

ETCP Council approves new Power Distribution Technician Certification



IN JULY, THE ETCP COUNCIL voted unanimously to offer a brand new certification covering Power Distribution Technicians (ETCP – PDT). This new program is in response to the increasing demand within our industry to establish benchmark standards and define the knowledge base and skillsets involved in the assembly, use, and disassembly of power distribution systems for a wide variety of entertainment venues and markets. These include corporate, trade show, outdoor event, theatrical, and motion picture/television segments of the industry. The first examinations are due to launch in the summer of 2016.

The entertainment industry currently does not have a means to assist employers in identifying competent power technicians. ETCP has recognized that need and is responding with the development of the PDT. For employers, this certification will provide documentation of proficiency and assist in determining a worker's status as a qualified entertainment power distribution technician. It will also serve to encourage continuing education among their staff to satisfy the requirements for renewal.

Response to the program has already been very positive. "It is extremely exciting that the development of the program has been fully funded by sponsorships. As ETCP develops the PDT certification program, we have made it a priority to join forces with the leaders in the power distribution industry," said Eddie Raymond, President of ESTA. "Incorporating their expertise as our

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) ensure that the certification is as relevant and impactful as possible."

Chairing the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are Alan Rowe, Co-Chair of the ETCP Entertainment Electrician SMEs and Chair of the IATSE Crafts Advancement Program, and Derek Coleman, Vice President of Power Distribution for PSAV. Joining them are: Rob Baxter, NBA Production Electrician, and Owner, Baxter Controls; Pat Enos, Operations Manager Trade Show Electrical, GES; Kevin Felton, Director – Electrical Services, Freeman Electrical, Inc.; Lance Hughston Sr. and Lance Hughston, Jr., IATSE members and Owners of Hughston Engineering, Inc.; John Lacy, IATSE member and freelance gaffer and best boy; Gregg Lirosi, Regional Power Distribution Manager, Eastern United States, PSAV; Billy Peacock, Owner, Eventpower; Phil Reilly, Lighting Director, WGBH-Television Group, IATSE member, NABET member; Steve Terry, Vice President of Research & Development, ETC; and Christopher Wren, IATSE member and Owner, Keylight, Inc.

As with the original certifications, it is important to ensure that all regions of North America are represented and that the SMEs come from all aspects of the industry. The SMEs who are participating in the creation of the PDT come from both coasts, the Midwest and Canada, and their work encompasses trade shows, generators, power distribution, live events, and film, just to name a few. Last October, they met in Kansas

City at ETCP's psychometric firm, Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP), to write over 300 questions to fill the item bank.

“... this certification will provide documentation of proficiency... as a qualified entertainment power distribution technician.”

"The development process has been eye opening; some of the expertise and leadership around the industry represented by this group is awe inspiring," says, PDT Co-Chair, Derek Coleman. "In my career I have always used the *NEC* code as a reference, but to be able to sit in a room and exchange ideas with some of the individuals that have contributed, or are current contributors, to the *NEC* has been an incredible experience. Furthermore, I am extremely grateful and proud of the investment of time, energy, and expertise from the SMEs. Special thanks to Alan Rowe, Meredith Mosley-Bennett, and Zachary Irwin, Psychometrician at AMP, for channeling all that passion into the creation of this certification."

The Power Distribution Technician certification is important because it fills the gap between electrical workers whose experience and level of competence are unproven and the professional certification of the Entertainment Electrician. "As an employer, from a safety standpoint, you want qualified people working on your

