

March 15, 2011

ITA-SUPPLIED CALCULATORS

Background

Over the last couple of months, the Industry Training Authority (ITA) has undergone a review of its examination practices, comparing them with practices across Canada. To be compliant with the rest of the country's practices, ITA has been making several changes in our exam practices.

In December 2010, a notice and an update were sent out to all training providers with the information that ITA had started a review on the use of calculators and that, as of September 2011, all exam candidates would be required to use a calculator provided by ITA.

Originally, the two calculators that ITA was considering were the same calculators that candidates in other jurisdictions are required to use – the Sharp EL-520WBBK and the Casio FX-260Solar.

ITA requested and reviewed extensive industry feedback before making any decision on the makes and models of calculators that exam candidates in BC would be required to use.

The Review

Sample calculators were sent to all private and public ITA training institutions. As part of our review, we also sought information from instructors to help determine the makes and models of calculator that should be supplied for all ITA examinations throughout the province.

We also conducted a survey to achieve a more comprehensive view on other's opinions of the suggested calculators.

ITA requested the submission of all feedback by February 15, 2011 to ensure that we would have enough time to perform an objective review of all responses.

The Decision

After a detailed review of all feedback, ITA has decided to go forward with the use of two calculators. These calculators will be distributed to examination candidates based on their trade, rather than on their training provider or geographic location. In part, this is because ITA must ensure that all apprentices have the opportunity to be mobile with their training needs, and thus the calculator they are given for an ITA examination must be consistent.

Each training provider's feedback was given equal weighting. Although not all of the instructors in a single trade unanimously agreed on one calculator, ITA went with the majority after carefully reviewing all feedback.

We have found that the majority of the trades recommended that we go forward with the Sharp EL-520WBBK calculator, as they felt that the functionality of this calculator meets the needs of most trades. In fact, some instructors are already recommending this calculator to their students.

ITA has also decided to go with the Texas Instruments TI-30Xa calculator for some trades. This calculator is very similar to the Casio FX-260Solar calculator, but we received feedback indicating that the ease of use and functionality of the TI-30Xa calculator would be a better match to the needs of the candidates.

The TI-30Xa calculator will be used only for a few select trades that indicated they preferred the Casio and for those trades that specifically indicated the TI-30Xa as their preferred calculator. The following table lists the trades that will use TI-30Xa. All other trades will use the Sharp EL-520WBBK.

TI-30Xa Calculator
Boilermaker
Ironworker (Generalist)
Ironworker (Reinforcing)
Carpenter
Piledriver & Bridgeworker
Meatcutter
Roofer
Automotive Glass Technician

Going Forward

ITA will start implementing the mandatory use of ITA-supplied calculators (the Sharp EL-520WBBK and the Texas Instruments TI-30Xa) in September 2011. No personal calculators will be permitted in the examination room after September 2011 – all calculators must be those supplied by ITA. This information will be also be posted on the ITA website.

Training providers should start informing all tradespeople that they will be required to use the specified ITA-supplied calculators for exams. Please ensure that students are prepared to write their ITA examinations with the prescribed calculator. User guides for these calculators can be found online.

Sharp EL520WBBK user manual: <http://www.sharp.ca/manuals/default2.asp>

Texas Instrument TI30Xa user manual:
http://education.ti.com/educationportal/sites/US/productDetail/us_ti30xa.html?bid=6

Thank you,

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