

Inspection and Investigation Training

The Opportunity

In 2000, Nova Scotia Environment and Labour was created from the merger of two departments and a number of agencies. This merger brought four major inspectorates together. Alcohol and Gaming, Occupational Health and Safety, Public Safety and Environment each had their own training sources and practices. Some used RCMP enforcement training, but this did not meet all the needs of our regulatory inspectors. A number of years after the merger it became apparent better training and more cooperation and consistency was needed among the inspectorates.

In 2005, a volunteer team, called the Inspection, Investigation and Prosecution Committee (IIPC) was formed to review current inspection and investigation policies, procedures and practices within all four inspectorates. The committee's review identified opportunities to increase the level of consistency between the various divisional inspectors and officers, and also to enhance professional development of staff, and provide a more effective and efficient level of service to the department's regulated clients across Nova Scotia.

The Response

Following an extensive process review, the committee, in consultation with and with assistance from the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and the Public Prosecution Service, developed a professional training curriculum for inspectorate staff that includes a core training program based on relevant, tailored topics that NSEL inspectors encounter most often. This training is modelled after an Ontario Program.

During the winter and spring of 2006, the team delivered a pilot program which resulted in twelve inspectorate staff being the first group certified by the new training. The experience of this group of people was particularly valuable, because they further enhanced the quality of the training by agreeing to scrutinize the program and present the committee with feedback. Their suggestions for further improvement were incorporated before the finalization of the development of the program. The resulting program offers inspectors information and training from a regulatory compliance and enforcement perspective, a perfect match for their primary job function.

In fall 2006, an additional twenty inspectors completed the foundation training. The Inspection, Investigation and Prosecution Committee has proposed that the program be conducted twice annually. It is anticipated that all inspectorate staff within NSEL – selected for participation on a priority basis – will be certified through this program within five years.



To better meet the needs of the department and the public, the IIPC identified an opportunity to utilize qualified internal resource persons as instructors for the foundation training. Although it's too early to calculate actual cost per person, there is no question that this training program will result in enormous cost savings to NSEL. It also created an opportunity for staff development, leadership, and recognition, which is a well-known source of motivation and job satisfaction for employees.

This innovative initiative is the first project of its kind in the provincial government and it has attracted much attention and interest from provincial inspectorates outside NSEL and also from other provincial jurisdictions across Canada. The development of the training shows leadership, and demonstrates initiative and a desire to improve client service delivery using innovative thinking.

The positive outcomes of the training program are already evident within the divisions. Following the pilot program, the inspectors and officers offered positive comments about the training and emphasized how relevant it is to their daily work. Word of mouth praise of the training has resulted in other staff persons requesting to enrol in the next available course. It helps staff to recognize issues at various regulated settings that should be referred to other divisions and provides the language to share that knowledge.

Improving Competitiveness and Compliance

A harmonization of inspection and investigation policies, procedures and practices within NSEL will ensure a long-term benefit for both stakeholders and staff.

Now that inspectors and officers are receiving the same type and quality of instruction and knowledge, the organizations we regulate will benefit from the consistent application of compliance and enforcement tools. Inspectorates will have the knowledge and tools they need to identify opportunities for increasing compliance and improved service, which ensures appropriate protections for Nova Scotians. Furthermore, having a common foundation of training between the department's inspectorate staff will help to promote greater cooperation and better communication with regulated stakeholders and among community partners.

Where can I get more information about this initiative?

You can call the office of Competitiveness and Compliance at 902-424-3081 or email cci@gov.ns.ca.

About the CCI

The Inspection, Investigation, and Prosecution Foundation Training program supports the goals of Environment and Labour's Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative (CCI). The CCI is a key part of *Better Regulation – Everyone's Business*, the Government of Nova Scotia's far-reaching plan for improving regulation in the province.

Environment and Labour is one of the main regulatory departments in Nova Scotia, and is changing the way laws are designed, communicated and enforced in Nova Scotia. Through the CCI, the department is taking a multi-year and systematic approach to making sure that our regulatory programs meet the needs of Nova Scotians. The Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative is working to make a brighter future for our people, economy, environment and communities.

Where can I get more information on the Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative?

Find out more at: www.gov.ns.ca/enla/cci or by calling 902-424-3081.



Environment and Labour