

The Case for 1:1 Apprenticeship Ratios

Skilled trade workers represent a critical component of employment and growth in the province. Unfortunately the province relies on antiquated labour laws and a 1970s apprenticeship system model that rewards a few well connected stakeholders, but limits opportunities for young and laid-off workers looking for a career in the skilled trades.

What is the Journeyman-to-Apprentice Ratio?

If a worker wants a career in the trades, they must first apprentice with a qualified employer in order to receive important on-the-job training. Employers must demonstrate their ability to train a worker based on the company's experience as well as the number of licensed journeymen it has on staff. This requirement is known as the 'journeyman-to-apprentice ratio' and it varies from trade to trade.

The plumbing trade is a good example of the antiquated nature of our apprentice system with 15,219 licensed men and women practicing the trade. The current requirement for employers to train plumbing apprentices is 1 journeyman on staff for the first apprentice hired and an additional three on staff for every additional apprentice hired. This means a company has to have 4 journeymen on staff in order to hire 2 apprentices and 7 journeymen on staff in order to hire 3 apprentices. This requirement means that small companies are shut out of participating in the apprenticeship system in a meaningful way.

Recent federal and interprovincial agreements such as the *Agreement on Internal Trade* mean that many journeymen are able to receive their license in another province or country, effectively by-passing our apprenticeship system while Ontario workers wait for scarce apprenticeship opportunities to present themselves.

What is the Ratio in other provinces?

For many trades, including plumbing and electrical, Ontario has among the highest ratios in the country at 3:1 for most companies.

Apprenticeship Ratio for Plumbers

	NF	NS	NB	PEI	MB	SK	Quebec	AL	BC	Ontario
Journeyman to Apprentice	1:2	1:1	1:1	1:1	1:1	1:2	2:1 (1:1 in residential construction)	1:2	No requirement	3:1

Source: Ellis Chart, & Quebec Training Website

What effect is this having?

Our high ratio means it's more difficult for Ontarians to find apprenticeship work.

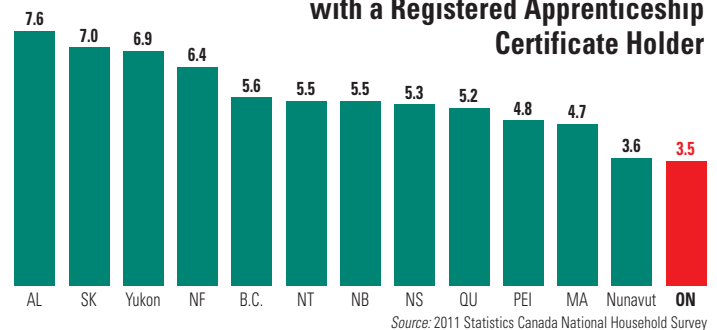
Data is bearing this out in our aging workforce and shortages of tradespeople as demonstrated by the average worker age in certain trades.

Trade	Average Age
Plumber	49
Electrician	49
Air Conditioning Mechanic	49
Sprinkler and Fire Protection Installer	51
Roofer	51
General Carpenter	65

Source: Ontario College of Trades

Ontario in Last Place

Ontario Ranks Last in Proportion of Population aged 25 to 64 with a Registered Apprenticeship Certificate Holder



Apprenticeship Regulations By Province

Province	Have Apprenticeship Training (per thousand full-time workers)	Apprenticeship Ratio
Newfoundland & Labrador	88	1:2
Quebec	85	4.5:1 (1:1 in residential sector)
Alberta	79	1:2
British Columbia	67	No Ratio Required
Saskatchewan	67	1:2
New Brunswick	63	1:1
Nova Scotia	61	1:1
PEI	55	1:1
Manitoba	47	1:1
Ontario	45	3:1

Source: CD Howe Institute: "Access Denied: The Effect of Apprenticeship Restrictions in Skilled Trades"

Action Is Needed

The College of Trades ratio review process has taken a slow and bureaucratic approach to changing ratios.

No other province had undertaken a cumbersome and piecemeal approach to ratio regulations.

The province needs to take action by moving to an across-the-board 1:1 journeyman to apprentice ratio.

A 1:1 across the board ratio is needed in the construction sector or Ontario will continue to fall behind!