



Emergency Response Assistance Canada
Assistance d'Intervention d'Urgence du Canada
1100, 744 – 4th Ave S.W. Calgary, Alberta T2P 3T4
Telephone: (587) 349-5880 Fax: (403) 543-6099 Web: www.erac.org

ERAC Online Course Update

-Finbarr Wilson

Training at ERAC is about to change. For the better.

Starting with the upcoming Release of a new Static, Grounding and Bonding course, ERAC will be improving every facet of online training.

Instead of static PDFs (sorry about the pun!), ERAC courses will move to a new interactive format. The wall of text will go, replaced by combination of a voiceover, matched to minimal onscreen text and supported by tons of images from the field.

From time to time, students will be asked to demonstrate their newfound knowledge in a small exercise. It could be a drop and drag interaction, or perhaps the student can move a slider representing a variable to see what happens.

The goal of all these changes is simple. Engagement. We want our students to walk away from courses with a strong and lasting memory of the content, because the delivery of the content is compelling.

What we don't want is students to fake it, by skipping through page after page of dense text then challenge the exam. And we all know that happens. And we all know it's far from perfect. The new courses will help.

And it is not just a facelift we are talking about. As ERAC rebuilds these courses the content will be reviewed carefully. If the information is tangential and irrelevant to the audience, it will go. If there's room to simplify and clarify the content, we will do it. The overall result will be more focused courses targeting students with what's important.

The first few new courses released will be the meat and potatoes of our work: Grounding and Bonding, LPG transfers and flammable liquid transfers. As more and more courses are published, the overall curriculum will start to change.

Currently, you can pretty much take any course at any time. A year or so from now, a new simpler and more coherent structure will emerge, and anyone with a passing knowledge of NFPA competencies will see a connection.

The new curriculum will follow NFPA fairly closely with a progression from analyzing the situation, through planning the response, and then to implementing the response.



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This sequential structure not only helps the student orient to the material, it will act as a much more robust platform for continuous improvement. For one, we will be better able to identify gaps in the training by comparing the NFPA-based courses directly with ERAC's new NFPA-based competency profile.

In the background, a fresh and complete competency profile for team members acts as the foundation for all future training development. New online courses will be designed from scratch to ensure every knowledge-based requirement from the profile is checked off in a logical and meticulously documented way.

Students won't see any of these backend changes, but when they reach their first regional, leaders and ERAC will be assured they are ready.

And that's what training is all about.