TYPE OF EXPERIENCE	POINTS	DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED
<i>ETCP Certification Examinations</i>		
ETCP Entertainment Electrician Certification	25	Those who hold the ETCP Entertainment Electrician Certification will automatically qualify to take the ETCP Power Distribution Examination.
Professional Electrical Work Experience	1 for each 100 hours 100 hour min. increment 1,000 hours (10 points) in a year is equivalent to 20 hours per week	A completed Employment History form containing contact information sufficiently detailed to allow verification by ETCP. Work experience must be related strictly to power distribution. Refer to the Content Outline for a list of skillsets. (Experience related to an academic degree cannot be used as professional work experience.)
Internship	1 for each 200 hours with a maximum of 5 points	A completed Applicant Evaluation form by the official representative of the internship is required.
Apprenticeship	1 for each 100 hours with a maximum of 10 points	A completed Applicant Evaluation form by the official representative of the apprenticeship is required.
<i>Notes: Licensure credits may contribute a maximum of 15 points.</i>		
Journeyman Electrician's License	10	Verifiable documentary evidence, such as a copy of the current license, is required.
Master Electrician's License	15	Verifiable documentary evidence, such as a copy of the current license, is required.
<i>Notes: Education credits may contribute a maximum of 5 points. All degrees must be achieved from an accredited institution.</i>		
Associates Degree	1	An official transcript is required from the granting institution, photocopies are not accepted.
Associates Degree in entertainment technology field	2	An official transcript is required from the granting institution, photocopies are not accepted.
Undergraduate Degree	2	An official transcript is required from the granting institution, photocopies are not accepted.
Undergraduate Degree in entertainment technology field	5	An official transcript is required from the granting institution, photocopies are not accepted.
Graduate Degree	1	An official transcript is required from the granting institution, photocopies are not accepted.
Graduate Degree in entertainment technology field	2	An official transcript is required from the granting institution, photocopies are not accepted.

ETCP uses a point system to determine eligibility to sit for examinations. A candidate must have 25 points to apply for the ETCP Power Distribution Technician Certification. This table lists the points awarded for various work experience, training (e.g., internships or apprenticeships), licensure, and degrees from accredited institutions.

electrical setups,” says Vancouver-based SME, Billy Peacock. “This certification will provide that peace of mind for employers hiring electrical workers who have already

proven their knowledge and abilities by obtaining the ETCP – PDT.”

There are a lot of qualified people working in the industry right now who

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could benefit from the Power Distribution Technician certification. These workers are responsible for safely installing electrical distribution in many situations—both indoors and out. “The best part of our jobs is that we see something different every day. We experience new challenges daily with changing technology and equipment. I see employers are pushing for more and the employee may not be trained for it. I have spoken with many technicians who took the Entertainment Electrician examination and they strongly believe that just studying for the examination made them better at what they do,” says SME Pat Enos.

The Power Distribution Technician certification is geared towards the technician who specializes in providing electrical power to the entertainment and event worlds. These individuals may not have, or even desire to have, the experience of working with lighting fixtures, programming, or lighting maintenance. As a result, they might not be qualified for the Entertainment Electrician certification. However, they provide an essential service to our industry every day.

The PDT certification will target the top half of individuals who work with this technology but are not the primary on the job. They will be working in conjunction with a Master Electrician, ETCP Entertainment Electrician, or other supervisor. The primary function of these technicians is to implement a power plan provided to them by the supervising electrician.

As with the Rigger and Electrician examinations, those seeking to apply must meet eligibility requirements to test, and ETCP uses a point system to determine eligibility. A candidate must have a total of 25 points. These can come from (or be a combination of) professional electrical work experience, education from an accredited institution, licenses, and apprenticeships and/or internships. Those who are already certified as an ETCP

Entertainment Electrician will automatically qualify to test for this certification.

“The time has come. I have spoken with many technicians who were intimidated by the Entertainment Electrician examination because not everyone who works in power distribution has theatre or film experience,” commented SME Phil Reilly. “We have long needed a mechanism that would assure me that the guys we hire have the skills necessary to quickly make sense of a ‘one line’ and a hamper piled high with portable distro. I just don’t have the time to keep looking over technicians’ shoulders to double-check the work. This new certification is going to give motivated technicians a reason to step-up their game.”

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Applications to sit for the PDT examination will be available in April 2016 and we are anticipating paper and pencil examinations to be held in Orlando, Chicago, Phoenix, and Southern California with other locations to be determined. ■



Meredith Moseley-Bennett has served as ETCP Certification Manager for nine years. Before her time with ESTA, she was a costume designer for film, television, and theatre. In addition to working full time, she and her husband spend their time shaping their precocious four year old daughter and managing a dog-sitting business.