

# ECAO

**ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS  
ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO**

# News

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## **SEASONS GREETINGS/OFFICE HOURS**

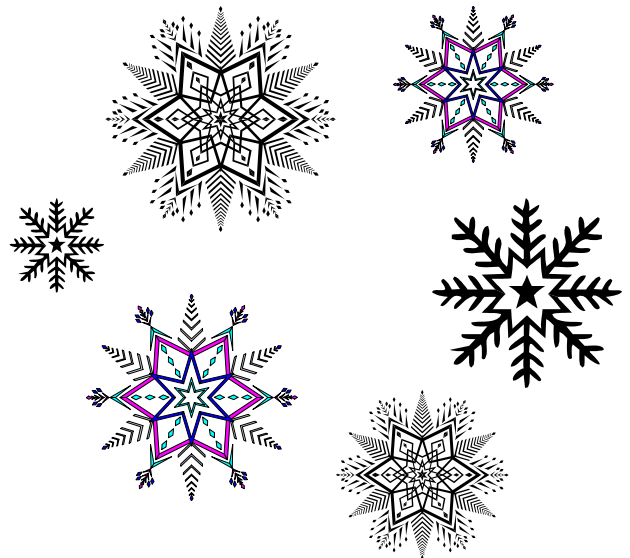
The office of the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario will be closed Thursday, December 25, 2003 to Friday, January 2, 2004. Regular business hours commence Monday, January 5, 2004. On behalf of the staff at ECAO, will wish you a safe and joyous holiday!

## **PAYDAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

As we are all aware, payday is on Thursday and there is a penalty for late payment.

The holidays will be taken on their actual days of Thursday, December 25, Friday, December 26 and Thursday, January 1.

In order to avoid penalties and possible grievances, it is recommended that employees be paid Tuesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> by cheque or Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> by cash and Wednesday, December 31<sup>st</sup> by cheque or Friday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> by cash.



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June 17-20, 2004, Charlottetown, PEI [www.ceca.org](http://www.ceca.org)**

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## ***EI AND CPP RATES FOR 2004***

Employment insurance (EI) premiums will be reduced by 12 cents to \$1.98 in 2004. Maximum insurable earnings will remain at \$39,000 for 2004.

The EI premium rate has declined each year from \$3.07 in 1994 to \$2.10 in 2003. The rate of \$1.98 for 2004 is the 10th consecutive reduction in the EI premium rate since 1994. Thus, over the 10-year period from 1994 to 2004, the EI premium rate has been reduced by more than a third.

These reductions in the EI premium rate will result in ongoing annual savings to employers and employees of \$9.7 billion in 2004, compared to the 1994 rate.

Maximum pensionable earnings under the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) for 2004 will be \$40,500—up from \$39,900 in 2003. The increase reflects the growth in average weekly wages and salaries in Canada.

Contributors who earn more than \$40,500 in 2004 are not required or permitted to make additional contributions to the CPP.

The basic exemption amount for 2004 remains \$3,500. Individuals who earn less than that amount do not need to contribute to the CPP.

The employee and employer contribution rates for 2004 will remain unchanged at 4.95% and the self-employed contribution rate will remain unchanged at 9.9%.

The maximum employer and employee contribution to the plan will be \$1,831.50 and the maximum self-employed contribution will be \$3,663.00. The maximums in 2003 were \$1,801.80 and \$3,603.60.

## ***2004 WSIB PREMIUM RATES***

The 2004 average premium rate is \$2.19 for every \$100 of insurable earnings – the same the average premium rate for 2003.

This 0% average premium rate change does not necessarily mean that premium rates will stay the same for all employers. Premium rates for individual rate groups have been recalculated based primarily on injury frequency, and on how much claims cost for individual rate groups.

<b>Rate Group</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2004 Premium Rate (\$)</b>	<b>2003 Premium Rate (\$)</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
<b>704</b>	Electrical and Incidental Construction Services	3.03	3.03	0.0%
<b>830</b>	Power and Telecommunication Lines	3.66	3.55	3.1%

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The premium rates for 2004 are the result of a careful review of the WSIB's funding strategy, and consultation with employer stakeholders in early July, 2003. The WSIB and employer stakeholders consulted on effective and responsible funding options to maintain financial security, while eliminating the unfunded liability by 2014.

