

You Ought To Know

ISSUE: 22

Green Page Edition

Do you need a Network Cabling Specialist Certificate of Qualification (631A) to be a Junior or Senior Network Cabling Specialist (NCS) Journeyperson?

Yes. It is a requirement under our Principal Agreement for IBEW members to have a 631A before they become a Junior NCS Journeyperson. They also need an additional 2,000 hours of on-the-job experience before progressing to a Senior NCS Journeyperson, and they must be able to carry out the work as defined within the trade. This is outlined in the Principal Agreement, Green Pages, section 3: Classifications.

It is important to note that, if your existing Junior and/or Senior NCS Journeypersons have been employed by you prior to May 1, 2022 and they did not have their 631A as of that date, they cannot be demoted because they do not have their 631A.

What should I do if I put in a dispatch request for a Junior or Senior NCS Journeyperson, and the union sends me someone without a 631A?

You can refuse the dispatch.

What is the work of a Network Cabling Specialist as defined within the trade?

According to [Skilled Trades Ontario](#), a Network Cabling Specialist installs, tests, labels and maintains low voltage communication distribution systems and signal sources to the terminal or equipment at the end of distribution systems, which comprise the architecture that supports voice, video and data transmissions within industrial, commercial and institutional complexes.

More specifically, a Network Cabling Specialist:

- plans and prepares for installations
- performs cable installations using hand and power tools
- installs cable support infrastructure
- terminates and splices inside and outside plant cables
- performs labelling, testing and documentation of installations
- performs networking installations
- troubleshoots cable systems
- develops and maintains positive client relations

How can my existing employees get their 631A?

If they can carry out work as defined within the trade, they might be eligible to challenge the exam with Skilled Trades Ontario. Please have them reach out to Brian Boersma (brian@oeittf.com) for details and registration information. Fees are currently covered by the Ontario Electrical Industry Training Trust Fund (OEITTF). There is also a pre-exam course provided by OEITTF.

If they are new to the trade or do not have the required skills to challenge the exam and perform the necessary functions of the NCS Journeyperson, they should go through the apprenticeship program. According to Skilled Trades Ontario, the timeframe to become competent in the trade of Network Cabling Specialist is 4,600 hours consisting of 4,000 hours of on-the-job work experience and 600 hours of in-school training.

The Principal Agreement outlines specific requirements (hours, trade school, etc.) for first and second term NCS apprentices.



What is the scope of work under the Green Pages?

The original scope of work is set out in section 2, clause 201 of the Green Pages, and reads as follows:

This Agreement covers all Employees of the Company engaged in the installation, maintenance, repair or service of all telephone interconnect and data systems including, but not restricted to, input data or voice lines, interface lines, acquisition lines, data reporting lines, local area networks, video distribution and related peripheral equipment for the above.

This is followed by a clause that explains exclusions and the ability to remove exclusions based on technological changes, and reads as follows:

This Agreement does not cover work that properly comes under the work jurisdiction of IBEW members employed under the Provincial Section of the Principal Agreement.

Specifically, the work not covered by this Agreement shall include but not be limited to the following:

The installations of all conduit, raceways, cable trays, and the pulling of all cables related to industrial process, building automated systems, fire and burglar alarms, and nurse call systems. The parties will give consideration to the above exclusions if the system is modified by changes in technology.

Electrical work not covered by the Agreement shall be covered by the terms and conditions of the Principal Agreement.

During local bargaining in 2019, the Greater Toronto Electrical Contractors Association (GTECA) and Local 353 agreed to expand the scope as outlined in their local appendix as a Letter of Understanding (LOU). During provincial collective bargaining in 2022, the parties agreed to expand the scope to reflect the changes in the sector as outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the Green Pages.

As those of you working in the sector know, technology is constantly changing. Going back to the early 1990s, many systems, such as nurse call systems, were hardwired and acted as standalone systems. This meant that each device required a direct electrical connection to a line voltage power source and had to be done by a licensed electrician to ensure safe and code-compliant wiring. Now, with power over ethernet (POE) cabling and wireless systems, line voltage wires do not need to be run between some devices. The communication happens wirelessly or over data lines.

