



North American Contractor Certification

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“There’s a hole to be filled with a certification program for all glaziers.”

- Patrick Flannery, Glass Canada

NACC Case Study:

Why are certification and installer qualifications important to Canada?

Perspectives from leading Canadian professionals involved in the glass and glazing industry.

Yvon Chiasson, ing., P.Eng.
Façade Specialist
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Mr Peter Neudorf
Director Field Operations
Ferguson- Neudorf Glass, Inc.

Mr. Patrick Flannery
Editor
Glass Canada Magazine

About NACC

The North American Contractor Certification Program provides architectural glass and metal contractors with certification recognition through a professionally administered, third-party assessment, as a means of creating a baseline for competency and adherence to industry-accepted guidelines.

Importance in the Canadian Marketplace-Regulations

The NACC credential is based on proficiency in five components: business practices, safety, glazing processes, contract administration, and quality. By assessing all aspects of a glazing contractor’s business, the well-rounded certification process benchmarks the means and methods that drive high performance and high quality in the industry.

In Canada, certification takes on a much more broad appeal due to the way the landscape is set.

“Canadian regulation of trades occurs at the provincial level as a result of our constitutional division of powers. This has created a patchwork of different approaches in the 10 provinces and three territories across the country that can create a barrier to glaziers from one jurisdiction moving to work in another,” said Flannery of Glass Canada Magazine. “A single national standard, recognized by all, would enable contractors to grow more easily outside of their home province and result in more competition and larger, more internationally competitive companies.”

Importance in the Canadian Marketplace-Performance

"If the glazing contractors candidate don't take themselves seriously, no one will. We always need to improve our workforce and raise the standards of the installations. The glazing facades are always changing and we need to keep up to speed," said Neudorf Jr. of glazing contracting firm Ferguson-Neudorf.

Not only are glaziers seeing the significance of certification, but also so are the engineering firms who take a very important role in the overall building construction space.

"Building Envelopes are increasingly becoming the most important part of the building and they should not be considered as something you tack onto a building. The building envelope needs to be the primary focus of the building design because it relates to everything! The overall assumed performance of the building will be determined by how well the cladding has been installed," said Chiasson of engineering firm Morrison Hershfield Limited. "This will also dictate how durable the building is and will determine its long term performance. How would this be achieved? Certification would be part of the solution"

Importance in the Canadian Marketplace-Stakeholders

Flannery notes the climate that certification in the market would experience.

"Overall, it would be greeted with great relief and acceptance. An established certification standard would remove a major source of risk in any open bid process. While no program can guarantee an absence of defects, it would at least serve as a starting point to weed out fly-by-night bidders."

Neudorf Jr. sees a very positive outcome on the glazing contractor side.

"My answer is they should be embracing this with open arms. A higher qualified workforce comes higher quality control factors. Everything gets installed correctly the first time. When you're certified, the company and the workforce takes pride in always doing the best job."

Importance in the Canadian Marketplace-Timing

"The time is right for companies to take manpower seriously. The right people, like the architects and general contractors, will take note. It's about time you get what you pay for rather than the cheapest bidder," added Neudorf Jr.

Importance in the Canadian Marketplace-Workforce

"Demographics are very much not in favour of the status quo. The average age in the trade is far too high with far too few entering to replace retirees. The interest in trades among young people is at an all-time low. The glass industry absolutely needs strong certified companies to show young people an attractive, stable career path instead of a jungle where you eat what you kill and never know where the next meal is coming from," noted Flannery.

Importance in the Canadian Marketplace-Collaboration

For Chiasson, the advantages an engineering firm can see from glazier certification are numerous including:

- Professional competencies – establishing a base of communication with owners/design professional
- Improved communication at all stages of the project (performance mock-up, shop drawings, start up, and execution in the field), we are talking the same language here
- Increased trust – when the cat is away, the mice continue their work, which will reduce the risks or errors, or wrong material being used, reducing the potential risks of leakage or comfort related concerns (risk of litigation?)
- Overall improved relationship with all team members

"The glazing contractor is the last one to be touching the exterior wall! When there is a problem with the building (not necessarily with the building envelope), they are the first one to be called," Chiasson concluded.