The 2004 premium rates take into account employers' concerns about the harsh financial realities facing Ontario businesses in the wake of SARS and other economic factors.

The insurable earnings ceiling for 2004 is \$66,800 – up from \$65,600 in 2003.

If you are in the WSIB's Merit Adjusted Premium plan (MAP) you may have your 2004 rate group premium rate further adjusted up or down, based on your own accident record. MAP rates are mailed to employers in December.

## **NEW SIN CARDS**

As part of the Government of Canada's plan to improve the management of Social Insurance Numbers (SIN), Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) amended the Employment Insurance Regulations in March 2003 to introduce expiry dates on SINS beginning with a nine, and began issuing a new version of the SIN card on September 12, 2003. Both of these changes are relevant to Canadian employers.

Employers are required under the EI legislation to ask all new employees to produce their SIN card within three days of the start of employment. You must record the SIN as it appears on the card. SIN cards issued after September 12, 2003 carry different messages on the back of the card and the signature strip has been removed.

The new messages are as follows:

- This is not an identity card. However, it should be kept in a safe place.
- This card is not an authorization to work in Canada.
- If an expiry date appears on the front of this card, the SIN may not be used in Canada after that date.

SIN cards previously issued to Canadian citizens and permanent residents continue to be valid.

SINS that begin with the number nine are issued to individuals who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents and who need a number for employment purposes or for other authorized uses.

If the employee has a SIN beginning with the number "9", the employer must also ask to see the Work Permit issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and ensure that the SIN is not expired. Hiring a temporary resident who does not have employment authorization would constitute "knowingly" hiring someone who does not have the right to work in Canada – an offence under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.

Your employee's SIN is a confidential number, restricted to income-related information and must be protected against misuse.

For more information contact:  
HRDC Enquiries Centre  
140 Promenade du Portage  
Phase IV, Level 0

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## **EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE**

NECA's Management Education Institute has announced its schedule for the 2004 *Executive Management Institute*. This is a prestigious program designed for senior executives and managers with corporate experience in the electrical contracting business. The program has been developed and will be presented by Thomas Glavinich, D.E., P.E., University of Kansas. For further details visit [http://www.ecao.org/visitors/courses\\_training.htm](http://www.ecao.org/visitors/courses_training.htm). Attached is a registration form. All ECAO members are by succession members of NECA and can take advantage of all NECA-MEI courses and programs. Due to the considerable cost, please be aware that there is a strict cancellation policy. If you have any further questions, contact Gary Lehman at 416-675-3226 ext. 315.

## **PROVINCIAL AUDITOR BOOSTS PROVINCIAL LICENSING AND TRADE CERTIFICATION**

In its 2003 annual report, released on December 2, 2003, the Provincial Auditor recommended that the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services continue to work with the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) and industry stakeholders to establish a provincial standard for electrical trade certification and licensing.

This is a major, positive development for the provincial contractor licensing and C of Q enforcement initiative promoted by ECAO, OEL and ESA to the previous conservative government.

The industry was concerned that provincial licensing and trade enforcement issues would get lost in the transition from one government to the next, but the Auditor's report puts the plan back on the agenda.

The report cites three reasons for recommending that the government continue to work with the stakeholders to develop a provincial system of certification and licensing:

- The high number of electricians critically injured or killed in Ontario from 1998 through 2001
- The lack of continuing education, safety and Code training of electricians
- Licensing requirements for electrical contractors vary from municipality to municipality

The Auditors report is available on-line at [http://www.gov.on.ca/opa/english/r\\_main.htm](http://www.gov.on.ca/opa/english/r_main.htm).

*ECAO News is published at the ECAO offices — 170 Attwell Drive, Suite 460, Toronto, Ontario, M9W 5Z5. Address changes may be sent to this office by mail, by telephone at 416-675-3226, by fax at 416-675-7736, or by e-mail to [ecao@ecao.org](mailto:ecao@ecao.org). Comments and questions can be directed to Eryl Roberts at the above numbers (extension 311) or by e-mail to [eroberts@ecao.org](mailto:eroberts@ecao.org).*

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