definitely one of the most talked about new programs in our industry. We are happy to report that our newest employee is looking forward to taking the test at LDI this year, part of our continuing effort to certify the industry, one technician at a time.

And we are happy to spread the word to technicians who work for other companies, too. On many job sites, technicians will wander over to me and strike up a conversation about ETCP because they see we display the logo. Either they are interested in getting more information on becoming certified, or they are certified and want to discuss the program and what it has done for them and their company. Since adding the arena rigger certification, I have had even more great marketing moments.

I was recently on a production where I was hired simply to put on a light show in a club for a few nights. The client was having problems with the system they had installed, but they still needed to open the club at night. When I investigated the problem, I realized that the new system was hung incorrectly. When I pointed it out, he was quick to ask for more information—because he saw I was certified, he knew immediately that I was qualified to give him the advice he needed. Not only was he grateful for my input, but he has hired us three more times since then!

Recently, I sent off a list of truss weights to a facility manager through our client for a show that is coming up soon. When he received the list and saw the certification in the signature, the facility manager immediately said, “Oh, I see he’s ETCP Certified! All right then, this is great—I won’t worry about a thing.” The client then called me right away to let me know how impressed he was with this reaction. He had no idea that the ETCP certification had already become such an accepted standard.

I guess that is really what I find incredible, the way the ETCP “stamp of approval” puts our clients, fellow technicians, and facility managers immediately at ease when working with us. In a short time, it has definitely become the accepted—even the expected—standard by which we are all now measured. Our decision to become certified and to support the certification so strongly has helped our business in many ways. Even when we find clients who don’t know about the program, they are eager, willing, and enthusiastic to be educated about it and what it means to have ETCP certified technicians working for and with them. Any way and any place we can promote our affiliation with the ETCP program, we do it, because it is the simplest and most straightforward way to say “You are in good hands, and your entertainment will be safe and successful—because certified technicians are on the job!” ■



James Tutorow III is Vice President of On Location Lighting Systems which is a rental, production, sales, and service lighting company. James has been a lighting designer for 22 years, and has designed lighting for industrial events all over North America. He is the father of 4 incredible boys and is married to the best service technician (Abby) in the world.