

Continuing ed now required for plumbers

When plumbers apply to renew their licenses in 2010, they will need to provide proof that they have completed 12 hours of specified continuing education. A new Mandatory Continuing Education requirement is part of the licensure standards for Master and Journeymen plumbers. Starting this May, providers such as the regional office of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) will begin offering the initial six hours of classes.

The State Plumbing Board will determine the curriculum each year based on modifications to the code and important industry issues. The topics for the classes and the material covered, therefore, will be consistent throughout the state.

“This is a monumental change,” says Joe Conley, New England Regional Trainer for IAPMO and coordinator of its new continuing education program. “We’re getting geared up to offer lots of classes and help plumbers fulfill this new requirement.” As the sole provider of continuing education for plumbing inspectors in the Commonwealth over the past six years, IAPMO instructors have a lot of experience training plumbers and working with the state board. Conley, who was the training director at Plumbers Local 12 for many years, will also be able to draw on his experience to develop and manage IAPMO’s continuing education program. Conley served on the continuing education sub-committee of the State Plumbing Board.

IAPMO is working with Plumbers Local 12 to present continuing education classes at the Local’s training center in Boston. The classes will be open

to both union and nonunion plumbers. IAPMO will also offer classes at other locations. Per the state’s guidelines to help insure a productive learning environment, the classes will be limited to no more than 49 participants. According to Conley, plumbers will have the option of attending two 3-hour blocks after work on weeknights or a single 6-hour block on a Saturday.

Local 12 has always placed an emphasis on training and education

The board has been developing the continuing education standards for the past three years, says Paul Kennedy, State Plumbing Board chairman and president of P. J. Kennedy & Sons in Dorchester, a Local 12 signatory contractor. Among the reasons for introducing the requirements, he says, is that it’s important for plumbers to keep up to date with changes in the code and to be on the same page as plumbing inspectors. “An inspector looking at a job will have the same eyes as a plumber on the job,” he explains. “We want to standardize the interpretation and enforcement of the code.”

As an example, Kennedy points to the code for corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST), one of the topic areas for the six hours of continuing education that will be presented this year. “After they go through the required classes, all licensed plumbers in the state will know that we have added 17 modifications to Massachusetts’ installation manuals,” he says. The first round of continuing education will also cover venting of gas appliances, PVC restrictions, cross connections, appeals and variances, and an overview of the continuing education requirements themselves, Kennedy notes.

Kevin Cotter, Plumbers Local 12 business manager, says that he supports the continuing edu-



LOCAL 12’S TRAINING CENTER will host IAPMO’s Continuing Education classes.

cation requirements and is pleased to be working with IAPMO to present classes at the Local’s training center. “Our Union has always placed an emphasis on training and education,” he says. “It’s one of the things that sets us apart in the industry.” In order to become Journeymen plumbers, Local 12 apprentices must complete 1000 hours of training over a 5-year period. The State Plumbing Board recently raised the training requirements for Journeymen from 300 hours to 550 hours—still about half of the Union’s more stringent requirements.

“We have a responsibility to keep license holders up to code,” adds Cotter. He notes that continuing education is among the hallmarks of the United Association’s new Standard of Excellence (see cover article). “It’s essential to stay current and learn the latest technology,” he says. “It’s part of what makes us professionals in our field.”

**Log on to the
LMCT
massplumbers.com**



**Don’t Delay.
Register for
continuing ed
classes today.**

IAPMO continuing education classes for both union and non-union plumbers will be offered at the Plumbers Local No. 12 Training Center in Boston.

To register or for more info, see the insert and card that came with this newsletter or contact Joe Conley:
joe.conley@iapmo.org
781-803-2782