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UA Foreman Certification Program

It takes special talent and qualities to be a successful foreman on a construction project. In addition to needing technical knowledge about every aspect of our trade and how a job should move forward, a good foreman also needs to be a leader, to have strength of character and a problem-solving attitude.

Just as we want to create highly trained journeymen and women in the construction industry, we also want to have foremen on these projects who are clearly well qualified for the complex task of managing a UA-manned project of every possible scope and size. In order to create a corps of fully trained supervisory personnel, the United Association and its contractor associations joined together to develop a course and certification for foremen. This joint effort is an excellent example of a cooperative labor-management undertaking that meets the needs of all of us—UA members and UA contractors alike. It is also taught by both UA and MCA instructors. The book and instructor course materials are available at the UA bookstore.

The response to this undertaking has been very gratifying. At the Instructor Training Program during August 2007 and 2008, about 180 UA and MCAA participants took the *Train the Trainer* course in order to prepare for the demand for this kind of training that lies ahead. These are the individuals who will be using the curriculum that has been developed by the UA and the MCAA.

The course is approximately 50 to 60 hours. It has been mandated that all fifth-year apprentices be taught this course. This new course will take the place of the Job Supervisor and Leadership and Development courses that currently run 45 to 50 hours in the curriculum.

Along with the new curriculum and book, the UA has developed a Foremen Certification Program. We have developed a 110-question certification exam that requires a grade of 80% or higher to pass. Once a UA member has successfully completed the certification exam, he or she will carry a foreman certification that will be effective for four years.

We know that many of our journeymen have already been working as foremen for many years. As an alternative, in order to acknowledge the professional status and accomplishments of current UA members in the field of job supervision, beginning on **January 1, 2009, through June 30, 2009**, individuals will be recognized as UA Certified Foremen provided they can provide a letter from their local union business manager's office or an

employing contractor that shows extensive work experience as a foreman. This information must be sent to the UA Certification Department. The UA recommends that individuals certified in accordance with this *professional acknowledgement provision* take an eight-hour course, available from the UA, at their locals. For those individuals who wish to take the exam and would like additional training, there is a 20-hour refresher course available from the UA. Any individual certified in accordance with this professional acknowledgement provision must pass the UA Foreman Certification Examination prior to the expiration of his or her initial four-year certification period.

Recertification training is provided to each individual holding UA Foreman Certification. Prior to the expiration of their four-year certification, individuals must attend a minimum of three hours of update training provided by the local union training facility. This update training is conducted to maintain the proficiency of the skills and knowledge required for acceptable performance and to adopt new industry standards on leadership and supervision.

Individuals who can provide documented evidence that they have worked as a foreman for at least 1,500 hours during the four-year certification period and have previously taken and passed the certification exam, will be recertified as UA foremen. Individuals working fewer than 1,500 hours as specified above must pass the UA Foreman Certification Examination with a score of 80% or above. Should the individual score less than 80% on the examination, it is recommended that he or she take the 20-hour UA Foreman Refresher Training Course before re-taking the certification examination.

All of this information is contained in the *Foreman Certification Program Quality System Manual* available online at the UANet under the certification tab. If you should have any questions, feel free to contact the UA Certification Department.

We know it is the intention of the UA contractor associations that all foremen on their job sites must be certified, and this is a requirement that we fully support. We know the UA can supply the qualified and trained individuals to fulfill this role.

As you can see, this is a well-thought-out program. We look forward to working with all of our local unions as we use these very important, joint labor-management initiatives in the years ahead. ■