A dispute arose in 2025 bargaining regarding the MOU and its continued application. The IBEW CCO recently filed a grievance against ETBA and 9 area ECAs, claiming that the MOU providing the expanded scope of work expired on April 30, 2025. Their position is that the agreement reached during bargaining in 2022 expired, and that the work listed in the [expanded scope](#) must be done by electricians under the terms and conditions of the Blue Pages. This grievance does not deal with the LOU between GTECA and Local 353.

How might this grievance impact contractors using IBEW members classified under the Green Pages to do this work?

If the IBEW CCO is successful with their grievance, there is a possibility that contractors could be liable for damages, most likely calculated as the difference between the Green Page classification wage and the Journeyman electrician wage, if you continue to use Green Page classifications to do the work. This scenario could also result in layoffs of NCS classifications since the IBEW CCO is taking the position the work must be done by electricians. While the ETBA will vigorously defend against this grievance, it is difficult to predict outcomes of an arbitration hearing.

How many hours are worked under the Green Pages across Ontario?

Not many when compared to the total hours for all ICI sectors in Ontario. Toronto/Local 353 has the highest hours compared across the 11 locals. When comparing 2018 hours to 2024 hours, Thunder Bay/Local 402 has seen the most growth. The chart below shows hours based on Green Page classifications only which, for 2024, accounted for 3% of all hours earned based on remittances to ECAO.

OEITTF Hours (based on \$0.05 remittances under the Green Pages)								
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	Change from 2018 to 2024
Local 105	30,151	21,725	25,582	31,599	28,320	31,820	39,540	-24%
Local 115	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Local 120	24,791	23,859	30,593	29,006	24,360	34,500	40,560	-39%
Local 303	3,805	2,553	4,128	4,966	6,780	15,980	7,060	-46%
Local 353	390,961	477,739	427,742	359,148	290,620	338,720	338,380	16%
Local 402	72,097	64,086	44,163	31,851	22,280	14,220	18,400	292%
Local 530	22	1,061	502	59	-	-	-	
Local 586	53,092	42,774	15,805	16,024	20,780	35,360	34,920	52%
Local 773	89,436	56,798	52,789	40,147	34,800	42,720	38,740	131%
Local 804	22,312	19,487	18,336	11,524	12,040	20,480	25,140	-11%
Local 1687	37,370	34,010	23,337	22,479	14,160	17,840	20,140	86%
Total	724,122	744,092	642,978	546,803	454,140	551,640	562,880	29%
All ECAO hours	24,877,137	24,001,882	23,243,568	20,534,171	18,266,959	20,633,689	22,389,921	
% of all hours	3.00	3.20	2.84	2.74	2.55	2.75	2.58	

The parties worked together during collective bargaining in 2022 to make changes to increase the work done under the Green Pages using Green Page classifications. You can see a slight increase in hours from 2023 to 2024 in all areas other than Toronto/Local 353 and Sarnia/Local 530.

Unfortunately, the hours in Toronto/Local 353 have been decreasing, which make up over half of the total hours across Ontario. Reduced hours in Toronto/Local 353 are largely a result of this sector's reliance on large mega-project type work such as hospitals and transit systems. As the Eglinton Crosstown work wrapped up last year, communications hours suffered as a result.

If the IBEW CCO is successful with their grievance, the hours in those areas will stop growing. From what we've been told by contractors, the work is more likely to go to non-union companies who are not required to use NCS techs or electricians, than to IBEW electricians. The work currently done by our members is a small fraction of the work available.

We will keep you advised as this matter progresses.

If I need to subcontract out the communications portion of a job, what should I do?

We realize that not all our members perform all of the work covered by the Principal Agreement and sometimes need to subcontract to other companies. It is important that all ECAO members know that it is a violation of our Principal Agreement to subcontract work, directly or indirectly, under the jurisdiction of the Agreement to a contractor who is not signatory to the Agreement.

Examples of violations would include:

- Using a non-union firm to perform work that is included in the scope of the Principal Agreement
- Suggesting that a General Contractor give the communications portion of the job to a non-union contractor
- Working with a client to find a non-union contractor to perform the communications portion of the job

If you are looking for a contractor to take on the communications portion of a job who is bound to the Principal Agreement, you can use this list to get started: <https://www.ecao.org/find-a-contractor/>

If you perform communications work and are missing from this list, please send your information to Jodi Travers at jtravers@ecao.org.